



Clinical Assessment of IMG Surgeons A Guide for IMG Surgeons Undergoing Clinical Assessment by Supervision

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Introduction

This guide has been produced by the College as an aid for you while you complete your specialist assessment to achieve Fellowship of the College.

The College will have assessed you as “partially comparable” to an Australian and New Zealand trained surgeon and recommended that you complete the following in order to attain Fellowship of the college:

- satisfactorily complete 12-24 months of assessment of clinical practice
- participate in the College’s Professional Development Activities during this period
- pass the Fellowship Examination, and
- complete any up skilling training or courses as stipulated in your Final Recommendation
- Attend the College’s IMG Induction Workshop during your first 12 months of clinical practice

The College will have recommended that you find hospital employment suitable for conducting the clinical assessment and providing sufficient scope of practice to prepare you for the Fellowship Examination.

By now you will have written to the College accepting the recommendation. The College will have notified you of the requirements regarding submission of a position description assessment form and in relation to formal commencement of clinical assessment.

Who are your key College contacts during the clinical assessment period?

Your specialist assessments will be managed by the Department of IMG Assessments of the College. The key contact person during your clinical assessment is the Business Support Officer for Clinical Assessment.

The contact details are:

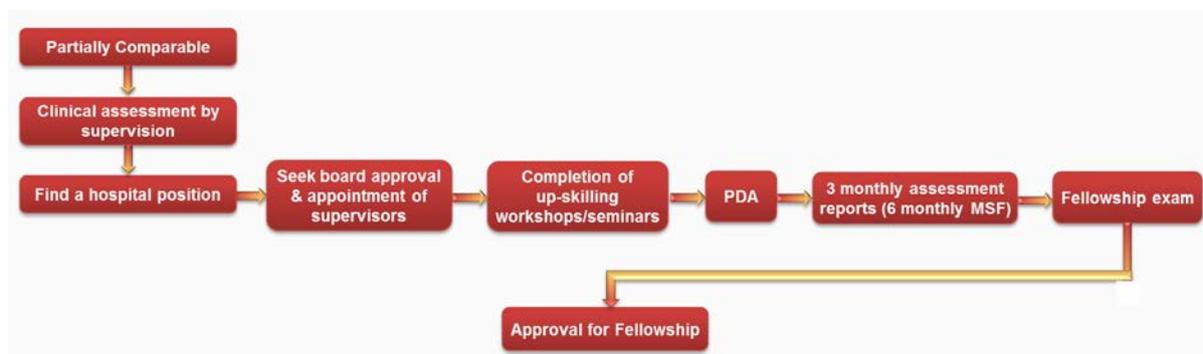
The Business Support Officer	
Department of IMG Assessments	
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons	Phone: +613 9249 1124
Surgeons’ Gardens	Fax: +613 9249 1240
Spring Street	Email:
	IMG.enquiries@surgeons.org
Melbourne VIC 3000	Web: www.surgeons.org

The other key contact during your clinical assessment will be your clinical assessors. They will be Fellows of the College appointed by the surgical specialty Board.

Overview

Assessment of clinical practice by supervision normally takes 12-24 months during which time you will be required to complete all components of the Final Recommendation. Figure 1 below presents an overview of the process.

Figure 1 – Overview of assessment of clinical practice by supervision



Finding suitable employment

Your first task is to find a suitable hospital position. You need to ensure that the position you are seeking for clinical assessment purposes provides:

- appropriate scope of work
- appropriate Fellows to provide clinical assessment
- opportunities for continuing education and preparation for Fellowship Examination
- infrastructure that supports clinical assessment

The College does not provide recruitment advice nor does it have an exhaustive list of positions available other than those positions published in the Surgical Positions Available section of the website. You may want to contact specialised recruitment agencies to assist in finding a suitable position. Further information on finding a job is available on www.doctorconnect.gov.au

Once you have found a position, you need to submit to the College a position description assessment form (PDAF) providing details so that the position can be assessed for its suitability to conduct the clinical assessment. The specialty board overseeing your assessment will undertake a review of the hospital position and confirm the suitability of the supervisors to undertake your clinical assessment.

Once the College has approved the hospital position, the clinical assessment period will formally commence (subject to the College's standardised three monthly reporting periods) and you have 4 years to complete the requirements for Fellowship.

Standardised three monthly reporting periods

All IMGs commencing clinical assessment are subject to the College's standardised three monthly reporting periods. The standard three monthly periods of assessment commence on 1 February, 1 May, 1 August or 1 November.

