



ANZCA
FPM

CEO

Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists

2 April 2024

Mr Martin Fletcher
Chief Executive Officer
AHPRA & National Boards

By email: sharon.kosmina@ahpra.gov.au

Dear Mr Fletcher

ANZCA SIMG assessment

In response to your correspondence dated 25 March 2024 on the expedited specialist International Medical Graduate Pathway the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) would like to provide the following information with an explanation as to our rationale.

Although we acknowledge the drive by health ministers to expedite the process, we would like to state that the delay in registration as a specialist in anaesthesia or pain medicine does not lay with ANZCA but rather within the processes associated with visa processing and being in receipt of an offer of employment.

For those who may be considered for the expedited pathway the most significant period of time in the process will not be in the college process. Once qualifications have been verified ANZCA offers interviews within the MBA time criteria, and assessment is delivered at the end of the interview verbally, with written confirmation within two weeks. The approval of an applicant's position description approval is rapid, usually within a week of submission.

For those SIMGs who are likely to be considered for an expedited pathway, an external assessment (workplace-based) is arranged in the last three months of their clinical placement before completion and sign off of the clinician. While the external assessment (workplace-based) has a high 'pass rate', it has at times uncovered significant problems with their performance that were not noted by their on-site Specialist International Medical Graduate (SIMG) supervisors (e.g. poor informed consent practices, bad infection control practices). Post-qualification experience also needs to be considered – while assessing their training is central to the assessment of recent graduates, those whose training is more distant need an assessment of the robustness of their recent practice range and continuing professional development including practice evaluation.

ANZCA does not feel that an expedited pathway is required in anaesthesia or pain medicine due to its performance against the agreed timeframes and metrics.

ANZCA feels that should this process proceed there are no qualifications in pain medicine that could be accepted and only qualifications in anaesthesia from the United Kingdom and Ireland could be considered. The following is expected to demonstrate substantial comparability from the UK and Ireland.

For both those two countries, the fellowship is an early- and mid-training test of knowledge and its application; the only full specialist qualification is the Certificate of Completion of Training (UK, CCT) or the Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (Ireland, CSCST).

The CCT/CSCST is NOT an additional assessment, it is the ONLY confirmation that the Specialist International Medical Graduate (SIMG) has had the full specialist training in that country and has met all the criteria for successful completion.

Any applicant from those two countries who does not have the CCT/CSCST would not be considered substantially comparable and would need a full assessment with no probable outcome.

In general, when considering an application in the area of anaesthesia training programs, the assessments are based on:

- The review of the curriculum against ANZCA's, including subspecialties covered, ANZCA roles in practice (domains of practice).
- Review of the methods of assessment, both in-training and external including examinations, with an assessment of their potential robustness. This includes coverage of the curriculum including the non-technical skills, and utilisation of multiple methods of workplace-based assessment (MSF, DOPS, mini-CEX, CBD).
- ANZCA fellows' recent experience of working in the training hospitals within that country.
- ANZCA's experience with the performance of SIMGs with training from that country.

There are no qualifications held by pain medicine SIMGs that are usually assessed as substantially comparable. While those pain medicine SIMGs from Hong Kong pain medicine units at which the Faculty of Pain Medicine ANZCA has accredited training in pain medicine are usually assessed as substantially comparable, that is specific to those hospitals.

FPMANZCA's pain medicine training program was one of the first internationally, so there are far fewer comparable programs. Many such programs are more technical (i.e. the delivery of specific procedures such as nerve blocks) without the focus on the whole patient.

Eligibility for fellowship for SIMGs on the expedited pathway

Should an expedited pathway be approved and put in place outside of the ANZCA college process, any applicant for FANZCA/FFPMANZCA would require:

- Evidence of successful completion of a period of supervised practice including cultural safety training, AND
- An external assessment (workplace-based) by two fellows from outside under ANZCA's auspices, AND
- (for FANZCA, completion of a simulation and skills course, the Effective Management of Anaesthesia Crises (EMAC), unless they have been assessed as having completed a similar course in the recent past which included training in human factors and their importance in managing crises.

The college feels the processes currently in place for the suggested clinicians in the expedited pathway already have a prompt and robust process that allows clinicians to be recognised as specialists promptly.

We feel that this allows for specialist recognition as fellows within the recognised process with the fellowship that the community expects that signifies meeting the Australian clinical standards and does not create two tiers of specialists in Australia, providing the community with one cohort of proficient and competent clinicians who have been tested against the standards for clinical practice in anaesthesia and pain medicine.

We are happy to answer any further questions should they be needed.

Yours sincerely,



Nigel Fidgeon
Chief Executive Officer