



RANZCOG

Trainee Selection Process

Guidelines and policy for selection of FRANZCOG trainees

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Background

The aim of the selection process is to recruit the best available trainees for the FRANZCOG Training Program, with the objective of producing specialist obstetricians and gynaecologists who best meet the community needs in women's health across Australia and New Zealand.

In 2011 the College introduced a national selection process in Australia and New Zealand in place of the previous state-based selection.

Each stage of the FRANZCOG Training Selection Process is highly competitive. Throughout the selection process the College bases its assessment of each candidate on consistent criteria.

As the New Zealand training year starts earlier than the Australian training year, the New Zealand selection process operates separately and earlier than the selection process in Australia; however, the basic process in both countries is similar in terms of selection criteria, scoring guidelines, and the core components of online CV/Application form, Applicant-nominated Referee Reports and Interview.

Scoring is based on the weightings listed in [Table 1](#).

Applicants are advised that, on average, there are three applicants for every training post available. The potential success rate has been approximately 30% in recent years.

Inevitably, in such a strongly competitive process, there will be strong applicants who will be unsuccessful in being selected for an interview or a post. The fact that an applicant does not receive an offer of interview or post does not necessarily mean that they were a poor candidate, but rather that other applicants scored more highly in some or all of the relevant areas assessed. Applicants are informed of this as part of the feedback process.

AMC Standards for Assessment and Accreditation of Specialist Medical Programs

The College ensures that all decisions pertaining to the selection process address the standards as outlined by the Australian Medical Council (AMC).

“The AMC does not endorse any one selection process; it recognises that there is no one agreed method of selecting the most appropriate trainees and supports diverse approaches that include both academic and vocational considerations.”¹

AMC Standard 7.1.1 states that “The education provider has clear, documented selection policies and principles that can be implemented and sustained in practice. The policies and principles support merit-based selection, can be consistently applied and prevent discrimination and bias.”¹

¹ Australian Medical Council, *Standards for Assessment and Accreditation of Specialist Medical Programs and Professional Development Programs by the Australian Medical Council 2015*, 3 September 2015. pg 18

Process

1. Capping of applications

- 1 a. From 2016 onwards, applicants cannot apply for the FRANZCOG Training Program more than three times. This cap *will not* be retrospectively applied.
- 1 b. Applying for the program in Australia as well as in New Zealand will count as two application attempts, even if applications are submitted in the same selection cycle.
- 1 c. An 'application' is considered official and will count towards the number of attempts when:
 - The online application form is successfully submitted; and
 - Eligibility requirements are verified by the College as having been met.
- 1 d. For the purposes of capping, an application can be withdrawn within ten days of the closing date without counting towards the applicant's number of attempts.
- 1 e. From 2019, applicants in their third and final application attempt, who rank within 10% of the required score for selection, will be granted one further attempt.

Example: 80 positions

Applicant A is on third attempt. Ranks 84th. Not selected this time, but granted a further attempt.

Applicant B is on third attempt. Ranks 115th. Not selected and not eligible for re-application.

2. Overall weighting of components

Australia

- 2 a. Selection for interviews will be determined by the overall score consisting of the following:
 - CV/Application form;
 - Applicant-nominated referee reports; and
 - Institutional Reference.
- 2 b. Offer of training positions will be determined by the final score, comprised of:
 - CV/Application form;
 - Applicant-nominated referee reports;
 - Institutional Reference;
 - Situational Judgement Test; and
 - Interview.

New Zealand

- 2 c. Selection for interviews will be determined by the overall score consisting of the following:
 - CV/Application form; and
 - Applicant-nominated referee reports.
- 2 d. Offer of training positions will be determined by the final score, comprised of:
 - CV/Application form;
 - Applicant-nominated referee reports; and
 - Interview.

