

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF ANAESTHETISTS

ABN 82 055 042 852

POLICY ON THE FORMAL PROJECT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Before the Diploma of FANZCA can be awarded, every trainee registered with the College is required to complete a Formal Project or to meet criteria for exemption from the Formal Project requirements.
- 1.2 The subject of the Formal Project must be of relevance to anaesthesia, intensive care or pain medicine.
- 1.3 Projects must follow conventional standards applicable to scientific work, including research ethics, honesty of reporting and authorship.
- 1.4 The project is not a prerequisite for presenting for either the Primary or the Final examinations and may be undertaken at any time.
- 1.5 To avoid delay in awarding the Diploma of FANZCA, the trainee must submit the project well before the completion of approved vocational training.
- 1.6 Each Regional/National Committee and Training Committee in South East Asia will appoint a Formal Project Officer who has a number of roles in relation to the Formal Project as set out in this document.
- 1.7 Prior to commencing project work, each trainee should register the project, and seek approval and advice from, his/her Regional/National Formal Project Officer via the Regional/National Office.
- 1.8 This Professional Document relates to all Formal Projects presented from August 16 2008.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of the Formal Project are:
 - 2.1.1 To advance skills in self-directed continuing education and scientific enquiry.
 - 2.1.2 To develop an understanding of evidence-based medicine.
- 2.2 The objectives are intended to advance skills in trainees by requiring them to gain experience, for example, in how to:
 - Develop an idea or concept into a topic for evaluation.

- Derive a question or hypothesis on the topic for the project to answer.
- Perform a literature search on the topic using libraries, books, journals, the internet and other forms of information technology.
- Evaluate what information is useful and relevant to the question or hypothesis.
- Collect data from the literature search and relevant investigations.
- Analyse information and data collected, and apply relevant statistical analyses.
- Review past work and publications on the topic, especially with respect to the question or hypothesis.
- Determine the results with reference, where applicable, to evidence-based reports.
- Decide how to best present the findings – if publication is intended, decide on the most appropriate journal.
- Write up the project to demonstrate scholarship, i.e. clear, logical, critical and analytical thinking.

3. THE FORMAL PROJECT

3.1 The Formal Project is the submitted material of the trainee's work. With the exception of published papers and written dissertations for a qualification (see 5.3), a project must include a written report of at least 1,500 words (excluding references) on the work undertaken. This will include a critical review and an evidence-based approach to the specific topic. The trainee should show that he/she has assessed background data relating to the project and objectively weighed up the validity of relevant information obtained from the scientific literature and other sources. The project must be conducted in major part by the trainee.

3.2 Examples of Formal Projects are:

3.2.1 A case report of interest or clinical significance.

3.2.2 A review of a topic relevant to anaesthesia, intensive care or pain medicine.

3.2.3 A meta-analysis of published work on a topic relevant to anaesthesia, intensive care or pain medicine.

3.2.4 A research project. This may be a self-contained project conducted mainly by the trainee or be a large trial involving multiple investigators to which the trainee contributes. When the trainee participates in a large trial, a log book of involvement should be presented which has been signed off by the trainee's supervisor.

3.2.5 Any other project which has value from a clinical, scientific or educational perspective, such as a quality assurance project, a project submitted for a higher

qualification relevant to anaesthesia, or an instructional video or computer program.

4. COMPLETING A FORMAL PROJECT

4.1 The usual steps undertaken to complete a Formal Project are:

4.1.1 Decide on a topic and propose a question, problem or hypothesis to analyse.

4.1.2 Define terms used in discussions on the topic.

4.1.3 Search for published and other relevant literature on the topic.

4.1.4 Collect other information or data if the project is a research study.

4.1.5 Analyse the scientific evidence in published and/or collected data that is relevant to the question, problem or hypothesis.

4.1.6 Derive conclusions from an analysis of the information and data. When the trainee has participated in a large trial, analysis of the results may not be possible. The trainee should describe the proposed analyses in depth.

4.1.7 Propose solutions and answers to the question, problem or hypothesis.

4.1.8 Complete the project (e.g. record videos, finish posters, prepare graphics).

4.1.9 Write up work undertaken.

4.1.10 Submit the project for assessment.

4.2 Project submission

4.2.1 The completed project report must be submitted to the Regional/National Formal Project Officer via the Regional/National office.

4.2.2 Submitted projects must be in electronic format (unless the nature of the submitted material does not allow this).

4.2.3 Each trainee must submit a signed statement that the Formal Project is original work and that all sources of assistance and documented works or ideas of others have been appropriately acknowledged (see 1.3).

