



Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing  
House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: [haa.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:haa.reps@aph.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Inquiry into Registration Processes and Support for Overseas Trained Doctors**

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR) is the leading professional organisation for the promotion of the science and practice of the medical specialties of Radiology and Medical Imaging (Diagnostic and Interventional) and Radiation Oncology in Australia and New Zealand.

Amongst other things, the College is responsible for the specialist training and assessment of Radiologists and Radiation Oncologists and assessing overseas trained doctors (OTDs; also referred to as International Medical Graduates - IMGs) who were practising as specialists in their country of origin and who wish to be recognised as specialists in Australia or New Zealand; and / or work in Area of Need positions in Australia. The College undertakes these assessments on behalf of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency / Medical Board of Australia (administered through the Australian Medical Council) and the Medical Council of New Zealand.

#### **Assessment Processes**

The administrative processes of RANZCR conform to the principles agreed to by the AMC and the Joint Standing Committee on Overseas Trained Specialists of the Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges; and by the Medical Council of New Zealand. They are set out in the following documents (in one consolidated document – Attachment A):

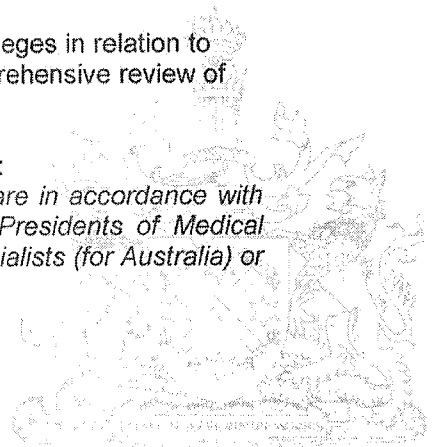
- Specialist Recognition Pathway for International Medical Graduates
- Flowchart - IMG Pathways to Specialist Recognition and Fellowship in Australia
- Assessment of Area of Need Applications – Information for Applicants and Employers
- Flowchart - Area of Need Assessment Process

#### **Australian Medical Council Accreditation**

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) accredits specialist medical colleges in relation to their education and training programs and the AMC undertook a comprehensive review of the RANZCR's programs in 2009.

In relation to the assessment of IMGs, the AMC Standard is as follows:

*The processes for assessing of specialists trained overseas are in accordance with the principles outlined by the AMC and the Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges Joint Standing Committee on Overseas Trained Specialists (for Australia) or by the Medical Council of New Zealand (for New Zealand).*



In summary, the AMC found that the College "has clear assessment frameworks for international medical graduates:

- seeking specialist recognition in Australia
- seeking Area of Need registration in Australia
- seeking registration within a vocational scope in New Zealand.

*In 2007-2008, the College reviewed its policy and procedures for the assessment of specialists trained overseas, in line with changes in national policies and Government initiatives. The College uses the three categories of 'substantially comparable', 'partially comparable' and 'not comparable' when classifying overseas-trained specialist based on their training, assessment and practice, which is in line with the guidelines for assessment of overseas-trained specialists been endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments' IMG Technical Committee".*

Chapter 7 of the AMC's Accreditation Report – 'Assessment of Overseas-trained Radiologists and Radiation Oncologists' is enclosed ([Attachment B](#)).

### **Support for Overseas Trained Doctors**

The RANZCR actively encourages those OTDs who are assessed as 'partially comparable' and those in Area of Need positions to pursue full specialist recognition and College Fellowship. The assessment process includes identifying areas of weakness or deficiency which need to be addressed through further training and experience and completion of relevant College examinations.

For some OTDs it is difficult to make an adequate assessment of their capabilities without observing them in practice. In such cases the College would prefer that the applicant was attached to a hospital department or other suitable accredited site so that their capabilities could be assessed over the course of a week. This has obvious resourcing implications.

In addition, following the assessment process, if it is determined that the applicant requires additional training, the onus is on the applicant to find a suitable training position. While the College may be able to suggest hospital departments which the applicant might approach, the College has no control over training sites and is unable to secure a position for the applicant. Faced with such obstacles, some decide to return to their country of origin or attempt to obtain an Area of Need position as an interim measure in order to remain in Australia.