Table 1. Weighting of the selection components at different stages of the process

Component	Selection for interview		Selection for position	
	AU	NZ	AU	NZ
CV/Application	40%	90%	20%	40%
Applicant-nominated Referees	20%	10%	10%	10%
Institutional References*	40%	-	20%	-
Situational Judgement Testing [^]	-	-	10%	-
Interview	-	-	40%	50%

[^] In Australia, *SJTs will be undertaken by applicants shortlisted for interview.*

[^] *In New Zealand, SJTs will be undertaken by applicants selected for interview as a trial only and will **not** be included as a scored component.*

* *Institutional References (IR) are utilised in Australia only. IR is **not** currently used in New Zealand.*

3. Trainee Selection Fees

- 3 a. All applicants will be required to pay a non-refundable application fee in order to apply for a training position. Access to the online form will only be granted after payment is confirmed.
- 3 b. Applicants selected for interview will be required to pay a non-refundable interview fee. Payment details and process will be notified to applicant at the time of offer of interview.

Selection fees are available on the College website.

4. Preferencing

Australia

- 4 a. Applicants indicate via their online application form their preferences for both Phase 1 and Phase 2.
 - Phase 1 – Applicants may preference **two** of the available posts: Provincial Integrated Training Program (PITP) Dubbo or Orange, Mackay and/or Bendigo; Integrated Training Program (ITP²) Newcastle; ACT and TAS.
 - Phase 2 – Applicants preference their **top three** remaining Australian states/territories, ie NSW, QLD, SA/NT, VIC and WA.
- 4 b. Applicants are not required to preference both Phase 1 and Phase 2. However, it is mandatory to preference a minimum of one state in Phase 2.
- 4 c. Applicants will only be considered for training posts in the location(s) for which they have indicated a preference.

² An Integrated Training Program (ITP) is a group of RANZCOG accredited hospitals which collectively provides the rotations undertaken by trainees during the first four years of the FRANZCOG Training Program.

New Zealand

- 4 d. Applicants indicate via the online form their preference for the NZ Integrated Training Programs (ITPs); Northern, Central and Southern.
- 4 e. Applicants may preference all or some ITPs. It is mandatory to preference a minimum of one ITP.
- 4 f. Applicants will only be considered for training posts in ITPs for which they have indicated a preference.

Conditions that apply to preferencing

- 4 g. The following conditions apply to selection for the abovementioned components:
 - i. If an applicant accepts an offer of a training position in New Zealand, they are automatically ineligible for selection in Australia.
 - ii. If an applicant accepts or declines an offer of a position in Australia – Phase 1, they are automatically ineligible for selection in Australia – Phase 2.
 - iii. If an applicant is not successful in being offered a position in New Zealand, they can apply for selection in Australia.
 - iv. If an applicant is not successful in Australia - Phase 1, they are still eligible for selection in Australia - Phase 2. This would **not** require a further interview. Phase 1 scoring will also count for Phase 2 selection.
 - v. Transfers from Phase 1 to Phase 2 training posts in Australia during Basic (Core) Training **will not** be considered.
 - vi. Upon commencement of the training program, the training /assessment requirements for all posts are identical, irrespective of whether the applicant entered via New Zealand, Australia: Phase 1, or Australia: Phase 2.

Preferencing PITP Posts

- 4 h. A position in the Provincial Integrated Training Program (PITP) may appeal to candidates who are currently based in rural and regional areas, who have worked in these areas recently or who have expressed a desire to pursue a career in rural and regional areas. The goals of the PITP are:
 - to produce a Fellow with the skills required to work in a provincial setting;
 - to enable medical practitioners who have a demonstrated commitment to rural health to undertake their specialist training and pursue a career in a regional area; and
 - to encourage growth in the rural and regional Obstetrics and Gynaecology workforce.
- 4 i. The following PITP positions may be available each year:
 - Bendigo PITP
 - Dubbo PITP
 - Orange PITP
 - Mackay PITP
- 4 j. Candidates must satisfy a minimum of one of the following eligibility criteria in order to apply for a PITP post:
 - Have lived at least five years in an approved regional/rural location* in Australia or New Zealand since the start of primary school education.
 - Awarded a Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS).

- Studied at medical school through the Bonded Medical Places (BMP) Scheme.
- Have worked a minimum of one year as a General Practitioner (GP) in a single approved regional /rural location* in Australia or New Zealand.
- Have undertaken a minimum of 12 months of clinical training in an approved regional/rural location* either as a medical student, intern, resident or registrar.

