

Division:	Education Development & Assessment	Ref. No.	TOR - 2014
Department:	Examinations		
Title:	Court of Examiners		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To provide the Terms of Reference for the Court of Examiners (the Court) and the Specialty Courts.

2. KEYWORDS

Court of Examiners Terms of Reference, Duties, Governance, Composition, Authority

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Background

The Fellowship Examination is primarily an assessment of professional judgement, clinical decision making and medical expertise to ensure candidates are safe and competent to practice independently as surgeons.

The Court is comprised of surgeons representing the nine surgical specialties in which the College conducts the examination. The number of examiners appointed to each Specialty Court is determined on the number of trainees and Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMG's) eligible for examination.

3.2. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.2.1. To ensure that the examinations conducted by the College are in accordance with requirements for accreditation and authorisation and key College Policy documents including the strategic plan.
- 3.2.2. To conduct examinations for the purpose of assessing a candidate's competencies and maintain the integrity and high standard of the Fellowship Examination.
- 3.2.3. To review the content (based on the surgical curriculum) of the Fellowship Examination.
- 3.2.4. To investigate, set standards, and prepare and provide guidelines for effective and varied methods of examining.
- 3.2.5. To optimise the use of advanced technology techniques for examination purposes.
- 3.2.6. To review the overall performance of candidates using the consensus marks submitted by each pair of examiner. A candidate's marks cannot be altered.
- 3.2.7. To regularly review historical examination results to ensure quality standards of the examination process are maintained.
- 3.2.8. To set standards and provide guidelines for the training of Examiners.
- 3.2.9. To conduct the relevant Specialty Specific Examinations which are the responsibility of the respective Specialty Courts, currently
 - a. Orthopaedic Surgery
 - b. Paediatric Surgery
 - c. Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

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Title:	Court of Examiners		

3.3. Composition

3.3.1. The Court of Examiners is accountable to the Education Committee and is made up of an Executive and nine Specialty Courts

3.3.2. Court Executive

- a. Chair
- b. Deputy Chairs of the Court (Australia and New Zealand)
- c. Senior Examiners (representing the nine Specialty Courts)

3.3.3. Specialty Courts

- a. Senior Examiner (Chair)
- b. Deputy Senior Examiner
- c. Examiners

3.4. Appointment

3.4.1. **Chair of the Court**

The Chair is elected by the Council of Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and has tenure on the Court while they hold office. RACS Regulation: Election process for Council Office Holders and Other Key Positions.

3.4.2. **Deputy Chairs of the Court**

- a. Deputy Chairs must have served as a member of the Court prior to nomination.
- b. Four Deputy Chairs are nominated by the Chair with a minimum of one Deputy residing in Australia and in Aotearoa New Zealand.. The Deputy Chairs appointed in alternate years to ensure maintenance of corporate knowledge. Appointment is for a period of two years with the option of reappointment for an additional two year term.
- c. Gender and specialty diversification is considered in appointment of Deputy Chairs.

3.4.3. **Senior Examiners**

For each specialty, a Senior Examiner is elected by the membership of the respective Specialty Court and becomes the Chair of that Specialty Court.

- a. Tenure is for two years but may be extended under special circumstances, with approval of the Chair of the Court.
- b. With the approval of the Chair of the Court, a Specialty Court may appoint a Senior Examiner from each country if this is deemed beneficial to the functioning of that Specialty Court
- c. The Specialty Court may submit an application to the Education Board to extend tenure for one additional year, if an examiner becomes a Senior Examiner in his/her final year of their tenure (i.e. year 9 of tenure).
- d. A Senior Examiner who has not completed a full nine years of tenure may step down and continue as an Examiner of that Specialty Court

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until tenure is completed, subject to triennial reappointment requirements.

3.4.4. **Deputy Senior Examiners**

For each specialty, a Deputy Senior Examiner is elected by membership of the respective Specialty Court. The Deputy Senior Examiner will exercise all duties of the Senior Examiner when requested or when the Senior Examiner is incapacitated.

3.4.5. **Examiners**

Appointments to the Court of Examiners are recommended for approval by the Chair of the Court to the Education Board and are noted by Council. Tenure is for a period of three years with the option to reappoint for a further two terms, to a maximum of nine years.

3.5. **In Attendance**

3.5.1. Staff with a permanent invitation to attend are

- a. Chief Executive Officer
- b. Executive General Manager, Development and Delivery
- c. Head of Examinations Delivery
- d. Manager, Examinations
- e. Examinations Officers

3.6. **Powers**

The Court has such executive powers, supervisory functions and decision-making authority, as the Education Board delegates to it in relation to the conducting of examinations.

3.6.1.

3.7. **Meetings**

3.7.1. Meetings and workshops are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Fellowship Examination.

3.8. **Specialty Court Workshops**

3.8.1. Each Specialty Court of Examiners meets annually to

- a. Set questions and marking guidelines and to discuss business related to the examination.
- b. Review and confirm applications for Appointments to the Court of Examiners.

3.8.2. The Chair, Court of Examiners must approve all significant alterations to the examination format and candidates must be given six months' notice of any approved changes to the examination format.

3.9. **Specialty Court Meetings**

3.9.1. Each Specialty Court meets prior to the commencement of the clinical/viva component of the examination to discuss business matters related to the examination and to prepare for the examination.

Approved by	Director, Education Development & Assessment	Original Issue:	June 2006
Document Owner:	Manager, Examination	Version:	6
		Approval Date:	May 2023
Page 3 of 4		Review Date:	May 2026

Division:	Education Development & Assessment	Ref. No.	TOR - 2014
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3.10. Executive of the Court Meetings

- 3.10.1. A meeting of the Executive of the Court is usually held the day prior to the commencement of the clinical/viva component of the examination.

3.11. Post-Examination Court Meetings

- 3.11.1. Specialty Court Meetings
- a. Each Specialty Court meets at the completion of the examination to review the overall performance of candidates and make recommendations to the Full Court.
 - b. In the event of a vote to be taken at the Specialty Court meeting, each examiner is expected to vote unless a conflict of interest has been established.
- 3.11.2. Full Court Meeting
- a. The Full Court considers the candidate result recommendations made by the Specialty Courts and ratifies the results of all candidates at the examination.
 - b. All Examiners conducting the examination are required to attend. An Examiner must have a valid reason for non-attendance and their apology must be minuted.
- 3.11.3. Business Meeting of the Court
- Attended by the Full Court for the purposes of conducting examination business, including but not limited to:
- a. Setting of Examination Dates
 - b. Policy changes
 - c. Recommendations for Education Board
 - d. Scholarships
 - e. Other Business

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Policies

Fellowship Examination

Appointments to the Court of Examiners

Position Description: Senior Examiners and Deputies

Position Description: Deputy Chair of the Court of Examiners

Position Description: Chair of the Court of Examiners

Examiners Charter

Approver Education Committee
Authoriser Council

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Page 4 of 4		Review Date:	May 2026
