

# Roles and Responsibilities for Examiners and Examination Coordinators

## Introduction

Examinations are an integral part of the College's services and the examiners involved have a key role in ensuring that the College runs high quality examinations that are transparent, reliable, valid and fair. The RANZCOG has only one 'panel of examiners', the Board of Examiners, from which come the Diploma, Membership and Subspecialty examiners for each relevant Written and Oral examination. The aim of having a combined group is to allow cross fertilisation and communication between Diploma, Membership and Subspecialist examiners, so that:

- uniformly high standards are maintained;
- crucial concepts and methodology pertaining to standard setting are understood and applied;
- the College's examination methodology, both in terms of constructing examinations and running them, is applied consistently;
- standards of fairness are rigorously maintained.

This common examination panel is thus an important part of maintaining the rigor, authority and dependability of the examination process.

Fellows and Diplomates who are appointed onto the RANZCOG Board of Examiners are providing a pivotal service in the ongoing development and assessment of trainee obstetricians and gynaecologists and GPs providing a service on obstetrics and gynaecology. Examiners can utilise their knowledge and skills in:

- developing questions for the Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) examinations and the Short Answer Question (SAQ) written examinations
- developing cases for oral examinations
- participating in standard setting activities
- marking examination papers against established criteria
- examining candidates in the Diploma, Membership or Subspecialty Oral Examinations.

Acting as a RANZCOG Examiner is also a valuable Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity, earning Fellows CPD points under the *Educator Activities* category.

## Application and appointment to the Board of Examiners

Membership of the Board of Examiners is open to Fellows and Diplomates of the College who meet the criteria listed below.

There is a common selection and assessment process for all examiners appointed to the Board of Examiners. This is an open application process, with applications vetted against a *Criteria Checklist* and presented for consideration at one of the three annual meetings of the Education and Assessment Committee. Following the successful participation of an applicant as a provisional examiner, appointment to the Board of Examiners is approved by the Education and Assessment Committee and then ratified by Council.

It is expected that examiners wishing to examine at Membership level must first display satisfactory performance as a Diploma examiner. Those wishing to examine at the subspecialty level must first perform satisfactorily as an observer at a Membership Oral Examination.

**Table 1: Usual process required to be undertaken in order to be appointed as an examiner**

<b>DRANZCOG</b>	<b>MRANZCOG</b>	<b>Subspecialty</b>
1. All new Examiner applicants MUST have 2 years of Diploma experience before they are Appointed as a Diploma Examiner	1. Appointment as Diploma Examiner 2. Satisfactory performance at a Membership Oral Examination as a provisional examiner 3. Appointment as a Membership Examiner	1. Satisfactory performance at a MRANZCOG examination as a provisional examiner 2. Appointment as a Subspecialty examiner

In seeking membership of the Board of Examiners, all applicants MUST complete an *Application Form for Examiners* (available from the College website) AND have their application proceed through the approved RANZCOG application process.

The relevant requirements for consideration for membership to the Board of Examiners include the following:

- All prospective examiners must apply in writing, using the relevant form, to the Education and Assessment Committee for consideration
- Applicants must supply the information specified on the *Application Form for Examiners*
- Applications can only be approved by the Education and Assessment Committee
- Criteria required for approval by the Committee as a provisional examiner include:
  - Applicants must be actively involved in teaching trainees where appropriate
  - Applicants must be involved in ongoing contemporary clinical practice in Australia and/or New Zealand
  - Applicants seeking to examine in the Membership examinations must have been actively engaged in the examination process as a Diploma examiner

All applicants MUST read the Roles and Responsibilities of Examiners document prior to applying and indicate on the application form that it has been read.

### **Roles and responsibilities for examiners**

The role of an examiner is pivotal to the continuing success of the RANZCOG assessment program. It is, however, a role that needs to be viewed as requiring a serious commitment once one's application has been approved.

- Membership and Diploma Examiners are expected to be available at least once per year for, respectively, the biannual MRANZCOG and DRANZCOG examinations
- Subspecialty examiners are expected to be available for the annual Subspecialty examinations
- All examiners are expected to make themselves available for at least one Examination Development Workshop per year.

In the event that an Examiner does not make him/herself available to examine within a two year period, membership of the Board of Examiners may be reviewed.