You nominate a commencement date of supervision to coincide with the one of the commencement dates listed above. You may still commence employment at any time whilst aligning supervision till formal clinical assessment begins.

IMGs who nominate a start date of supervision but start employment at a later date will have their commencement date default to the next quarterly start date.

Note for IMG surgeons in Area of Need positions

Area of Need positions are administered through the government health jurisdictions. Generally, an IMG surgeon who is in an Area of Need position is also undergoing assessment for Fellowship of the College. Information on the specialist pathway for Area of Need is available from Australian Medical Council and Medical Board of Australia.

Appointment of clinical assessors

You or your employing hospital may nominate two clinical assessors. The College, however, will make the final decision regarding the appointment. The clinical assessors will have Fellowship of the College in the discipline in which you are being assessed. Further information with regard to the role and responsibilities of Clinical Assessors can be obtained from the College's

- Clinical Assessors of IMGs policy
- A Guide for Clinical Assessors

available on the College's website www.surgeons.org

Purpose of clinical assessment

As you have been assessed as "partially comparable", the College will recommend that your clinical assessment will be by supervision.

Supervision is the monitoring and assessment of an IMG surgeon when the Clinical Assessor is at the same hospital as the IMG surgeon and can observe his or her practice directly on a day to day basis. The only exception where on-site supervision is not a requirement is when an IMG surgeon who is required to do on-call surgery. The IMG surgeon undertaking a period of surgical practice under supervision is required to have on-site supervision by two Fellows nominated by the assessing Specialty Board Chair. The Fellows are providing clinical assessment of the IMG surgeon to assess that he or she is safe to practise independently at the level of a specialist surgeon. The Clinical Assessors are aware that the IMG surgeon is required to present for the Fellowship Examination to provide evidence of comparability to the level of a specialist surgeon who is a Fellow of the RACS. Your clinical assessors will be aware that you are required to present for the Fellowship Examination and they will be able to provide you with feedback on your clinical performance and progress towards preparation for that exam.

Occasionally, it may not be possible to find two clinical assessors working at the same hospital, particularly if you are located in a rural or regional hospital. In such instances it may be necessary to appoint a clinical assessor from another hospital.

What is the role of the clinical assessor?

The role of your clinical assessor is to observe your work to see that you are safe to practice independently as a specialist surgeon. The clinical assessor will also assess whether you are practising at the level of a Fellow of the RACS on day one of practice. The clinical assessor is not "training" you.

It is envisaged that you will have regular contact via face-to face, email or telephone with your clinical assessors. This will enable you and your assessors to work together through various issues including, but not limited to:

- Identifying aspects of practice where you require support and assistance
- Negotiating plans of action in order to meet needs and goals

- Selecting Continuing Medical Education activities and audit options to complement and support specific aspects of your surgical practice
- Determining the focus and design of audit activities
- Reviewing the results of audit activities
- Addressing any deficiencies which are revealed as a result of audit activities and performance review

Receiving feedback

Meaningful feedback is at the heart of clinical assessment. It is a vital part of the assessment process where IMG surgeons are told how they are performing. It needs to be based on first hand observations of their performance and aims to provide you with an opportunity to clarify your strengths and weaknesses, to encourage self reflection, raise self awareness and plan for future development.

Feedback will be planned, not rushed, and wherever possible it will be given in a timely fashion, as close to the observed behaviour as possible. It will be specific and you will be told precisely the areas in which you have performed well. Where possible you will be given illustrative examples, for example;

“When you told the patient their diagnosis you used clear and simple explanations and checked for their understanding”.

Similarly your Clinical Assessors will be discussing areas that need to be improved. They will endeavour to be clear and specific; for example

“When you told the patient their diagnosis you used technical terms that they appeared not to understand, you were rushed and appeared insensitive to their concerns”.

Your clinical assessor will want to ensure that feedback provided to you is **specific** and **constructive** and **given in such a way that you will listen to and act on it**.

Your clinical assessors may ask questions about areas you believe you are performing well and areas where you think you could improve.

Quarterly clinical assessment review and reports

For the duration of your clinical assessment you will be required to meet quarterly with your clinical assessors for a performance review. Your clinical assessors are there to provide meaningful feedback on your clinical performance and your progress towards being ready to sit the Fellowship Examination. Therefore, it is important that you are honest in your reflections on performance and deal openly with identified issues so that you can improve your performance.

