1. Purpose and Scope

This policy relates to the mentoring of Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) who may request assistance from the College in finding an appropriate mentor, or for those SIMGs who may be experiencing difficulty in their training/personal situations and would, in the opinion of their Supervisor and SIMG Assessment Committee Chair, in consultation with the SIMG, benefit from having a mentor for a specified period.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate processes are in place for the mentoring of SIMGs in the above categories, in accordance with the College’s commitment to providing SIMGs with appropriate support in the workplace throughout their training. The workplace includes practice sites in public and private hospitals and private practice settings.

It is not the purpose of this policy to formally allocate a mentor to every SIMG in training, but to facilitate the provision of a mentor where required or requested.

2. Definitions

2.1 Specialist International Medical Graduate (SIMG)

SIMGs whose qualifications are assessed as either Substantially or Partially Comparable to an Australian trained obstetrician and gynaecologist or whose qualifications are assessed as either equivalent to, or as satisfactory as, those of an obstetrician and gynaecologist vocationally trained in New Zealand, may enter a pathway toward Fellowship of the College.

For the purposes of this policy, SIMGs within such a pathway to Fellowship in Australia or New Zealand will be referred to as SIMGs.

Depending on the requirements of the pathway prescribed following their initial assessment, SIMGs may be required to satisfactorily complete a period of oversight or training with either a practice supervisor or training supervisor. For the purposes of this policy, a period of oversight or training will be referred to as training and a practice supervisor or training supervisor will be referred to as a Supervisor.

2.2 What is mentoring?

For the purposes of this policy, mentoring is defined as a formal professional and confidential relationship in which, by mutual consent, an experienced person in the discipline of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and with appropriate empathetic skills (the mentor) assists and supports another person in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the professional and/or personal growth of that person.

The mentoring role is entirely separate from the formal Supervisory role of the Supervisor and does not replace that role. The SIMG remains under the supervision of a Supervisor throughout the period they are being mentored.

2.3 Who can be a mentor?

For the mentoring of an SIMG in training, a mentor may be:

- A Fellow of the RANZCOG with experience of the SIMG training as a SIMG on the pathway, a Supervisor or a consultant who has worked with SIMGs but is not the SIMG’s Head of Department or their formal Supervisor and is not involved in conducting their report, formal appraisal or assessment. The Fellow may or may not be located at the SIMG’s workplace. It is not advisable that a Fellow with a current role in the oversight of the SIMG pathway such as the Chair or a Member of the SIMG Assessment Committee or Assessor panel should act in the role of mentor.
• In many instances, the mentor will be known to the SIMG and specifically requested by them. In those instances where the SIMG has been advised that a mentor would be appropriate, the mentor may not be known to the SIMG but could still be appointed their mentor, subject to the agreement of the SIMG.

2.4 When should a mentor be considered?

A mentor may be appointed if any of the following circumstances apply:

1. By SIMG request

The SIMG undertaking training or a period of oversight/supervision believes that their training would benefit from the guidance, advice and support of a mentor, usually for a defined period e.g. a specific time frame of 6-12 months of practice, or as an ongoing arrangement and the SIMG makes such a request to the College, see Item 4 below.

This perceived benefit may relate to any of the following areas:

- clinical training
- assessment
- supervision
- interaction with consultants, fellow SIMGs, other health professionals, patients
- examinations
- career objectives
- personal difficulties
- a combination of any of the above or
- any other area identified by the SIMG as requiring the assistance of a mentor.

2. By Supervisor request

If the SIMG is perceived by their Supervisor or Head of Department in consultation with the SIMG Assessment Committee Chair to be experiencing difficulties in any of the above areas and may benefit from the guidance, advice and support of a mentor, and the SIMG is agreeable to such a mentoring arrangement. In such instances, the appointment of a mentor must be with the knowledge of the relevant Supervisor, Head of Department and the SIMG Assessment Committee Chair.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Responsibilities of the Mentor

Note: The Mentor has no role in the formal assessment of the SIMG.

A RANZCOG mentor has the following responsibilities:

• To treat all discussions with the SIMG as confidential, except where the following applies:
  - The SIMG has agreed that the mentor may discuss specific issues raised with another party who may be able to provide assistance and advice
  - The mentor, as a fellow practitioner, has a legal obligation to make a mandatory notification to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) or the New Zealand Medical Council (as applicable) if discussions with the SIMG reveal that the SIMG has behaved in a way that constitutes notifiable conduct in relation to the practice of their profession. Notifiable conduct is defined as: practising while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs; sexual misconduct in the practice of the profession; placing the public at risk of substantial harm because of an impairment (health issue); or placing the public at risk because of a significant departure from accepted professional standards. In such instances, the mentor must advise the SIMG that mandatory notification will occur.

