

# Trainee logbooks: the way of the future



All trainees will need to keep a logbook of cases from 2013 as part of the revised curriculum so it's a good idea to start recording cases now, according to members of the Trainee Committee.

Already, the majority of trainees are believed to use logbooks in some form, which range from paper-based logbooks and self-devised Excel spreadsheets, to electronic logbooks available on computers, smart phones and tablets.

While some trainees are collecting only enough data to meet the sessional requirements of current training

modules, from 2013 they will be required to keep records of each case to meet volume of practice requirements under the revised curriculum.

Queensland Trainee Committee Chair and final year anaesthesia trainee, Dr Brett Segal, is encouraging trainees to start keeping detailed logbooks now.

"It's good for the trainee, it's good for the hospital and ultimately it's good for the patient as well, with regards to safety," he says.

The type of information generally recorded in a trainee logbook includes patient age and gender, the type of surgery, ASA classification, anaesthetic procedures performed, level of supervision, time of day, and lessons obtained from the case.

Dr Segal started recording his operations as a trainee in the United Kingdom, where it is mandatory, and uses the Royal College of Anaesthetists' iGasLog on his smart phone.

He says an electronic logbook can help you collate reports on the types of cases you have been doing and identify gaps in your training. It is also useful when having a commencement interview with a supervisor of training when starting a new rotation.

Dr Segal says anaesthetists are known as being technically-minded, with the specialty required to use a range of machines such as ventilators and ultrasounds, and most have easily adapted to digital logbooks.

As he explains: "People joke about anaesthetists and their gadgets."

Popular electronic logbooks include the iGasLog and the Australian-based Vaper logbook, which also has applications for the Medicare benefits schedule and relative value guide.

However, Victorian Trainee Committee Chair and final year anaesthesia trainee, Dr Kym Saunders, prefers using her own Excel spreadsheet after a bad experience with an early-version iPhone application that could only be synchronised to an external internet site that crashed for two months.

She started a logbook after being strongly encouraged as a resident to keep records as a log of training time and cases, and has continued using one because of the many benefits.

"It's easy to get your modules signed off because you've got a clear documentation of each specialty," she says. "Also for your own personal uses to see if you've been a bit deficient in certain areas – if you haven't done enough arterial lines or CVCs (central venous catheters) under ultrasound guidance – as well as just keeping a record of interesting cases."

Dr Saunders says the best way to keep a logbook is to update it at the end of each day and not collect patients' stickers and allow them to accumulate and face the onerous task of trying to back-date case details when a module needs to be signed off.

Both doctors emphasise keeping a logbook will be important for trainees currently in the training program who will transition to the revised curriculum.



“If you’ve got proof that you’ve done half a module, then you’re more likely to get that time approved for the volume of practice requirements,” Dr Saunders says.

Acting General Manager of ANZCA’s Education Development Unit, Mr Olly Jones, says the numbers and types of cases that will be required under the volume of practice requirements of the revised curriculum are being finalised and will soon be publicised.

“The reason we’re doing it is to confirm experiential learning,” Mr Jones says. “It means every trainee records their experiences to demonstrate exactly what exposure they’ve had to different cases throughout their training program.”

“This means personal development plans and learning plans can be done in consultation with new supervisors every time they start a new rotation based on the information that’s there in black and white, as opposed to a lot of guesswork over the five-year training program.”

Mr Jones says the new logbook requirement will put structure into place for assessments and involves an element of standardisation to make sure all trainees have experiences that meet the requirements of the training program.

By logging every case, trainees will not only meet the volume of practice requirements, but also contribute to their own reflective learning by highlighting cases of significance.