As well as acting as an examiner at the oral examinations or marking SAQ examination papers, an examiner may also be asked to:

- Contribute to the development of examination questions and/or oral examination scenarios; and
- Participate in examination standard setting processes (always included when examining at an oral examination) and be asked to vet examination papers.
- Undertake or assist with the provision of feedback or counselling to candidates who have failed examinations.

The period of appointment to the Board of Examiners is three years and can be renewed by the Education and Assessment Committee on a maximum of two occasions making a maximal total appointment of nine years.

The Education and Assessment Committee may elect not to reappoint an examiner in the event of:

1. Repeated episodes of unavailability without valid reason
2. Exceptionally poor performance in the conduct or scoring of the examinations
3. Unethical behaviour in the conduct of one's duties as an examiner
4. Discontinuation of active practice or of one's role as a supervisor of trainees.

All newly appointed examiners will be provided with an information kit, which includes information pertaining to:

- Examination dates,
- MCQ/SAQ Workshop dates
- Standard-setting concepts (e.g. Minimally acceptable Passing Standard)
- Examination preparation procedures and timelines
- Information on examination feedback and/or counselling for candidates

## **Roles and Responsibilities for Examination Coordinators**

Each of the College's examinations falls under the responsibility of an Examination Co-ordinator. Leadership in a specific examination area brings with it the opportunity to positively impact on examination standards (validity, reliability and transparency of the examinations being coordinated) by ensuring timeline compliance and the preparation of quality examination questions. The role requires vigilance and regular communication with examiners.

All Examination Coordinators are expected to:

- Adhere to all RANZCOG Rules and Regulations pertaining to the running of RANZCOG examinations
- Adhere to RANZCOG timelines for the development, running and review of examinations
- Liaise with RANZCOG College House Assessment Services staff and senior Fellows around examination related workshops and other professional development activities that will ensure the continuing high standard of all examination activities
- Ensure continuing communication with members of the Board of Examiners and College House Assessment Services staff regarding availability to contribute to examination development i.e.: MCQ, SAQ or clinical scenario development, question vetting, standard setting activities, marking SAQ papers, examining a station at an OSCE or Oral Examination and in the post-examination review process (teleconference)
- Commit to serving a minimum term as Coordinator (minimum two year appointment)

Due to the small pool of potential Subspecialty examiners and future Subspecialty Examination Coordinators, current Subspecialty Examination Coordinators are expected to develop effective succession planning mechanisms to ensure that, in the event that a Subspecialty Examination Coordinator is temporarily unavailable or resigns from the position, there is a suitable replacement who is conversant with all aspects of the Subspecialty examination processes.

## **Examination Results**

The pass mark on any given RANZCOG Examination is determined by the relevant standard-setting process for the examination. Candidate scores are compiled from examiners' marks by College House staff and are presented, along with the calculated or previously agreed pass mark, in a report for discussion and approval at a post-examination meeting. Topics for discussion at the post-examination meeting must include:

- Conduct of the standard-setting process and calculation of the resultant pass mark
- Conduct of the actual examination

- The performance of questions/stations on the examination
- Candidate results
- Special consideration applications

It is not permissible at any meeting other than a meeting of the Education and Assessment Committee to put or vote on a resolution to pass a candidate who has achieved a fail result in an examination, nor to fail a candidate who has achieved a pass result.

Questions may be struck from an examination, and pass marks and results recalculated, only on the basis of serious underperformance of the question.

Results are ultimately ratified (or rejected, as appropriate) by Council on the recommendation of the Education and Assessment Committee.

### **Conflict of Interest**

It is important to recognise the potential for a conflict of interest inherent in the role of a RANZCOG Examiner or Examination Coordinator.

- All Examiners and Examination Coordinators must declare if there is a conflict of interest in the examination of a candidate in an oral examination (where it is not possible to conceal a candidate's identity)
- Personal knowledge of a candidate's daily clinical performance does NOT provide Examiners or Examination Coordinators with grounds for challenging or changing the independently obtained candidate examination marks during any post examination forum. No such conduct shall be entered into by an Examiner or Examination Coordinator.

### **Confidentiality**

Examiners and Examination Coordinators will have the opportunity to contribute questions and/or scenarios for use in written and oral examinations at Diploma, Membership and Subspecialty level. It is critical to the credibility of all RANZCOG examinations that knowledge of examination content remains confidential. The examination paper review and marking processes must also remain confidential; this includes the responsible handling of electronic and hard copy material and ensuring the privacy of conversations pertaining to examination content.