** In Australia, an approved regional/rural area is defined as one rated from RA 2-5 in the Australian Standard Geographical Classification - Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA).*

- 4 k. Applicants interested in applying for a PITP post, who do not meet any of the above criteria, are required to submit an “Expression of Interest (EOI)”. In the EOI, applicants will be asked to outline reasons they wish to apply for a provincial post.
- 4 l. Applicants in these circumstances may be required to undertake a phone interview.
- 4 m. Process will be determined once application numbers have been confirmed, ie if large number of EOIs received, phone interviews will be replaced by a paper-based assessment;
- Eligibility for PITP posts will be assessed by the Provincial Fellows Committee;
 - Applicants deemed eligible: may apply for a PITP post in Phase 1 of the RANZCOG Selection Process;
 - Applicants deemed ineligible: cannot apply for a PITP post. However, they can still apply for other Phase 1 positions.

5. CV/ Application

- 5 a. CV/Application forms are to be completed online via the College’s pro forma application form.
- 5 b. Printed or electronic versions of the form submitted via any other method will not be accepted.
- 5 c. Applications will not be accepted after the closing date.
- 5 d. The application form will include function for uploading supporting documentation where applicable.
- 5 e. Provision of documentary evidence is mandatory where indicated. Failure to attach documentary evidence will automatically invalidate selection points for that question.
- 5 f. Documentary evidence must relate ONLY to the relevant question.
- 5 g. Documentary evidence must be provided in PDF format.
- 5 h. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all attachments are checked and confirmed to be accessible files.
- 5 i. The application form may include declarations and/or statements which could influence or invalidate an application.
- 5 j. *The College will not tolerate false declarations. Information found to be misleading will result in immediate disqualification of the application, and a lifelong ban from making future applications.*
- 5 k. CV/Application scoring will be in accordance with the approved guidelines.
- 5 l. CV/Application scoring will be averaged by the number of assessors.
- 5 m. Where necessary, a clinical representative and/or the members of the Selection Committee may be consulted for guidance and/or clarification on content and scoring.

CV/Application scoring guidelines may be accessed via College website.

6. Referee Reports

- 6 a. Applicants will be asked to nominate a maximum of four referees when completing their online application.
- 6 b. Referees should include:
 - i. two who are Fellows of RANZCOG or holders of the NZ Postgraduate Diploma in Obstetrics and Medical Gynaecology (PGDipOMG), or a combination of both.
 - ii. should an applicant be unable to cite such practitioners as their referees, it is acceptable to list other consultants who are Fellows of Australian or New Zealand medical colleges with whom they have worked closely.
 - iii. RANZCOG Trainees who have completed Basic (Core) Training and are undertaking Advanced Training level or above are eligible to be referees.

Applicants are advised to use the most appropriate referees possible to support their application.

- 6 c. Referees will be contacted automatically when the applicant submits their final application.
- 6 d. Referees will only be contacted via email.
- 6 e. The referee report form can only to be completed online via the College's pro forma application form.
- 6 f. Printed or electronic versions of the referee report form submitted via any other method will not be accepted.
- 6 g. Referees and applicants will be given a minimum of one reminder of the pending deadline.
- 6 h. An online dashboard will provide applicants with the ability to track the number of referee reports that have been submitted in support of their application.
- 6 i. The applicant is responsible for providing a valid email address for each referee.
- 6 j. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that referees submit reports. The College will not follow-up outstanding reports.
- 6 k. In the event that a reference contains 50% or more 'insufficient opportunity to assess' (IOA), the report is considered invalid and the referee will be asked to either modify their responses, or 'opt-out' of being a referee.
- 6 l. There is no obligation for a referee to complete a report. Referees who choose to 'opt-out' must do so via the online form.
- 6 m. Where a referee chooses to 'opt-out' the applicant will be contacted and given the opportunity to nominate a replacement referee.
- 6 n. Newly nominated referees will not have an extension of time to complete the report. They will have until the official closing date only.
- 6 o. Referees are asked to rate the applicant using the 0-3 points scoring scale for a variety of attributes to reflect the skills and characteristics demonstrated by the applicant in relation to others at the same level.
- 6 p. Referee reports will not be accepted after the closing date.
- 6 q. Scoring of referee report forms will be averaged based on the following denominators:
 - i. Where four reports are received, the denominator for averaging will be four.
 - ii. Where one, two or three reports are received, the denominator for averaging will be three.

