



# Policy on prejudicial relationships

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This statement has been developed and reviewed by the Training and Accreditation Committee and approved by the RANZCOG Board and Council.

**Disclaimer** This information is intended to provide general advice to practitioners. This information should not be relied on as a substitute for proper assessment with respect to the particular circumstances of each case and the needs of any patient. This document reflects emerging clinical and scientific advances as of the date issued and is subject to change. The document has been prepared having regard to general circumstances.

**First endorsed by RANZCOG: February 1998**

**Current: November 2018**

**Review due: November 2021**

**Background:** This statement was first developed by Training and Accreditation Committee in February 1998 and most recently reviewed in November 2018.

**Funding:** The development and review of this statement was funded by RANZCOG.

In developing this statement of policy, principles and procedures, the aim of the RANZCOG Council is to both protect Fellows, Members and RANZCOG staff in the performance of their duties related to training and assessment, and to safeguard the interests of trainees enrolled with the RANZCOG (in MRANZCOG/ FRANZCOG, Subspecialty, or Certificate of Women's Health (CWH), DRANZCOG and DRANZCOG Advanced training programs).

Emphasis is placed on the ethical responsibility not to abuse power, trust, and access to training positions or resources in relationships between RANZCOG trainees and those appointed or employed by the RANZCOG to trainer, assessor or supervisory roles. There is the potential for conflicts of interest, real or perceived, to occur when the trainer/assessor/supervisor is in a position of power over the trainee. A prejudicial relationship has the potential to affect both the trainee involved and other trainees in the relevant institution and/or the relevant training program.

Health department and individual hospital policies regarding equal opportunity and sexual harassment, and Medical Board codes of practice may also be relevant in this context.

It is clear that both trainees and trainers/assessors/supervisors have rights and responsibilities within this ethical framework. Teaching and supervisory positions carry with them an implied ethos of exemplary behaviour towards those entrusted to them for training and assessment. Complementing this is the expectation that trainees, conduct themselves with appropriate professionalism in their interaction with trainers/assessors/supervisors.

Wide publicity, discussion and regular review of the content of these guidelines is encouraged so that RANZCOG fellows, members, trainees and College staff will understand the issue as one of professional conduct and safeguards and not as an invasion of privacy.

### **Ethical Obligations for trainers/ supervisors/ assessors:**

The following documents published by the RANZCOG should be used to guide the parties involved in the trainee/trainer/supervisor/assessor relationship(s):

- (1) **Re-accreditation of Hospitals in the FRANZCOG Training Program: Standards and Procedures [for FRANZCOG training]**
- (2) **Standards for the Accreditation of CGO/COGU/CMFM/CREI/CU Training Units [for Subspecialty training]**
- (3) **RANZCOG Code of Ethical Practice**

If doubt exists regarding the appropriate application of guidelines (particularly where uncertainty may adversely affect a trainee), trainers, supervisors and assessors are required to discuss the matter with the Chair of the relevant RANZCOG committee (i.e. the Chair of the relevant Regional/New Zealand Training Accreditation Committee, and, where necessary, the Chair of the College Training Accreditation Committee in the case of MRANZCOG/FranzCOG training; the Chair of the relevant Subspecialty Committee in the case of Subspecialty training; and, in the case of CWH/DRANZCOG/DRANZCOG Advanced training, the Chair of the Training, Accreditation and Recertification Subcommittee of the Conjoint Committee for the Diploma of Obstetrics and Gynaecology).

Trainers, supervisors and assessors must declare all personal or immediate family interests, or a relationship involving financial interests, with a trainee which are relevant to the integrity of the appropriate training program to the Chair of the relevant RANZCOG

committee (as listed above). Examiners must declare all personal or immediate family interests, or a relationship involving financial interests, which are relevant to the integrity of the RANZCOG examination process to the Chair of the Education and Assessment Committee (in the case of the MRANZCOG or CWH/DRANZCOG examination process) or the Chair of the relevant Subspecialties Committee (in the case of Subspecialty examinations).

If a personal, immediate family or financial interest with a trainee does exist, a Fellow, Member or employee of the RANZCOG shall not take part in any of the following matters in relation to that trainee, or any other trainee who may be affected by that relationship:

- selection for entry into FRANZCOG training;
- selection for any RANZCOG approved training post;
- assessment procedures;
- training supervision or co-ordination of an Integrated Training Program;
- selection for any prize.

Trainers, supervisors and assessors should not ask for, nor encourage, the giving of any form of benefit in connection with their official duties. They should avoid situations where the acceptance or giving of any form of benefit may be seen to be a conflict of interests with official duties. Benefits may be defined to include gifts, gratuity, remuneration, allowance, fee, subsidy, consideration, free service and entertainment.

Trainers, supervisors and assessors should not disclose official information to any unauthorised persons or organisations without the authority to do so, unless the disclosure is permitted in the ordinary discharge of official duty, or the release is authorised by the trainee concerned. Employers do not have the automatic right to access RANZCOG Training and Accreditation data regarding a trainee.

### **Appointments**

All training and examination appointments are made on behalf of or by the RANZCOG, and *not* by individual institutions.

### **Complaints Procedure**

In the event that a prejudicial relationship occurs, or is perceived to have occurred, and is not dealt with by the RANZCOG trainer/assessor/supervisor stepping aside from his/her position, the following procedure should occur:

- The matter should be reported to the Chair of the relevant RANZCOG committee (as listed above).
- If the relevant Chair or Chairs are unable to resolve the matter, the relevant Chair(s) must report the matter to the RANZCOG Standards and Complaints Committee for further assessment and appropriate action.

### **Appendix Full Disclaimer**

This information is intended to provide general advice to practitioners, and should not be relied on as a substitute for proper assessment with respect to the particular circumstances of each case and the needs of any patient.

This information has been prepared having regard to general circumstances. It is the responsibility of each practitioner to have regard to the particular circumstances of each case. Clinical management should be responsive to the needs of the individual patient and the particular circumstances of each case.

This information has been prepared having regard to the information available at the time of its preparation, and each practitioner should have regard to relevant information, research or material which may have been published or become available subsequently.

Whilst the College endeavours to ensure that information is accurate and current at the time of preparation, it takes no responsibility for matters arising from changed circumstances or information or material that may have become subsequently available.