Both for the assessment process and especially for the additional training, funding is required to assist and compensate the assessing and training departments / sites and to assist the OTD. Hospital departments are generally already over-stretched in training local candidates and in the absence of funding are not in a position to take on the extra demands of assisting OTDs nor to offer them training salaries..

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing has provided some financial support for up-skilling of OTDs, administered through state and territory health departments. However, funding has been inadequate to meet the need and obtaining information about and accessing funds has often been difficult.

With regard to Area of Need appointees (who usually fall into the partially comparable category), they are likely to have been approved for a limited scope of practice which recognises their competencies and their areas of weakness. To address these weaknesses and prepare for College examinations, they need access to training and experience in areas or imaging modalities which are usually unavailable at their place of employment and therefore need to be released by their employer to spend time at an appropriate site,

assuming such an arrangement can be made. The demands of service delivery make this difficult for the Area of need employee and the employing practice, in the absence of funding, availability of locums etc.

The College hopes that these comments are of assistance to the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Swinbourne', written in a cursive style.

Don Swinbourne  
**Chief Executive Officer**

2 February 2011



## THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF RADIOLOGISTS

### Specialist Recognition Pathway for International Medical Graduates

#### **Introduction**

It is not possible to practice as a specialist radiologist or radiation oncologist in Australia without undertaking the Australian Medical Council (AMC) Specialist Pathway. This pathway enables International Medical Graduates (IMG) to have their training, qualifications and experience assessed for comparability to an Australian trained specialist.

In New Zealand, the Medical Council of New Zealand refers IMG applications to the College for advice and recommendation as to whether the applicant should be granted vocational registration and under what conditions, if any.

This process is different to the Area of Need assessment process whereby an IMG is assessed for his/her suitability for a specified position in a designated Area of Need with limited registration. IMGs who would like to work as a specialist in an area of need position must undertake the Area of Need pathway through their prospective employer.

**It is important to note that the College solely assesses the comparability to the skills, qualifications and experience of an Australian trained specialist and cannot guarantee employment. It is up to the individual to arrange their employment in Australia and New Zealand.**

#### **Initial Step**

IMG applicants who do not hold the AMC Certificate or a primary medical degree from an Australian university and who want their specialist qualifications assessed must first apply to the AMC ([www.amc.org.au](http://www.amc.org.au)) for initial assessment.

If the IMG obtained their primary medical degree in Australia, but gained their specialist radiology / radiation oncology training overseas, they are not required to go through the AMC and can proceed to be interviewed. Please contact the College directly to arrange an assessment.

All relevant documentation and qualifications are checked through the International Credentials Service (EICS) of the Educational Commission for the Foreign Medical graduates (ECFMG). If the applicant meets the basic eligibility criteria, the AMC will refer the application to RANZCR to determine whether that applicant's qualifications and professional experience are comparable to those of an Australian-trained specialist. Once a satisfactory determination from the AMC is received, the applicant will send the AMC Form SC and the initial assessment fee to the RANZCR.

#### **Fees**

As of 1st July 2009, the fee for specialist recognition applications for comparability is \$1600 (GST exempt) this should be paid on the application being forwarded to the College for assessment.

The combined assessment fee for specialist recognition and area of need assessments will increase to \$4800 (GST exempt).

The fee covers administrative costs, document processing, document verification, interview preparation and assessor costs.

The RANZCR accepts Bank Drafts, Cheques, Money Drafts, all in Australian Dollars, and MasterCard, Visa, Amex and Diners. Please contact the College beforehand if you require a tax invoice for payment.

#### **The Interview**

The RANZCR will advise in writing the next step of the assessment process, being the face-to-face interview. The purpose of the application and interview process is to provide a fair and transparent opportunity for the College to make a proper assessment of the applicants' qualifications, training and experience.

