

New Zealand Orthopaedic Association (Monday 23 March)

Update to NZOA Trainees

You will all be aware through numerous communications of the postponement and cancellation of the various public meetings and functions of the RACS and of the NZOA. Of particular interest to all of you, is the current postponement of the final fellowship exam until further notice and also SET selection for 2021 trainees.

The NZOA Speciality Orthopaedic Training Board met by teleconference Thursday night to discuss the implications of these postponements. To reconfirm these changes:

1. The final fellowship exam for 2020 is postponed until further notice. Three months' notice will be given of any change to that position. The earliest the exam could take place is September 2020. That is probably optimistic. More likely it would be November/December 2020, or even May 2021. The senior examiners have reiterated that there will be no compromise or change to the exam format to allow for it to be done in a different way. The current format is the format that is approved and accredited by the Australian Medical Council. It is extremely unlikely for a different decision to be made for candidates in New Zealand if the course of the pandemic was different here than in Australia.
2. SET selection will be postponed until such time as the timing of the final fellowship exam is confirmed.

There are two issues regarding 2020 SET selection.

1. As positions for the new SET 1 trainees are dependent on the SET 5 trainees successfully leaving the programme, there may not be sufficient positions available if the exam is delayed beyond the end of 2020. The Board is open to investigating options with the DHB to facilitate positions for new trainees.
2. The Board has affirmed that it is confident in the current selection process and will not compromise that process. As this process involves multiple interview stations and the congregation of candidates and interviewers, under current guidelines, this is not an option. Again, the Board is open to innovative ways of achieving this objective without compromising the process.

As we are near the completion of the initial selection of SET 1 candidates for interview, the Board has agreed we should complete this process to the stage of confirming the candidates to be offered interviews. We would then postpone the interviews until the issues outlined above have been resolved.

We realise these changes are causing quite a disruption to your lives and future planning. These are challenging times but as much as possible, the Board will endeavour to continue the NZOA training programme with as little interruption as possible.

Kind regards,

Richard Keddell, Chair NZOA Speciality Orthopaedic Training Board
Tim Gregg, Chair, NZOA Education Committee