
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE



RACS Examination Statement

Friday 16 September, 2016

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) has finalised its investigation into a 2013 video recording that alleged serious concerns about the College's examination process and policies.

The complaint related to a secret, illegal recording made of one segment of a 2013 RACS Fellowship examination in one of the nine RACS specialties. All candidates who went through this examination section in May 2013 have since passed the examination and are Fellows of RACS.

RACS received the complaint in April 2016 and in May 2016 established a specifically constituted complaints committee to deal with it, consistent with RACS complaints procedures.

The committee included two senior surgeons and a senior, independent community member.

The committee investigated whether, in 2013, there was a breach of RACS examination procedures and whether the material on the tape reflected, or misrepresented, the actual candidate assessment.

The committee's investigation included specialist, independent analysis of the tape and related information. The analysis found that the video recording (which was the basis of the complaint) had been significantly manipulated to support the allegations, and did not accurately reflect what took place in the examination. All meta-data in the video had been removed in production. The committee reviewed the actual audio examination recording.

There was no evidence of bias in the way the examination was conducted and therefore the allegations, made on the basis of the video, were not proven. Minor breaches of examination policy were found, however the committee noted that the outcome of the assessment was not affected. These related to processes for recording scores and candidate identification.

RACS has reminded all examiners that its examination policy requires that all examination candidates must be de-identified in examinations, and that scores must be given contemporaneously. All RACS examiners are required to complete the RACS Examiner Training Course, and there has been 100 per cent compliance.

The examiners concerned did not participate in examination activities while RACS investigated these allegations.

Since April 2016, RACS has strengthened the examination process to protect its integrity, including:

- Increasing examiner education
- Introducing external observation (by examiners from another speciality)
- Introducing new policies, processes or practices including:
 - The introduction of observers to monitor examiner engagement and process
 - Review of Examiner Training Course, with a refresher course in development
 - Commitment to review the practice of consensus scoring
 - Examiner briefings on exam requirements and processes before each exam.

This matter has now been resolved and RACS will not comment further at this time.

Media inquiries: Greg Meyer 0429 028 933 or Nicole Newton 0407 998 611

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About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

www.surgeons.org

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