- 6 r. Reference reports are confidential between the College and the referee. At no time will reference reports be made available to applicants.

7. Situational Judgement Testing (SJT)

- 7 a. Situational Judgement Testings (SJTs) are designed to assess an individual's judgement regarding situations encountered in the workplace.
- 7 b. Applicants will be presented with a set of hypothetical work-based scenarios (via written online format) and asked to make judgements on possible responses.
- 7 c. Applicants' responses will be evaluated against a predetermined scoring key to provide a picture of their situational judgement in that particular context. An individual SJT question can assess several attributes per scenario such as interpersonal and communication skills, problem solving and teamwork, empathy and professional integrity, clinical reasoning and coping with pressure.
- 7 d. The SJT test may comprise of:
- i. Type A – Ranked question
The applicant is presented with scenarios followed by five possible outcomes. Applicants are asked to rank each response in order, from most appropriate (ranked as 1) to the least appropriate (ranked as 5) given the circumstances described in the scenario.
 - ii. Type B – Multiple-choice style question (select three options)
The applicant is presented with scenarios followed by a number of possible options. For each scenario, applicants are instructed to select the three options which together are the most appropriate response to the situation, given the circumstances described.
 - iii. Type C – Multiple choice question (select one option)
The applicant is presented with scenarios followed by five possible options. For each scenario, applicants are instructed to select the option which is the most appropriate response to the situation, given the circumstances described.
- 7 e. Applicants successful in being offered an interview will sit the SJT on the day of interview. In New Zealand, SJT results will not contribute to overall score. In Australia, SJT results will contribute to overall score as per weightings on [Table 1](#).
- 7 f. Applicants are prohibited from communicating information regarding STJ questions to anyone. If such is established, this will result in immediate disqualification of the application, and a lifelong ban from making future applications.

8. Institutional References (IR)

As part of selection to the training program, Institutional References (IR) will contribute to identifying applicants suitable for interview and selection to the training program.

Institutional References are not used in New Zealand.

- 8 a. In Australia, the College will contact sites where applicants have indicated that they have spent a minimum of 6 months (20 clinical weeks) in a pre-vocational O&G position between February of the year before application and June in the year of application.
- 8 b. Hospitals are provided with a list of relevant applicants who indicate that they have undertaken a prevocational O&G term at that site.

- 8 c. Hospital contacts are a combination of Heads of Unit or equivalent, ITP Coordinators and Senior Training Supervisors and/or RANZCOG Fellows. These contacts are confirmed by the College's Regional offices.
- 8 d. Applicants are ranked in order by hospital contacts in liaison with other consultants **and** senior registrars who are familiar with the pre-vocational O&G clinical performance of those listed. These rankings must not be made by one person.
- 8 e. In the event that two or more applicants are considered 'equal', the same ranking may be given to both.
- 8 f. In the event that an applicant listed has not undertaken pre-vocational O&G training at the hospital or who was yet to commence or complete the training period, hospitals are instructed to indicate this with 'Not Able to Rank'.
- 8 g. Once finalised, rankings must be signed by at least two Fellows of the College, one of whom must to be an ITP coordinator or a Training Supervisor.

9. Selection of applicants for interview

- 9 a. The averaged CV/Application form score, averaged Referee Report score and Institutional Reference (IR) score will be combined to give an overall 'shortlisting' score.
- 9 b. The CV/Application, referee report and IR scores will be scaled to ensure weightings as per [Table 1](#).
- 9 c. The combined 'shortlisting' score will be used to create a ranked list.
- 9 d. The number of interviews offered each year will be set by the RANZCOG Selection Committee and will be based on the maximum number deemed feasible in the light of available resources.
- 9 e. In Australia, shortlisted applicants will be offered an interview in the state of their first preference as nominated on their application form.
- 9 f. All interview offers will be made via email only.
- 9 g. Applicants will be provided with a 48-hour period within which to confirm their acceptance of the offer of an interview and process payment of interview fee.
- 9 h. Failure to comply with item 9g above will be regarded as a rejection of the offer.
- 9 i. Where an applicant rejects an offer or withdraws from interview, the next person on the ranked list will not be offered an interview.