You will need to organise a meeting with each of your clinical assessors, separately. You and the clinical assessor will review your logbook data via MALT (Morbidity Audit and Logbooks Tool) and each clinical assessor will complete the progress report. You are both required to sign the reports.

In addition to undertaking quarterly (3-monthly) performance reviews, you will be required to undertake the following online assessment tools during your period of clinical assessment:

- 6-monthly Multi-Source Feedback (MSF)
- 3-monthly Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS) and
- 3-monthly Mini Clinical Examinations (Mini-Cex) assessments

Details for all these assessment tools are available on the College’s website.

The Department of IMG Assessments will record whether progress is satisfactory or unsatisfactory in your assessment record and will confirm this with you in writing.

At the end of each year you will receive a transcript of your progress to retain as a record.

Maintaining surgical standards

The College has implemented an internal review process to ensure that surgical standards for each surgical discipline are maintained with respect to IMG assessments. Each surgical and education training board has where possible appointed a representative to the Board to assist in the management of IMG specialist assessments. Normally, this is the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Board of Surgical Education and Training, although some specialty boards have two or more representatives (for example, Orthopaedics). This position is referred to as the IMG representative.

The Chair and/or the IMG representative review each IMG surgeon's assessment reports and logbook data to ensure that their performance meets the required standards.

Management of Unsatisfactory Performance

If the Chair and/or IMG representative determines that an IMG surgeon's performance is unsatisfactory the Department of IMG Assessments will contact the IMG in writing. The correspondence will be copied to the Clinical Assessors.

The Department of IMG Assessments will also schedule a performance counselling interview, which will be attended by the Chair and/or IMG representative, the IMG, and both the Clinical Assessors.

At the conclusion of that interview the following will be clearly identified:

1. Areas of unsatisfactory performance
2. The required standard of performance to be achieved, and
3. A Remedial Action Plan developed for the IMG by the Chair and/or IMG Representative.
This plan will be signed by the IMG and both Clinical Assessors.

Remedial Action Plan

Preparation of the Remedial Action Plan will be co-ordinated through the Department of IMG Assessments in consultation, the Specialty Chair and/or IMG representative following the performance counselling interview.

The plan fulfils four functions, which are;

1. To identify the areas in which an IMG's performance is below standard
2. Specify areas where up-skilling is required
3. Define the assessment method and criteria
4. Record the performance grade at the end of the rotation

The Remedial Action Plan will be used over the next three months and performance will be recorded on the progress report by each clinical assessor. The College's Business Support Officer will send a copy of the agreed plan to the IMG surgeon and the Clinical Assessors and this plan will be used during the next three-monthly rotation. As soon as the IMG surgeon and the Clinical Assessors have a copy of the Remedial Action Plan, the IMG surgeon will be required to attend a meeting with the Clinical Assessors to incorporate the education and assessment requirements needing development into the intentions for the term. The Clinical Assessors will notify the College that this meeting has occurred.

Throughout the term the Clinical Assessors will monitor and record the IMG surgeon's progress.

To prepare for the next clinical assessment review the Clinical Assessors will consult with medical and nursing staff concerning progress, to consolidate views. They will schedule a meeting with the IMG surgeon to discuss progress. The Clinical Assessors will write comments in the progress reports for each area where performance has been assessed as below standard. They will also record a performance grade.

Should subsequent identification of unsatisfactory performance in any area and/or including inadequate breadth and scope of clinical practice by the IMG be identified, the Specialty Chair and/or IMG representative must formally notify the IMG via the Department of IMG Assessments. The clinical assessors will also be notified. The Department of IMG Assessments will arrange a reassessment of the IMGs specialist and/or AoN assessment. The reassessment will be undertaken by the Specialty Chair and/or IMG representative, and Deputy Chair, Board of Surgical Education and Training (SET) or nominee. At the conclusion of reassessment notification may include:

- a) Review of the recommendation to the IMG to include an extended period of assessment of clinical practice.
- b) Review of the recommendation to the IMG to apply, to enter, the Surgical Education Training (SET) program. The IMG is not "partially comparable" but rather "not comparable".
- c) Withdrawal of College approval of the Area of Need position/hospital post.

This indicates the discovery that an IMG surgeon requires training and can no longer continue the specialist clinical assessment pathway. Such a decision is not made lightly and all efforts are made to help an IMG surgeon deemed "partially or substantially comparable" to reach the goal of attaining Fellowship of the College.