The interview is conducted by the appropriate Branch Education Officer (BEO) with a senior Fellow of the College, both of whom are trained assessors. All applicants are interviewed face-to-face (no telephone interviews are conducted). While the College endeavours to interview applicants and provide a final recommendation within an 8 week period, this is not always possible as in many cases, the applicant is not in Australia during this time.

Interviews can usually be arranged in most capital cities although this is subject to the availability of the interview panel. Radiation Oncology interviews are only conducted at the College office in Sydney.

The interview is a structured and thorough process that provides an opportunity for the panel to:

- explain the assessment process;
- clarify the applicant's training and experience;
- determine the applicant's suitability for practice in Australia

It is an opportunity for the applicant to:

- detail and explain previous training and working experience.
- ask any questions of the panel about the assessment process.

Applicants are required to arrive for the interview no later than 10 minutes prior to the start of the interview. (If you are not able to attend please contact the College as soon as practical). The interviews are scheduled to run for 1 – 1.5 hours.

If for some reason you cannot make the interview, another interview can be scheduled through the College for a later date (it should be made aware that a re-schedule of an interview in many cases cannot be sooner than 4 weeks later).

#### **Specialist Short Term (Locum) Positions**

A specialist may be required as a locum in a practice not deemed as an Area of Need. In these circumstances, the applicant must still apply through the AMC specialist recognition pathway.

If the contract period is less than 12 weeks duration, the IMG committee chair and chief censor will consider the nature of the position and the appropriate process to be followed.

Any position greater than 12 weeks duration will be treated as a standard specialist recognition application.

#### **Recommendations of the Interview Panel**

The interview panel will determine if the IMG is substantially comparable, partially comparable or not comparable.

If **Substantially** comparable to an Australian-trained specialist, the applicant is required to take up appointment in a specialist (non Area of Need) position under supervision and undertake a peer-assessment in the work place.

If **Partially** comparable, the applicant is required either:-

- a) To undertake a prescribed period of supervised training in an accredited training site not exceeding two years and to sit and pass the College Part II examinations; **or**
- b) To sit and pass the College Part II examinations without additional training

If **Not** comparable, the applicant is referred back to the AMC where they may proceed down one of their pathways leading to general registration: -

- i) Competent Authority
- ii) Standard pathway (work-place based assessment) or
- iii) Standard pathway (AMC examination) – existing process

They may then compete for a training position along with other medical graduates.

There are 2 other existing pathways for those that are substantially comparable:

- i) **Assessment of Overseas Trained Sub-specialists**, whereby an individual applies to be assessed within their sub-specialty only e.g. Neuroradiology. They are required to meet eligibility prerequisites including 80% of clinical practice time devoted to sub-specialty, consultant in sub-specialty for minimum of 3 years, & minimum number of presentations & publications in the sub-specialty. They are granted specialist recognition after passing sub-specialty component of Part II exams and are then eligible for full Fellowship;
- ii) **International Recognition**, where an individual applies for admission to Fellowship of the College on the basis of International Recognition. They are of an extremely high caliber; have an extensive record of publications, presentations, recipient of academic awards and hold a high level academic appointment. They are interviewed by the Chief Censor and a Councillor and if successful, are granted specialist recognition. Admission to Fellowship under this provision is recommended only upon taking up a position in Australia or New Zealand.

#### **Undertaking Further Training**

It may be recommended that you require further training before you will be permitted to sit the FRANZCR Part II examination. This training is to be undertaken in an accredited department in Australia or New Zealand. The period of time required can range from 2 to 24 months.

Accredited radiology training positions are highly competitive. In many circumstances, you will be competing alongside Australian/New Zealand trained graduates. There are many more applicants than positions available and it should be noted that it may take time to secure a position. In some circumstances, the position may be unpaid.

The College is responsible for assessing the qualifications of the applicant and is responsible for the accreditation of training departments. The funding of a trainee position is the responsibility of the State Health department. The College accredits the positions, but does not determine their numbers or locations. Similarly, the College does not have a role in employment matters – this is solely up to training departments. You will need to contact departments directly to discuss obtaining a position.