10. The Interview

- 10 a. Dates for interviews in Australia and New Zealand will be set in accordance with appropriate local timelines.
- 10 b. All Australian interviews will take place on the same day.
- 10 c. All Australian interview panels will use the same questions.
- 10 d. Additional question(s) may be asked of Phase 1 Provincial ITP applicants.
- 10 e. In Australia, interviews will be held in each state capital where there is a regional office. Interviews may be held in additional locations on a needs basis.
- 10 f. In New Zealand, interviews will be held in a single location.
- 10 g. If necessary, interviews may be run over the course of two days. In these circumstances, separate sets of questions may be asked on each day.

- 10 h. Interview panels will be organised in consultation with the relevant Regional Training Accreditation Committee (TAC).
- 10 i. Interview panels will have a minimum of five members and a maximum of eight members.
- 10 j. Panels may include:
 - i. Fellows of the College; and
 - ii. a trainee representative; and
 - iii. a hospital or consumer representative (where appropriate).
- 10 k. Interview panels from one or more states or territories may be combined, subject to approval by the Selection Committee.
- 10 l. Interviews will be 15 minutes in duration.
- 10 m. Additional 5 minutes duration will be given to interviews for applicants of Provincial ITP (PITP) posts.
- 10 n. Interview questions and scoring criteria will be prepared by the Education Strategy Committee, or a nominated panel.
- 10 o. A printed copy of questions will be provided to applicants at the time of interview. This is for reference only and must not be removed from the interview room.
- 10 p. Summarised information contained in the 'Clinical Experience' section of the applicant's CV/Application form will be made available to panel members. This information includes the following: training and employment history together with, location, duration and dates.
- 10 q. Each interview panel member will score the applicant as per the scoresheet provided.
- 10 r. Interview scores will then be combined and averaged by the number of panel members for each applicant.
- 10 s. Regional Office staff will record and collate interview scores and submit them to College House.
- 10 t. Interview scores will be standardised against the national mean for each panel.
- 10 u. Applicants are prohibited from communicating information regarding interview questions to anyone prior to the termination of interviews. If such is established, this will result in immediate disqualification of the application, and a lifelong ban from making future applications.
- 10 v. The Chair of the Interview Panel or the Interviewer responsible for asking the question may elect to interrupt the Interviewee during an answer in the interest of completing all questions in the allotted time.

11. Overall scoring and ranking

- 11 a. In Australia, the averaged CV/Application, averaged referee, Situational Judgement Testing (SJT), Institutional Reference, and standardised interview scores will be weighted as per in [Table 1](#) to produce the overall score and rank.
- 11 b. In New Zealand, the CV/Application, Referee Report and standardised interview scores will be weighted as per in [Table 1](#) to produce the overall score and rank.

12. Matching/allocation of posts

National

- 12 a. Allocation to training posts is based on national ranking and preference.
- 12 b. Prior to the date of interviews, all Regional TAC Chairs will be required to inform College House of the number of available first-year training posts for the coming training year in their state/region.
- 12 c. Where there are 'x' positions available nationally, the top 'x' ranked applicants will be prioritised for matching to positions.
- 12 d. Higher ranked applicants will be prioritised for positions in their state of first preference.
- 12 e. Lower ranked applicants may be offered positions in the state of their second or subsequent preference.
- 12 f. Where an applicant has preferenced a limited number of states, and all positions in that/those state/s have been allocated to a higher ranked applicant, the applicant will not be awarded a position on the training program.
- 12 g. Should positions be available due to applicants in the 'top x' missing out as a result of limited preferencing, the next ranked applicant(s) who has preferenced the state where a position is available will be offered the post.
- 12 h. Applicants will receive **one** offer only.
- 12 i. Applicants will have a 48-hour period within which to confirm their acceptance of the offer of a post.
- 12 j. Failure to confirm acceptance of the offer of a post within the 48-hour window will be regarded as a rejection of the offer.