• To focus on assisting the SIMG to develop professionally and/or personally in the identified areas. As such, the mentor does not evaluate the SIMG or conduct reports, formative appraisals or summative assessments.
• To be prepared to invest time and effort in advising and supporting the SIMG either through scheduled face-to-face meetings or other communication as agreed with the SIMG such as telephone, email, Skype, etc. and to give the SIMG adequate notice if not available for a scheduled meeting

• To be a good listener and provide encouragement and support

• To act as a sounding board with whom the SIMG can discuss ideas and concerns, clarify problems and suggest possible alternative approaches

• To provide appropriate guidance and advice based on their professional and personal knowledge and experiences

• To create a safe environment in which the SIMG feels free to discuss their concerns openly and honestly, without worrying about possible negative consequences for their current or future training positions

• To treat the SIMG with respect and courtesy

• To be aware of and utilise relevant information and resources that would assist the SIMG, or suggest resources or persons who may be of further assistance to the SIMG

• To be a role model with respect to collegiality and appropriate professional conduct

3.2 Responsibilities of the SIMG in the Mentoring Relationship

In this role, the SIMG has the following responsibilities:

• To be open and honest with the mentor about their concerns

• To accept the guidance and advice offered by the mentor in a courteous and non-defensive manner

• To treat all discussions with the mentor as confidential

• To give the mentor adequate notice if unavailable for a scheduled discussion.

4. Appointment of Mentors

The process for the appointment of a mentor is as follows:

• If the SIMG wishes to request a mentor and has identified an appropriate person for this role, as defined in this policy, they should make this request to their Supervisor or Head of Department or the SIMG Assessment Committee Chair. If the SIMG has requested a mentor but is unable to nominate an appropriate person, the Supervisor or Head of Department or SIMG Assessment Committee Chair may advise the SIMG of possible mentors.

• If the SIMG has not requested a mentor but, in the opinion of the Supervisor, Head of Department, or the SIMG Assessment Committee Chair a mentor is considered advisable, this proposal must be discussed with the SIMG and possible mentors suggested. The SIMG must be agreeable to the proposal and to the nominated mentor. There is no penalty if the SIMG does not agree to the proposal for a mentor.

• All requests for a mentor by a SIMG or a Supervisor shall be kept on file by the SIMG Mentoring Coordinator.

• The Supervisor or SIMG Assessment Committee Chair is responsible for liaising with the SIMG’s proposed mentor to ascertain if they are willing to act in this capacity. If the person approached is willing to take on this role the SIMG should be advised accordingly. The mentor is responsible for making the initial contact with the SIMG to arrange a meeting. Subsequent meetings are negotiable between the mentor and SIMG.

• The appointment of a mentor does not in any way replace the role of the SIMG’s Supervisor. Throughout the mentoring period the SIMG must continue to be supervised by their appointed Supervisor.
The College should be advised by the Supervisor or Head of Department of the establishment of the mentoring relationship and the date when this was agreed to. The SIMG Mentoring Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that this information in placed on the SIMG’s record.

5. Completion of Mentoring Relationships

The completion of a mentoring relationship can occur for any of the following reasons:

- The mentoring relationship has worked successfully and the SIMG and/or mentor believe that ongoing mentoring is no longer needed.
- The mentoring relationship has worked successfully but the SIMG and/or mentor believe that the SIMG’s changing situation or needs require mentoring from another appropriate person better equipped to assist the SIMG.
- Either the SIMG or the mentor, or both, believe that the mentoring arrangement is not working. Mutual consent must at all times be the basis of the mentoring relationship.

The process for the completion of the mentoring relationship is as follows:

- The SIMG and the mentor discuss the completion.
- The SIMG advises the Supervisor or Head of Department accordingly.
- The SIMG notifies the SIMG Mentoring Coordinator of the completion.
- The SIMG Mentoring Coordinator records the completion of the mentoring relationship in the SIMG’s file.
- The SIMG Mentoring Coordinator advises the SIMG Assessment Committee Chair of the completion.

Approved by: SIMG Assessment Committee
Date Approved: 30 July 2014
Review Date: The Board shall review this policy every two years