In order to clarify an IMG surgeon's performance the Chair and/or IMG representative may request an independent assessment or audit of the IMG surgeon's performance during the development process.

Professional Development Activities

All IMG surgeons undergoing clinical assessment are required to participate in the College's Professional Development Activities. This program is managed through the College's Department of IMG Assessments. Further information can be obtained from the Professional Development Opportunities for IMGs policy on the College's website.

Maintenance Of Professional Standards (MOPS)

An IMG must register for the MOPS program in January of the year following completion of clinical assessment if they have not attained fellowship, and remain in that program until Fellowship is attained or the pathway to Fellowship ceases.

Applying to present for the Fellowship Examination

The Fellowship Examination is managed by the College's Examinations Department. The prerequisites for eligibility are:

- Successful completion of nine months of clinical assessment
- Approval by the Specialty Chair and/or IMG representative

The exams are run two times a year in Australia and/or New Zealand and have deadlines for applications. Fees are payable.

For further information and contact details refer to the Fellowship Examination website, which can be located under “Examinations” in the “Surgical Education and Training” section of the College website.

Eligibility for Fellowship

When all requirements for Fellowship have been successfully completed the Specialty Chair and/or IMG Representative will review your specialist assessment reports and make a determination concerning recommendation for Fellowship. If you have been recommended for Fellowship, the College will notify you and forward to you information regarding making an Application for Admission to Fellowship.

Who can support you?

The College has experienced IMG Assessment managers and a Clinical Director of IMG Assessments to support you as you progress through your specialist assessment. Contact them for help and advice as required.

For matters relating to your clinical progress and preparation for the Fellowship Examination speak with your clinical assessors or the College staff at the Department of Examinations. Their contact details can be found on the College website.

What fees are payable for clinical assessment and what do they cover?

The fees for clinical assessment are set annually and published on the College website. There are two sets of fees; one for on-site clinical assessment and the other for off-site clinical assessment. Your fees should be on-site. The only exception will be if one of your clinical assessors is located at another hospital which is some distance away.

Once you have paid the annual fee, you will be entitled to the following College services:

- Surgical News magazine
- ANZ Journal of Surgery
- Password access to the members sections of the College website
- Access to elearning resources on College website
- Four formal review meetings per year with each of your clinical assessors and additional communications according to your assessment recommendations
- Access to surgical education and training material on a user pays basis
- Access to the College’s online assessment tools including MALT
- Administrative support from the Department of IMG Assessments in accordance with the requirements of your recommendation

Additional resources

The College provides some courses which are designed to assist IMG surgeons in their professional practice:

1. Care of the Critically Ill Surgical Patient (CCrISP)
2. Emergency Management of the Severe Trauma (EMST)
3. Critical Literature Evaluation and Research (CLEAR)
4. Non Technical Skills for Surgeons (NOTSS)
5. Training in Professional Skills (TIPS)
6. Statistics for Surgeons (STATS)
7. Laparoscopic skills course
8. Training in Professional Skills (TIPS)
9. Preparation for the Fellowship Examination (elearning resource)

Complaints and appeals

The College has implemented a formal process for handling complaints and appeals. These must be lodged within three months of receipt of notice of original decision.

Requests for review or reconsideration of College decision must be lodged in writing and sent to:

The Manager
IMG Assessments
The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Surgeons' Gardens
Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Complaints or appeals must be lodged in writing and sent to:

Chief Executive Officer
The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Surgeons' Gardens
Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Further details may be obtained by referring to the Appeals Mechanism policy on the College website.

Policies

The policies relevant to the clinical assessment period are:

- Specialist Assessment of International Medical Graduates in Australia
- Assessment of Clinical Practice in Australia
- Clinical Assessors of International Medical Graduates
- Professional Development Opportunities for IMGs
- Conduct of the Fellowship Examination
- Appeals Mechanism Policy

FORMS

Forms relevant to the clinical assessment period are:

- Position Description Assessment Form
- Progress Report
- Professional Development Activities

ONLINE ASSESSMENT FORMS

Details for all these assessment tools are available on the College's website

- DOPS
- Mini-Cex
- MSF

LOGBOOKS

Details on how to access the College's Morbidity Audit and Logbook Tool (MALT) for the recording of their surgical procedures is available on the College's website.

Additional resources

The College provides some programs which are designed to assist IMG surgeons in their professional practice. Please refer to College website for a complete listing of courses and workshops to assist you with your professional practice.