State-based matching to ITPs

- 12 k. A list of applicants successful in national selection will be provided to each Regional TAC Chair in rank order.
- 12 l. Individual scoring or rank will not be provided.
- 12 m. Where there is more than one ITP in a state, preference collection and matching to ITPs is the responsibility of the relevant Regional TAC.
- 12 n. Where state preference matching is required, the Regional TAC may take into account:
 - i. applicant rank in the national selection process; and/or
 - ii. applicant preference ranking of ITPs; and/or
 - iii. hospital/ITP preference ranking of applicants.
- 12 o. Local employment processes may involve further employment related requirements. This may include additional application forms, collection of referee reports, interviews, police checks and/or other relevant information.
- 12 p. Offers of local ITP positions will be made by the relevant regional TAC Chair.
- 12 q. Applicants will have a 48-hour period within which to confirm their acceptance of a local hospital/ITP offer.
- 12 r. Failure to confirm acceptance of a local hospital/ITP offer within the 48-hour window will be regarded as a rejection of the offer.

- 12 s. The College will provide the employing authority with a summarised CV/Application form for each of the successful applicants upon request.
- 12 t. Information relating to nominated referees, referee reports, scoring, ranking and any other detail deemed confidential and/or irrelevant will not be provided to employing authorities.

13. Securing Hospital Employment

- 13 a. Whilst the College makes every effort to ensure that participating hospitals will accept the outcome of the selection process, the College does not have the power to direct a hospital to employ a specific applicant.
- 13 b. Having been matched to a hospital post within an ITP in a given state, the applicant is responsible for securing employment with that hospital by commencement of the relevant training year.
- 13 c. Should a hospital choose not to employ an applicant, they may apply to the College for permission to make the place available to the highest ranked applicant on the merit list who has preferenced the relevant state. Such permission may be granted on a case-by-case basis upon assessment by the Chair of the RANZCOG Selection Committee.

14. Merit list

- 14 a. All unsuccessful applicants will be kept on a merit list in the event a position becomes available prior to commencement of the second semester in the year immediately following application. After this time, the merit list becomes null and void.
- 14 b. Applicants who had been offered a training position but could not secure employment will be placed on the merit list. Applications from candidates under these circumstances will **not** count towards capping.
- 14 c. If during, or after, the selection process a place becomes available because a position has been rejected, an applicant defers, and/or a new position is created, that place will be offered to the highest ranked applicant who has not been offered a position and who has preferenced the state where the position is available. This does not include applicants who may have been offered a position previously and rejected it.

15. Feedback

Feedback will be provided to all applicants unsuccessful in the selection process as follows:

- 15 a. For applicants who were not successful in obtaining an interview, a feedback letter will provide the applicant's ranking (in deciles relative to other applicants) for CV/Application, Referee Reports and Institutional Reference (Australia only).
- 15 b. For applicants who obtained an interview but were not successful in obtaining a training place, a feedback letter will provide the applicant's ranking (in deciles relative to other applicants) for CV/Application, Referee Reports, Institutional Reference (Australia only), SJT (Australia only) and Interview AND for interview alone.

16. Deferral of commencement of training

Applicants who are offered and accept a place in the FRANZCOG Training Program may apply, *in exceptional circumstances*, to defer commencement of training. If applicants wish to apply for deferment under the terms of the *RANZCOG Deferral of Training policy*, they must notify the

Executive Officer at the relevant RANZCOG Regional Office no later than four weeks prior to commencement of the relevant training year.

The RANZCOG policy on deferral of training is available on the College website.

17. Appeals

As with all College decisions, applicants have the right to seek reconsideration, review and/or appeal of College decisions pursuant to the *Exceptional Circumstances, Special Consideration & Reconsideration Policy* and the *RANZCOG Appeals Procedures* as applicable.

All processes are handled confidentially and are conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. Additionally, they serve to provide a mechanism by which any individual who is dissatisfied with a College decision can seek redress without fear of reprisal.

These policies may be accessed via the College website.

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