

# Overseas Trained Specialists & Area of Need

## Assessor/Community Representative Workshop

An educational workshop for overseas trained specialist and area of need (OTS/AoN) assessors and community representatives was facilitated at College House in May 2009. An important achievement of this workshop was that it provided an opportunity for a valuable forum of discussion and assisted in maintaining consistency within the OTS assessment process.

During the past year, there has been a review of current practice and significant changes were introduced to assist the OTS assessors in their role for the assessment of overseas trained specialists. An assessor procedure manual was implemented as a reference tool, which included information relating to the interview process, guidelines and conflicts of interest. The assessors have found it clarifies the assessment procedure and associated policies defining what is expected of the role of an OTS/AON assessor.

## Community Representative Workshop

The community representatives attended a workshop at RANZCOG to review the community representative questions asked during the OTS/AoN interviews. The questions were reviewed and changes were implemented, with some new questions added and others removed. The new questions are to be introduced by the end of 2009.

## Recruitment of Assessors and New Criteria for Recruiting Assessors

In order to respond effectively to the rapid increase in the number of OTS/AoN applications received for specialist assessment, the OTS/AoN Committee have agreed to introduce further interviews, with the first additional interview session scheduled for 1 September 2009. To address this increase in demand in an effective timeframe, the OTS/AoN Committee has agreed to recruit additional Fellows as assessors. Planning for this has been executed and the new criteria were presented at the committee's meeting in September 2009.

## OTS Training Portfolio

The OTS Training Portfolio was introduced in 2008. It provides a cumulative record of an individual OTS' specific training needs as identified through interview, examination, supervisor reports and self-evaluation. The portfolio relates these needs directly to the core competencies derived from the RANZCOG curriculum and provides practical guidance on how these competencies might be both recognised and addressed. In doing this, it becomes the key mechanism for training supervisors to activate training initiatives in response to identified areas of need.

## Completion of Support Infrastructure Programs

The Department of Health and Ageing-funded Support Infrastructure Program (SIP) for overseas trained specialists is now complete and final reports were submitted in June 2009. A number of initiatives developed under this program have been integrated into College processes and will continue to benefit both overseas trained specialists and RANZCOG Trainees. The OTS Training Portfolio is now the key training document for OTS Trainees. The OTS Training Supervisor Workshop will continue to provide relevant support and training. The online.ranzcog and Trainee Connect website now provides an extensive range of online resources which is under continuing development.

## Australian Medical Council and Joint Standing Committee for Overseas Trained Specialists

With recent changes introduced Australia-wide by the Australian Medical Council (AMC) and the Joint Standing Committee for Overseas Trained Specialists (JSCOTS), the RANZCOG has been able to broaden its relationship and communications with the AMC and JSCOTS. While there have been many changes made at their request, the RANZCOG has ensured that a transparent assessment process is in place, in the interest of quality patient healthcare.

## Consistency of Interviews Between New Zealand and Australia

The RANZCOG's role as Branch Advisory Body (BAB) for the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) in the assessment of overseas trained specialists has now been ratified. The College conducts the assessments of eligible OTS candidates for the MCNZ and provides advice in relation to their suitability for vocational registration as a specialist O and G in New Zealand. The College's assessment panel also determines suitability for Fellowship of the College and reports to the RANZCOG OTS/AoN Assessment Committee. To ensure consistency of assessment across the two jurisdictions, a New Zealand representative now sits on the OTS/AoN Assessment Committee and representatives from both Australia and New Zealand are eligible to sit on either of the assessment panels. This has led to a much closer, positive working relationship between the two jurisdictions.

### **Dr Chris Hughes**

Chair, OTS/AoN Committee

### **Sonya Andrew**

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