A list of accredited department for radiology and radiation oncology training can be found on the College website:

Radiology - <http://www.ranzcr.edu.au/educationandtraining/radiodiagnosis/training/05.cfm>

Radiation Oncology - <http://www.ranzcr.edu.au/educationandtraining/radiationoncology/handbook/index.cfm>

All enquiries in regard to training positions should be made in writing to the Director.

### **Peer Review Assessment**

Where the initial assessment by the assessment panel deems that an applicant is suitable to work as a specialist without having to sit the FRANZCR Part II examinations, a peer review assessment will be required prior to the RANZCR recommending specialist registration without conditions. The assessors will have taken into consideration the training program and subsequent work experience undertaken by the IMG before coming to Australia. As a minimum, the following criteria apply (but are not restricted to):

- the training and assessment program is nationally based where the goals & objectives are clearly defined;
- the program is a minimum of four years and preferably five years in length;
- the training program is predominantly clinically based;
- training is conducted under supervision;
- objective written and clinical assessments are included in the program;
- the qualification obtained or conferred is nationally recognized;
- there is Continuing Professional Development activity;
- the training, assessment and CPD programs leading to nationally recognized qualification are accredited by an external assessing body;
- there is ongoing performance appraisal in the workplace;
- the applicant has had a minimum of **five (5) years post Fellowship experience** in a consultant position and/or held academic posts (senior lecturer or above) at nationally recognised institutions;
- The applicant has published a **minimum of one (1) article in a peer reviewed journal** or can submit for review an original manuscript of publishable quality;
- The consultant position being sought must be based in a hospital with a **partially/fully accredited imaging/radiation oncology department.**

After the interview, the assessment panel will make a recommendation to the IMG Committee who, in turn, will refer the application to the Education Board.

The purpose of the peer review is two-fold. It allows the IMG to gain experience in working in the Australian health care system and it also allows currently practicing specialists to interact with the IMG in a clinical context, to determine if he or she is practicing competently prior to recommendation of unconditional registration. In addition, the location of the consultant position in an accredited training department benefits the IMG in providing the necessary support and guidance, where required.

The peer review assessment must include:

- Practice under supervision/guidance of senior radiologist/radiation oncologist within institution or at a nearby site
- A review to occur in conjunction with the Branch Education Officer or others as determined by the Chief Censor and/or Education Board

The period of review is **within 24 months**, as determined on the basis of the initial assessment and interview but is typically 12 months.

Periodic assessments will be required at times nominated in the assessment report, with a more detailed multi-sourced feedback required at the end of the peer review period.

Subject to satisfying the peer-review assessment(s), the College would then recommend that the IMG be granted full specialist recognition without conditions. The outcomes of the peer review reports will be communicated to the relevant Medical Board by the College.

## **Part II Examination**

Information about the format and structure of the examinations is available on the College website at the following link:

[http://www.ranzcr.edu.au/educationandtraining/radiodiagnosis/exam\\_part2/index.cfm](http://www.ranzcr.edu.au/educationandtraining/radiodiagnosis/exam_part2/index.cfm)

## **Access to Medicare Benefits**

It should be noted that under the terms of the Commonwealth Health Insurance Act, practitioners who did not obtain their medical degree in Australia may be restricted in their ability to access Medicare benefits even after obtaining Fellowship, with the exception of those doctors working in designated Area of Need<sup>1</sup>. For further information regarding access to Medicare Benefits, refer to the Medicare Australia website at: <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/>.

