

Portfolio:	Pathways to Fellowship	Ref. No.	REG-2069
Team:	Examinations		
Title:	Fellowship Examination Eligibility and Examination Performance Review		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This regulation provides the criteria for eligibility requirements for a Trainee and a Specialist International Medical Graduate (SIMG) of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) applying to present for the Fellowship Examination (FEx) as well as the examination performance review processes for unsuccessful candidates.

RACS is committed to a review process following repeated failure in the examination or where a candidate has performed poorly (as defined by the Court of Examiners) in a particular FEx. The review process is designed to assist a candidate in their pathway to Fellowship.

2. KEYWORDS

Eligibility, Fellowship Examination, FEx, Committee of Surgical Education Training, CSET, Feedback, Review, Specialty Training Board/Committee, STB/C

3. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this regulation:

- a. **Candidate** shall mean a trainee or SIMG registered and approved to present for the FEx.
- b. **Examiner** shall mean a RACS Fellow appointed to assess the candidate is safe and competent to practice as an independent surgeon.
- c. **Patient** shall mean a member of the public who volunteers for the purposes of running the examination.
- d. **Court of Examiners/Specialty Court** shall mean appointed examiners representing each specialty who are responsible for running the FEx, including question design/format, marking guidelines, standard setting and results.
- e. **Attempt** shall mean participation in any component of the examination, i.e., if a candidate sits the written component and does not progress to the clinical/viva component this will be regarded as an attempt.
- f. **One-Time Exemption** shall mean an exemption granted to a candidate from re-sitting the written component of the next scheduled FEx where the candidate has passed the written component of a FEx but failed overall. The one-time exemption only applies if the candidate presents for the next scheduled FEx.
- g. **SIMG** shall mean Specialist International Medical Graduate.
- h. **STC/B** shall mean the Specialty Training Committee or Board of the relevant specialty
- i. **RACS** shall mean the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

4. BODY OF POLICY

4.1. Eligibility

- 4.1.1. To be eligible to register and present for the FEx:

Authorised By: **Executive General Manager, Education Pathways**

Document Owner: **Manager, Examinations**

Original Issue: September 2015

Version: 8

Approval Date: November 2024

Review Date: November 2027

Portfolio:	Pathways to Fellowship	Ref. No.	REG-2069
Team:	Examinations		
Title:	Fellowship Examination Eligibility and Examination Performance Review		

- a. Trainees and SIMGs must hold a valid Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)/Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) registration without conditions.
 - b. Candidates who are not citizens of Australia or Aotearoa New Zealand must hold a valid visa or permit without any restrictions.
- 4.1.2. Each STB/C determines the requirements for approval to present for the FEx. Trainees must review the relevant specialty specific training regulations when determining readiness before applying.
- 4.1.3. Candidates must pass the written component to be eligible to sit the Clinical/Viva component of the exam.
- a. Candidates who pass written segments but fail the overall exam will not be required to re-sit the written component of the next scheduled exam, as a one-time exemption, and progress directly to the clinical/viva component.
 - b. Candidates who pass the written segments but fail the overall exam and who do not present for the next scheduled exam, will be required to re-sit the written segments on their subsequent sitting of the exam.
 - c. Candidates who fail any written component and fail the overall exam must sit the written component in the next exam.
- 4.1.4. SIMGs under a pathway to fellowship with a greater than 12-month supervision requirement may apply upon confirmation of satisfactorily completing 6 months of supervision. If an SIMG has a requirement for 12 months or less they may apply at any time.
- 4.1.5. SIMGs on the Assessment pathway to Vocational Registration with Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) must:
- a. have been recommended to sit the FEx by their Vocational Registration interview panel; and
 - b. submit a letter to the RACS Aotearoa New Zealand Office from their RACS approved assessment supervisor stating they have demonstrated knowledge and practice that is (at minimum) equivalent to a final year Trainee.