4.2.4 Where the trainee has collaborated with others to complete the Formal Project, a supervisor and/or co-author must submit a signed statement that the trainee conducted a major part of the project or, in the case of a large trial, that the trainee made a significant contribution (see 3.2.4).

5 ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS

5.1 Except for projects deemed to allow exemption from the requirements of the Formal Project, all projects must be assessed by a Formal Project Assessment Committee of at least two people specific to that Project nominated by the Formal

Project Officer, one of whom may be that Formal Project Officer. Where there is a deadlock in the outcome recommendations by the members of a Formal Project Assessment Committee with an even number of members, the Committee must be expanded to include an additional member.

- 5.2 For projects which need to be assessed, a Formal Project Assessment Committee may accept a project, may require it to be revised, or may reject it.
- 5.3 Completion of the following projects will be deemed to allow exemption from the requirements of the Formal Project without requiring further assessment:
 - 5.3.1 A paper published in an indexed and peer-reviewed journal. Letters to Editors are excluded.
 - 5.3.2 A qualification relevant to anaesthesia, awarded either before or during vocational training in anaesthesia, conferred by an educational or professional institution, and which requires examination of a written dissertation. Diplomas of FJFICM and FFPMANZCA are considered as approved Formal Projects. Acceptance of other qualifications requires approval by the DPA Assessor.
- 5.4 An oral or a poster presentation at an ANZCA ASM, ASA NSC, Regional ANZCA/ASA CME Meeting, NZSA/NZNC ASM, ANZCA Registrars Meeting, or other meeting having selection criteria of an acceptable standard and approved by the DPA Assessor may be accepted as a Formal Project. A written report must be submitted for assessment as stated in 3.1 for any oral or poster presentation submitted as a Formal Project.
- 5.5 Formal Project assessors should consider the following aspects when reviewing a Formal Project:
 - 5.5.1 The project's topic is relevant to anaesthesia, intensive care or pain medicine.
 - 5.5.2 The report has a minimum of 1,500 words.
 - 5.5.3 The trainee conducted a major part of the project or adequate involvement in a large trial has been documented (see 3.2.4 and 4.2.4).
 - 5.5.4 The trainee achieved the Formal Project objectives or demonstrated an awareness of the objectives.
 - 5.5.5 The trainee derived a question, problem, or hypothesis for the project to resolve.
 - 5.5.6 The trainee conducted an up-to-date critical review of the project's topic from published and other relevant literature, using an evidence-based approach.
 - 5.5.7 The trainee used or described a valid approach or relevant methodology.

- 5.5.8 The trainee objectively analysed information derived from the project with reference to evidence contained in the literature.
- 5.5.9 The trainee, where relevant, followed conventional standards applicable to scientific work (e.g. research ethics, honesty of reporting and authorship) (see 4.2.3).
- 5.6 Meetings of Formal Project Officers with the Chair of the Education and Training Committee (ETC) or his/her nominee will be held on a regular basis. Formal Project Officers should consult the Chair of the ETC or his/her nominee about problems with any project.
- 5.7 A trainee whose Formal Project has been rejected by a Formal Project Assessment Committee may apply to the College for a Reconsideration or Review of the decision (see Regulation 30) and/or may submit a formal Appeal to the College (see Regulation 31).

6 CERTIFICATION

Upon compliance with the above, the Formal Project Officer will certify to the College that the trainee has completed an appropriate Formal Project or has met requirements for exemption. The College will notify the trainee that requirements are met.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Regulation 30 Reconsideration and Review Processes
Regulation 31 Appeals Process

COLLEGE PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTS

College Professional Documents are progressively being coded as follows:

TE Training and Educational
EX Examinations
PS Professional Standards
T Technical

POLICY – defined as ‘a course of action adopted and pursued by the College’.
These are matters coming within the authority and control of the College.

RECOMMENDATIONS – defined as ‘advisable courses of action’.

GUIDELINES – defined as ‘a document offering advice’. *These may be clinical (in which case they will eventually be evidence-based), or non-clinical.*

STATEMENTS – defined as ‘a communication setting out information’.

This document has been prepared having regard to general circumstances, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to have express regard to the particular circumstances of each case, and the application of this document in each case.

Professional documents are reviewed from time to time, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure that the practitioner has obtained the current version. Professional documents have been prepared having regard to the information available at the time of their preparation, and the practitioner should therefore have regard to any information, research or material which may have been published or become available subsequently.

Whilst the College endeavours to ensure that professional documents are as current as possible at the time of their preparation, it takes no responsibility for matters arising from changed circumstances or information or material which may have become available subsequently.

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