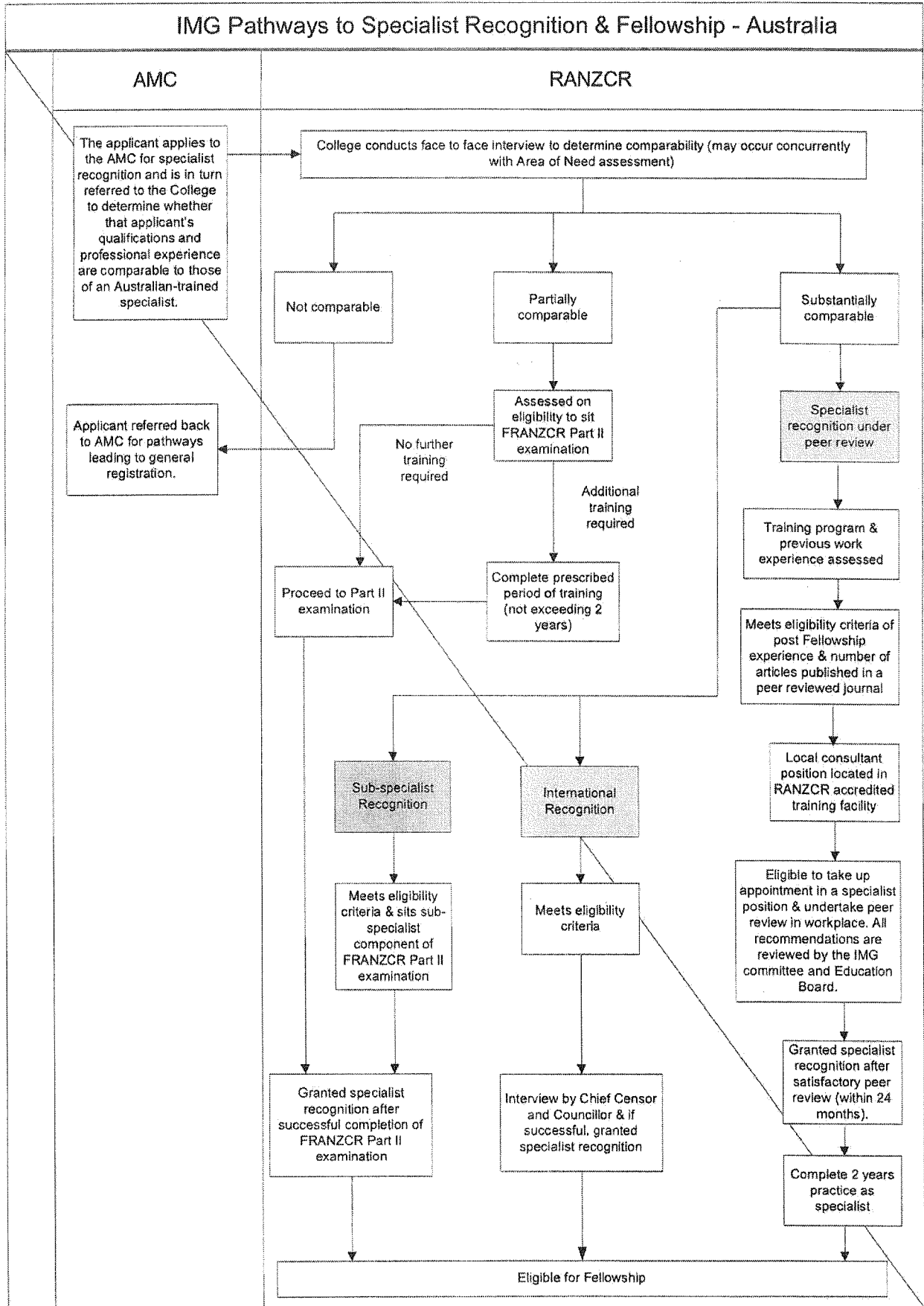
## **IMG Assessment in New Zealand**

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<sup>1</sup> For the RANZCR Area of Need Assessment process, please refer to <http://www.ranzcr.edu.au/otds/areaofneed/index.cfm>



The IMG assessment process in New Zealand is different from that in Australia. Further details on the NZ assessment process can be found at: <http://www.ranzer.edu.au/otds/nz.cfm>.





