

# Education and Assessment

The past year has seen changes at two levels: the ongoing monitoring, fine-tuning and incremental enhancement of the College's education and assessment programs and the initiation of a more systematic review of the curriculum within which these programs exist.

## RANZCOG Curriculum

The Examination Committee has been renamed the Education and Assessment Committee and its Terms of Reference have been altered in order to better facilitate oversight of the curriculum, including its review and development. A formal review and evaluation of the curriculum has commenced. Although a cohort of Trainees has yet to complete training since the introduction of the RANZCOG Curriculum, such reviews are a necessary part of the Australian Medical Council accreditation process of the College training program. There is now sufficient experience and data available to begin an evaluation of at least the Integrated Training Program (ITP).

## Membership Examinations

A structured feedback mechanism has been adopted for the short answer question component of the MRANZCOG written examination. Examiners now complete not only a score sheet for each question they mark, but also a feedback form that, while fast and easy to fill out, provides a wealth of information on the performance of the candidate and of the question itself. The implementation of this feedback mechanism has also permitted a trial of a Rothmans-style standard-setting method for the paper, for which the initial results are encouraging. The concurrent trial of an Angoff-style standard-setting method is continuing.

Another significant development has been the decision to make past examination questions more readily available in order to aid candidates in their preparations for the examination.

With regard to the Membership Oral Examination, work has centred on how best to accommodate the increased numbers of candidates who are now presenting for the examination, with an emphasis continuing to be placed on the recruitment of more examiners.

## Communication Skills

The College offers a communication skills workshop to Trainees in the first two years of training. In the opinion of the Education and Assessment Committee, Trainees are well equipped with regard to communication skills and no further formal training, nor any formal assessment, is required. A voluntary assessment mechanism has, however, been made available for use with any Trainee who is identified as having problems with communication. Such a mechanism is primarily intended as a tool to facilitate feedback.

## Research Project

Two parallel courses of action have been undertaken to assist Trainees in meeting the research requirements of the curriculum. The first is an expansion of the exemption criteria. Trainees may now gain exemption if they have completed an honours year in the biomedical sciences or if they have previously published research of a standard expected for the Research Project. The second course of action is a decision to focus assistance on Trainees at a local level.

Rather than taking a centralised approach, the College has decided that resources and energy are best directed at better equipping training supervisors to support their Trainees. It is anticipated that these efforts will start to bear fruit in the coming year.

## Ultrasound

A new In-hospital Clinical Assessment has been introduced. This is a four-part assessment that more closely reflects current ultrasound practice.

A new Flexible Learning Program (FLP) module is currently being formulated. This represents a significant departure from the format of current modules, in that it consists of a series of online lectures, incorporating both audio and visuals, along with multiple choice questions and suggestions for further reading.

## Assessment of Surgical Skills

In keeping with the College's practice of continually reviewing and, where necessary, revising the components of its training and assessment program, changes have been made to the assessment of surgical skills. It was agreed that 'vaginal delivery' be required as a procedure in its own right; that 'repair of episiotomy or other perineal trauma' form a separate basic procedure; and that midwives will be able to assess Trainees on their competence to perform vaginal delivery (all other procedures can only be assessed by Fellows of the College).

## Subspecialties

In the subspecialties area, revisions to regulations pertaining to the Research Project have been made. Additionally, efforts have been made to further improve subspecialty examinations. For example, a workshop on writing quality short answer questions was held for examination and committee coordinators at College House.

## Fetal Monitoring

It has been agreed that fetal heart monitoring is an essential skill and that participation in a fetal surveillance workshop should be compulsory for all first-year Trainees. Work is under way to determine how best to implement a mandatory first-year fetal surveillance component in the training program.

## Colposcopy

The College is considering the future place of colposcopy training and possibly credentialing in its education programs, both in the training program itself and in Continuing Professional Development. There is consensus that colposcopy training and assessment should be enhanced. The broad directions in which this enhancement should be taken will be discussed at coming meetings.

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