4.2. Feedback report

- 4.2.1. The Examinations Team will forward the Senior Examiner's feedback report to candidates, surgical supervisor (if applicable) and STB/C. For a SIMG under a pathway to fellowship a copy will also be provided to the SIMG Manager and Clinical Director, SIMG Assessment and Support. For a SIMG on a pathway to Vocational Registration with the MCNZ a copy will be provided to the Executive Officer for SIMGs Aotearoa.
- 4.2.2. The report is intended to assist candidates with the review and planning of their training or clinical assessment (if applicable) and/or examination preparation requirements for any subsequent attempt.

Portfolio:	Pathways to Fellowship	Ref. No.	REG-2069
Team:	Examinations		
Title:	Fellowship Examination Eligibility and Examination Performance Review		

- 4.2.3. The report must include where applicable, areas of concern in relation to poor performance and/or safety.

4.3. First Examination Attempt

Following an unsuccessful attempt (where an attempt is defined as participating in any exam component), candidates must arrange a meeting with their current supervisor.

4.4. Second or Subsequent Examination Attempt

- 4.4.1. Candidates must be interviewed by the STB/C Chair or nominated representative and current supervisor/s (if applicable). The interview should include a review of examination performance, the candidate's training or clinical assessment (if applicable). At the end of the interview a remediation plan should be implemented if necessary, and a signed copy must be sent to the STB/C (for a Trainee) or the SIMG Team (for a SIMG).
- 4.4.2. If the relevant STB/C has concerns regarding patient safety and believes a candidate should be reported to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) or the MCNZ, it will recommend this to the Chair of CSET and the Censor-in-Chief in accordance with the mandated guidelines.
- 4.4.3. Recommendations of the STB/C must be communicated in writing to candidates. A copy must be provided to the SIMG Manager if concerning a SIMG under a pathway to Fellowship. A copy must be provided to the Executive Officer for SIMGs Aotearoa for SIMGs on a pathway to Vocational Registration with the MCNZ.
- 4.4.4. For a SIMG under a pathway to Fellowship, the STB/C may request:
- an independent review of the assessment post; and/or
 - a reassessment of the SIMG's specialist qualifications, training and experience.
- 4.4.5. Any recommended changes to an Interim Assessment Decision of a SIMG under a pathway to Fellowship will be considered by RACS

4.5. Poor Performance and Safety Concerns

- 4.5.1. Poor performance in the examination process is defined as:
- candidate failing five or more of the seven segments; or
 - identification by the relevant Specialty Court of Examiners of performance or behaviour of a candidate in a segment that is considered well below the expected level of competence.
- 4.5.2. Safety concerns in the examination process is defined as:
- performance of a candidate in any segment of the examination that could indicate the candidate's potential to be a danger to a patient.

Portfolio:	Pathways to Fellowship	Ref. No.	REG-2069
Team:	Examinations		
Title:	Fellowship Examination Eligibility and Examination Performance Review		

- 4.5.3. Poor Performance with safety concerns is defined as:
- a. identification by the relevant Specialty Court of Examiners of performance or behaviour of a candidate considered to be below the expected level of competence and that could indicate the candidate's potential to be a danger to a patient.

4.6. Reporting of Poor Performance, Safety Concerns and Poor Performance with Safety Concerns for Trainees (as defined in clause 3.5)

- 4.6.1. Within two working days of the meeting of the Full Court of Examiners, the Examinations Manager will notify the relevant STC/B. A copy will be provided to the Chair of CSET.
- 4.6.2. Within two weeks of receiving the feedback report the relevant STC/B Chair and nominated representative must conduct an interview with candidates.
- 4.6.3. During the interview, candidates must be advised of poor performance , safety concerns or poor performance with safety concerns as identified in the feedback report.
- 4.6.4. Within two weeks of the interview the relevant STC/B must provide report/minutes to the Chair of CSET and the Examinations Manager.
- 4.6.5. Trainees will be advised in writing of any remediation plan and/or additional examination requirements recommended by the relevant STC/B. A copy must be provided to the Examinations Manager.
- 4.6.6. The relevant STC/B may also seek advice and information from other parties, including (but not limited to) the Chair of CSET, the surgical supervisor and employer.

