

Program Purpose

The purpose of the Victorian Microbiology Centralised Appointments Program (VMCAP) is to provide a transparent and fair selection process that balances the service and research needs of each Pathology laboratory with the interests of trainees. Training positions are primarily for training Pathologists (Microbiologists) although the committee welcomes the application of candidates from other disciplines; they should not disadvantage appropriately skilled prospective Pathology applicants (single or dual Microbiology candidates) whether local or interstate.

The Victorian Microbiology Centralised Appointments Committee (VMCAC) interview and appoint trainees. They are comprised of

- Educational Supervisors
- A College representative
- The Head of Department or delegate for each laboratory (even if no position is available for that year)

The Committee will have a number of roles in training, namely:

Oversee the balance of training of individuals within the Victorian Microbiology Training Program. This would be to ensure, where possible, that candidates get exposure to a variety of laboratories to broaden their training experience. This could include exposure to public and private sectors, general and specialised laboratories. The allocation of training positions will primarily follow the candidate preferences however the Committee may make recommendations for placement depending on the candidates prior training.

The Committee will be proactive in tracking the progress of training of each trainee. The Committee will meet twice yearly to discuss the progress of each candidate with the purpose of flagging any training or personal issues that may affect the progress of individual candidates. The guiding principle is that early involvement and correction of any identified issues will maximise the chances of candidates successfully completing training.

For this centralised appointment process to be successful, participation from pathologists within all training centres is essential. Involvement carries with it an assumption that the Committee members will contribute to discussions in a spirit of co-operation and abide by the consensus decision of the VMCAC. If unanimity cannot be reached, the final decision will be the responsibility of a Centralised Appointments sub-Committee consisting of educational supervisor(s), a College representative, two Heads of Departments of at least one public and one private laboratory.

The Centralised Appointments Process

The Victorian Microbiology Centralised Appointments Process (VMCAP) is based upon the collective assessment from the interview panel for each candidate. The interview panel will consist of representatives from all of the training centres.

Appointment to the Victorian Microbiology Training Program is based primarily upon merit. Each successful candidate will have the endorsement from the VMCAC chosen to be representative of the Victorian Microbiology community. The VMCAC aims to improve the quality of approved candidates, maintain a transparent and just centralised appointments

process, foster a collegial egalitarian environment and prevent closed arbitrary appointments of candidates outside of this process.

Any out of cycle appointments will require representation from the centralised appointments sub-committee. If the appointment to the training program is outside the routine VMCAP the employer must contact a Microbiology Coordinator of the VMCAP to organise an interview panel and suitable interview time. The interview panel should consist of an Educational Supervisor(s), the Microbiology director (or suitable representative) of appointing Department and at least two (2) other outside laboratory directors (or suitable representatives). Selection for any position will follow the same principles as in cycle appointments. Refer to RCPA Selection of Pathology Trainees Guideline on the College website for further information.

If the appointment to the VMCAP is outside the routine selection process, the employer must notify the Microbiology Coordinator of the VMCAP where applicable, to ensure that the trainee participates in the next available selection round. These candidates will need to be interviewed by a VMCAC endorsed panel before official entry to the Victorian Microbiology Training Program.

The Victorian Microbiology Training Program

Appointment to the Victorian Microbiology Training Program (VMTP) indicates the Program's commitment to provide training to that candidate until completion of RCPA and joint RCPA/RACP training requirements, contingent on satisfactory supervisor reports. Trainees can only be appointed to the VMTP through the centralised appointments process or the centralised sub-committee (see above). The annual VMCAP panel includes representatives from all laboratories offering training positions. Trainees already on the VMTP will be given preference over new trainees outside the VMTP, on the basis that completion of training of satisfactorily progressing candidates is the first priority. For others, preference shall be given in the following order:

- RCPA Microbiology trainees from other jurisdictions, including NZ, Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia.
- Prospective trainees with RCPA registration but without RCPA endorsed microbiology training.
- All other candidates with AHPRA registration and evidence of recent practice and at least two years clinical experience.
- Overseas candidates should only be appointed if there are no local (state or national) candidates appropriate for Microbiology training.

Evaluation Process

Candidates are required to rank their laboratory preferences for all positions prior to interview.

The evaluation process involves assessment of all candidates based on the following categories:

- CV content [25% of overall score]
- Referee Report [5% of overall score]

- Interview performance [70% of overall score]

Candidate ranking scores are then generated using the weightings of the above categories. Referee reports and CV's are marked by at least 2 VMCAC members, prior to interview using standardised scoring criteria. Interview scores are generated using the individual scores from each interview VMCAC panel member, who consists of a Director or representative from each laboratory in Victoria, that are then added to generate a mean score. Scores from each assessment category are then added together, and the final score is used to create the ranking list of candidates.

The ranking list of candidates is then matched to the candidate's preferences in an open process involving all members of the VMCAC. Each candidate is then matched to their highest available preference (based on their ranking) in descending ranking order. The most highly ranked candidate will be given the first opportunity for choice, there after the next most highly ranked candidate is permitted their choice until all successful candidates are placed. The laboratory Head of Department or delegate has the opportunity to veto an appointment but must provide justification to the VMCAC if they choose to do so. In some circumstances, characteristics of the training site may influence the suitability of candidates and may provide a justification. Ideally, the requirements of individual sites should be specified prior to advertising so prospective candidates are aware of any training constraints associated with any position.

Candidates are prioritised in training positions based upon hierarchical rules. Trainees already in the VMTP are placed first followed by interstate trainees. Thereafter, candidates registered with the RCPA but not yet accepted on the VMTP are next offered positions followed by general applicants.

On the VMCAP interview day once the Laboratory Director has agreed to the allocation, successful candidates will be offered a position. Candidates are expected to accept the offer immediately. Failure to do so will lead to the position being offered to the next highly ranked candidate.

Candidates already on the VMCAP still require to be interviewed on an annual basis, even if they wish to stay at the same facility the following year. The rationale for re-interview is to allow the VMCAC to reassess each candidates' performance, capabilities and collect feedback on progress to assist with benchmarking.

Where candidates indicate a preference to stay another year at an existing laboratory, provided the supervisors reports are satisfactory and the supervising Pathologist agrees, the candidate should be permitted to stay for a maximum of two years at the one laboratory, independently of the candidate's performance on the day.

Relationship with the RACP (Infectious Diseases)

Historically, many of the training positions in laboratories have been made available to Infectious Diseases (ID) registrars due to training requirements of the RACP, as well as common interests between the disciplines.

The RCPA requires that no existing pathology trainee (dual/single discipline) lose a training position due to the appointment of a non-RCPA trainee. New appointments of non-RCPA trainees should not be at the expense of a suitable RCPA trainee. Non-RCPA trainees can

be employed in preference when the RCPA candidate is not suitable and there is no other RCPA candidate available, with the consensus of the VMCAC.

Due to the large number of ID only trainees, these candidates are not formally interviewed by the VMCAC panel. Positions not filled by RCPA trainees are then made available to the RACP appointment panel who will negotiate individually with Microbiology Departmental heads.