

Division:	Education and Training Administration	Ref. No.	ETA-SET-012
Department:	Surgical Training		
Title:	Religious Observance		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The College conducts certain mandatory training and assessment activities outside of normal business hours, including during evenings and weekends. The College acknowledges that a participant may have a religious belief or specific religious occasion that may preclude their participation in a mandatory activity.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a process for an application by such a participant for the making of alternative arrangements.

2. KEYWORDS

Religious; Observance; Beliefs; Trainees; Consideration

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Request for Alternative Arrangements on the basis of religious belief or obligation

- 3.1.1. A participant who is required to attend a scheduled training or assessment activity conducted by the College and whose religious beliefs or obligations will preclude him or her from participating may apply for the making of alternative arrangements, observing the following timelines:
- a. Examinations: no less than 90 working days before the date on which the examination (or, when conducted over multiple days, that date of the first component) is to be conducted;
 - b. All other mandatory assessments: no less than 30 days before the assessment (or, when conducted over multiple days, the date of commencement). Specialty Training Boards may specify alternative timelines for specific events, which will take precedence.
- 3.1.2. An application must include:
- a. Identification of the training or assessment activity which is the subject of the application
 - b. Description of the precise religious belief or obligation which falls at the same date and time as the above activity
 - c. The alternative arrangements requested
- 3.1.3. The application for consideration should be supported by a letter from an authoritative and appropriate religious authority in Australia or New Zealand.
- 3.1.4. Where consent, approval or dispensation may be available to a candidate to allow participation when otherwise in conflict with religious requirements, the candidate will be required to demonstrate reasonable efforts to obtain such consent, approval or dispensation.
- 3.1.5. The College reserves the right to seek clarification and advice from the religious organisation supporting the application, and from any other appropriate authority (i.e. an appropriate religious body or authority, an Equal Opportunity Commission or Anti-discrimination authority).
- “Religious belief” and associated terms have the meaning ascribed to them in relevant anti-discrimination legislation.

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3.2. Consideration of application

- 3.2.1. An application will be considered by the College Board, Committee or other body which administers the training or assessment activity.
- 3.2.2. An application received after the stipulated timeframe will not be considered.
- 3.2.3. The criterion is reasonableness. Therefore in considering alternative arrangements the College will take into account relevant factors including, but not limited to, the impact on the viability of the activity on participants and examiners, the availability of alternatives, the provision of health services, the integrity of the activity, additional costs and the availability of any religious dispensation.
- 3.2.4. Where alternative arrangements can be made but there is a financial impact on the College the reasonable costs may be payable by the applicant prior to the activity.
- 3.2.5. An applicant will be advised in writing of the College's decision.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Specialty Training Board regulations

Approver Education Board
Authoriser Council

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