4.7. Reporting of Poor Performance, Safety Concerns and Poor Performance with Safety Concerns for SIMGs (as defined in clause 3.5)

- 4.7.1. Within two working days of the meeting of the Full Court of Examiners, the Examinations Manager will notify the relevant STC/B. A copy will be provided to the Chair of CSET, Examinations and SIMG Manager/Executive Officer for SIMGs Aotearoa.
- 4.7.2. Within two weeks of receiving the feedback report the relevant STC/B Chair and/or nominated representative must conduct an interview with candidates.
- 4.7.3. During the interview, candidates must be advised of poor performance , safety concerns or poor performance with safety concerns as identified in the feedback report.
- 4.7.4. Within two weeks of the interview the relevant STC/B must provide report/minutes to the Chair of CSET and the Examinations Manager, and SIMG Manager/Executive Officer for SIMGs Aotearoa.
- 4.7.5. The SIMG will be advised in writing of any remediation plan and/or additional examination requirements recommended by the relevant STC/B. A copy must be provided to the Examinations and SIMG Manager/Executive Officer for SIMGs Aotearoa.

Portfolio:	Pathways to Fellowship	Ref. No.	REG-2069
Team:	Examinations		
Title:	Fellowship Examination Eligibility and Examination Performance Review		

4.7.6. Any recommended changes to a the Interim Assessment Decision of a SIMG under a pathway to Fellowship will be considered by RACS

4.7.7. The relevant STC/B may also seek advice and information from other parties, including (but not limited to) the Chair of CSET, the Chair of the SIMG Committee, the Clinical Director SIMG Assessment and Support, Executive Officer for SIMGs Aotearoa, the surgical supervisor and employer.

4.8. Confirmation

4.8.1. Four weeks after a feedback report has been provided, the Examinations Manager will write to the relevant STC/B Chair requesting confirmation:

- a. that a documented remedial plan to address the issues of poor performance , safety concerns or poor performance with safety concerns was implemented;
- b. that supervision to address issues related to safety concerns was arranged for the Trainee, or SIMG if applicable; and
- c. whether reporting to the Medical Registration Authority is required.

4.9. Recommendations for Medical Registration Authority Reporting

4.9.1. If the relevant STB/C has concerns about patient safety and believes a candidate should be reported to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) or the MCNZ, it will make a recommendation to the Chair of CSET and the Censor-in-Chief.

4.9.2. Within two weeks of receiving a recommendation, the Censor-in-Chief and Chair of CSET to review the recommendations to decide an appropriate course of action.

4.9.3. If the recommendation is approved, the Censor-in-Chief will advise the Chief Executive Officer to notify the relevant medical authority.

4.9.4. If the recommendation is not approved, the Censor-in-Chief will ask the STC/B to review their assessment.

4.9.5. Candidates will be informed in writing of the Censor-in-Chief's decision. A copy must be provided to the Examinations and the SIMG Manager.

4.10. Eligibility and Approval Following Poor Performance and/or Safety Concerns

Trainees will be approved to present for the FEx following an assessment of poor performance, safety concerns or poor performance with safety concerns when:

4.10.1. The relevant STC/B is satisfied that the Trainee or SIMG has satisfactorily completed the recommended remediation plan and/or examination requirements.

4.10.2. There are no outstanding reports (from RACS or external bodies) regarding safety of practice in the clinical setting.

4.11. Non approval

Candidates will receive a full refund if an STC/B does not approve eligibility to present.

Portfolio:	Pathways to Fellowship	Ref. No.	REG-2069
Team:	Examinations		
Title:	Fellowship Examination Eligibility and Examination Performance Review		

4.12. Time Expired Applicants

4.12.1. Trainees

- a. Trainees who have not completed all prerequisite elements of their training program within the maximum term specified in the Trainee Registration and Variation regulation cannot apply to present for the FEx.

4.12.2. Specialist International Medical Graduates

- a. SIMGs under a pathway to Fellowship must have a valid Interim Assessment Decision at the time of the written component of the FEx.

5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Fellowship Examination Regulation
 Supervised Practice of Specialist International Medical Graduates in Australia and Aotearoa
 New Zealand Vocational Assessments of the SIMGs in New Zealand Regulation
 Trainee Registration and Variation Regulation
 Individual specialty training regulations

Approver Education Committee
Authoriser Council