

Policy

Subject: Award of FRCPA to overseas trained specialists via peer review pathway
Approval Date: December 2009, August 2012, August 2015, July 2017, March 2019
Review Date: July 2023
Review By: Board of Education and Assessment
Number: 2/2009

This policy addresses the requirements for award of FRCPA to overseas trained specialists (OTS) in pathology who have been assessed by the Board of Education and Assessment and OTS subcommittee as substantially comparable. The peer review process offers a pathway to Fellowship following a period of oversight, but without formal examination.

The purpose of the peer review pathway is two-fold:

1. It allows orientation of the applicant to the health care system of the relevant jurisdiction
2. It allows practicing specialists to interact with the OTS in a clinical context to determine if she or he is performing at an appropriate level, and to identify areas that may need improvement prior to the award of FRCPA.

To be eligible for this pathway, the applicant must have been assessed by the Chief Examiner or delegate, together with the OTS subcommittee, to be substantially comparable according to the following definition:

A substantially comparable overseas trained specialist pathologist has suitable post-graduate qualifications, training and experience such that the pathologist is considered able to practise effectively at a level that would be expected of an Australian or New Zealand trained RCPA Fellow (Refer to RCPA policy, 'Assessment of Overseas Trained Doctors and Overseas Trained Specialists in Australia and New Zealand' 4/2006) Qualification must be attained via examination. Research or other assessment pathways are not considered appropriate. This will include pathologists who are recognised specialists in one of the College's jurisdictions who have obtained FRCPATH by examination, even though they may not have CCT Certification from the GMC.

Oversight and peer review must be undertaken at a laboratory that is NATA/RCPA accredited (or an equivalent certification authority in the relevant jurisdiction). In addition the laboratory must be accredited for training with the RCPA and comply with the specific criteria set down by the Board of Education and Assessment relating to capacity to comply with peer review processes. The position should allow practice in at least senior registrar or junior consultant level.

The peer review process must include:

- Twelve months full time equivalent practice under oversight of a pathologist who has been a Fellow of the RCPA for at least 5 years. Supervisors must be appointed in accordance with the College's policy 'Supervision of Training' 11/2002.
- Peer review report forms completed by at least 2 assessors at 3, 6 and 12 months after commencement of the period of oversight. Reviewers must be trained to complete these reports.
- Participation in the RCPA CPDP and QAP programs
- Certification by the applicant's overseer that orientation to the relevant culture and health care system has been satisfactory

- The 3, 6 and 12 month reports are reviewed by the OTS subcommittee and the applicant and peer reviewers are interviewed at this time.

Peer review may also include formative workplace-based assessments of a nature and frequency to be determined by the Chief Examiner or delegate in combination with the OTS subcommittee.

The OTS will be required to pay a fee for the 12 months assessment equal to the amount of a Part 2 examination fee.

In exceptional circumstances, the period of peer review may be decreased at the discretion of the OTS subcommittee. Such circumstances include:

a. Where the OTS has previously practised in Australia/New Zealand in an appropriate supervised environment for a period of more than six months and reports from at least two (2) supervisors for that period are available and satisfactory. This practise must have occurred within the previous five years and must have been at least at senior registrar, fellow or junior consultant level. In addition, the OTS must have been practising in an environment in which:

- the peer reviewers have clinical contact with the OTS at least once a week in a range of settings;
- the peer review report/s indicates practice at an above average level with no deficiencies identified, and
- the peer reviewers indicate that the OTS can practise as a competent pathologist in an unsupervised manner;

b. Where the OTS is considered by all peer reviewers to be performing at a very high level. After consultation with the peer reviewers, the OTS subcommittee or the lead supervising Fellow may recommend that the OTS be invited to apply for a reduction in the period of peer review. Reduction through this category is at the discretion of the Board of Education and Assessment chair.

c. Reduction will only be considered once a satisfactory three month peer review report has been provided.

The period of peer review may be increased if the OTS subcommittee determines that the applicant needs more time to achieve the required standards.

The OTS subcommittee may determine at any time, if progress is unsatisfactory, that the applicant must undertake formal examinations.

In any case where patient safety concerns arise in the course of peer review, the matter must be brought promptly to the attention of the senior management of the employing institution and reported to the RCPA CEO or Deputy CEO. The CEO or Deputy CEO will confer with the employer to implement remedial measures where appropriate and determine if reporting to the applicable medical registration authority or regulator is required.

FRCPA may be awarded after:

- Completion of the above peer review process
- Submission of an application form and supporting documents (such as logbooks, publications and certificates of attendance at courses) as prescribed by the OTS subcommittee
- Final review by the Chief Examiner of the Discipline

The application for Fellowship will then follow the standard pathway, ie review by the Registrar of Board of Education and Assessment, then sign off by the Chief Examiner in the discipline, and the Chairman of the Board of Education and Assessment then sent to the Board of Directors.

If deemed fit, the OTS will then become immediately eligible for full RCPA Fellowship. The Australian Medical Council (AMC) will be advised of the subsequent outcome.

Related documents:

- 'Assessment of Overseas Trained Doctors and Overseas Trained Specialists in Australia and New Zealand' 4/2006
- 'Supervision of Training' 11/2002, establishes requirements for supervisors