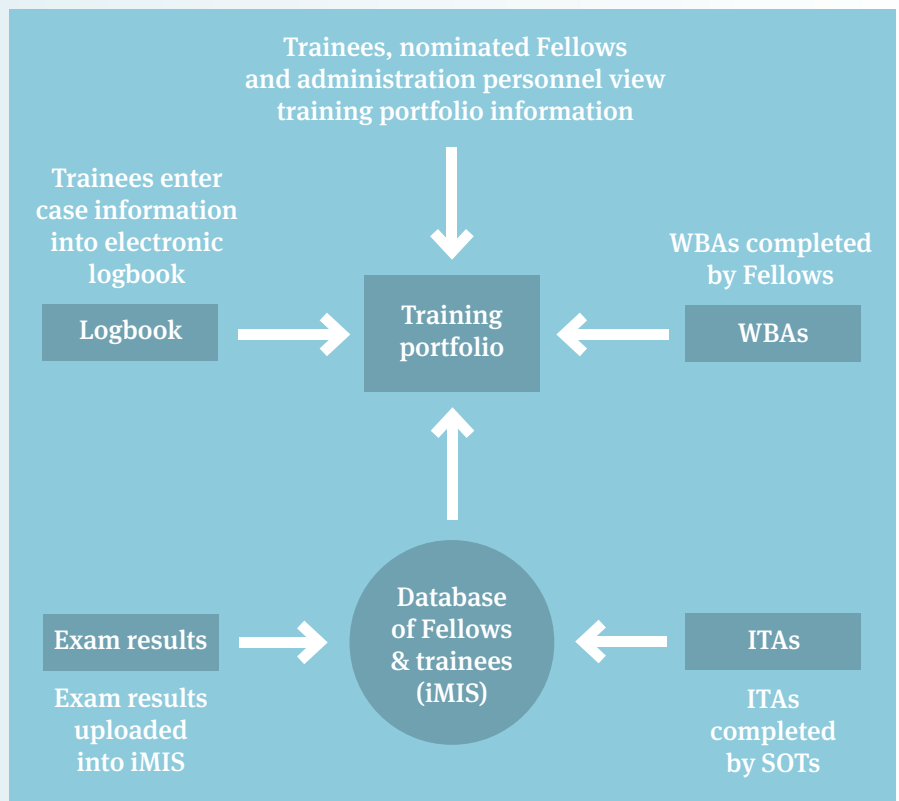
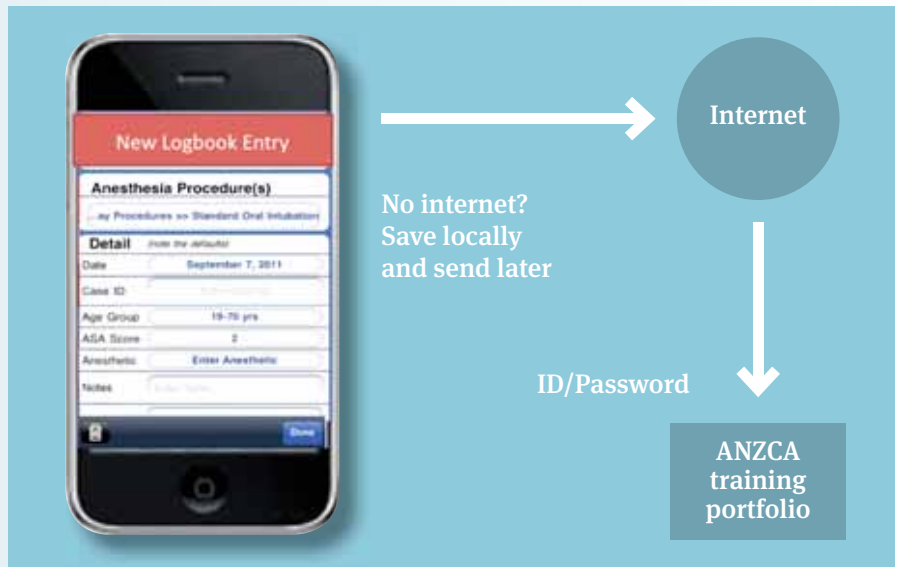
In addition, Mr Jones says it will help ANZCA fine-tune the training experience for trainees.

“From a curriculum evaluation point of view, if all of the cases are logged then it means that we can see if there are particular downfalls in our curriculum or holes,” he says.

“If every trainee struggles to get access (to a type of case), then it means we can do something about it and develop alternative resources or provide simulation opportunities. It means we know a lot more about the trainees and we can build bridges between the program in theory and in practice.”

Finally, Mr Jones nominates an additional benefit for trainees of keeping a logbook is gaining skills for the “manager” component of the “ANZCA roles”. “This is the first step really in preparing them for being effective administrators,” he says.

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*Above clockwise from left: Dr Brett Segal demonstrates his iPhone application to log cases he has been involved with; A smart phone logbook; A diagram of how the process might work.*