The Royal Australian and New Zealand  
College of Radiologists\*

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# Assessment of Area of Need Applications

*Information for Applicants and Employers*



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## 1. Introduction

This manual has been developed to provide International Medical Graduates (IMG), employers and recruiters with information on the College's assessment processes regarding Area of Need (AON) applications. Please note that a separate process exists for applications for Specialist Recognition and more information regarding this pathway is available on the College website.

The main aim of the assessment process is to determine the applicant's *suitability for the specified position*, in a designated Area of Need. Areas of need are determined by States and Territories, and can be any location in which there is a lack of specialists or where there are specialist positions that remain unfilled after local recruitment efforts. Ideally, an AON specialist will work in the designated Area of Need positions for 12 months before pursuing Specialist Recognition or Fellowship.

This is different to the Specialist Recognition process where an IMG is assessed for comparability to the skills, qualifications and experience of an Australian-trained specialist. For this reason, AON specialists who would like to proceed to specialist registration must undergo re-assessment under the Specialist Recognition pathway.

The manual has been prepared to enable applicants to undertake appropriate preparations and includes:

- the procedures that the employer/applicant must follow.
- the documents that must accompany the application.
- the document verification and assessment process followed by the College.
- the recommendation options.

## 2. Applications

Upon receipt of an application, an acknowledgement letter will be sent advising the next available assessment dates and times. These dates are published on the College website and the assessments are conducted at the Sydney College office. Assessment allocations will be reserved for those applicants whose Area of Need application forms and fees have been received by the College.

The College will endeavour to assess applicants and provide a final recommendation within 8 – 10 weeks of receiving ALL completed application documentation and the assessment fee, provided that the applicant is available for the assessment in Australia.

## 3. Document Verification

To make an application to the College, the Employer/Applicant must send the following documents to the College:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Form AON-SA (Copy)                        | These documents are available from the AMC       |
| 2. Form AON-SB (Original)                    |  |
| 3. Form AON-E (Copy)                         |  |
| 4. Area of Need Application Checklist        | These documents are found on the College website |
| 5. EARAON-F1 (Application Form)              |  |
| 6. EARAON-F2A & EARAON-F2B (Referee reports) |  |
| 7. EARAON-F3 (Position Description)          |  |
| 8. EARAON-F4 (Skills Assessment/Audit)       |  |
| 9. EARAON-F5 (Employer Details)              |  |

It is also advisable to forward copies of the employer job description and State Health Area of Need certification to the College.

It is not necessary to provide copies of supporting documentation required by the AMC, as the AMC usually forwards these to the College, along with their determination letter. In any case, copies of ALL documentation, whether for the College or AMC, should be kept by the applicant/employer/recruitment firm as a matter of good record keeping.

#### 4. Description of Forms

**4.1 Area of Need Application Checklist**

This checklist is designed to ensure that all the relevant documentation is collated and that all information regarding the Area of Need process is understood before submitting to the College.

**4.2 EARAON-F1 (Application Form)**

This form is designed to obtain comprehensive information regarding the applicant's examination history, working history and research.

**4.3 EARAON-F2A and EARAON-F2B (Referee Report Forms)**

Referee Report forms are required from three colleagues of the applicant and must be current. The names of the referees should be provided to the College and submitted with the initial application form. The referee reports should be forwarded separately to the College by each referee. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the referee reports are sent to the College.

The College may contact referees to obtain further information and clarification on the applicant.

**4.4 EARAON-F3 (Position Description)**

A comprehensive position description is required from the employer, outlining all relevant information pertaining to the proposed offer of employment to the applicant.

The position description outlines all relevant information regarding the clinical work that the applicant is expected to undertake. Information is sought on the dynamics of the practice and also a description of how, if necessary, oversight and supervision will be provided to the applicant.

**4.5 EARAON-F4 (Skills Assessment/Audit)**

The employer is to provide information (extracted from the position description submitted) on the modalities required and the approximate number of procedures which the applicant will be expected to undertake in the position.

An assessment of the applicant's skills in relation to each modality and previous experience is also required. It should be noted that the College may seek clarification and in some cases verification regarding the number of procedures undertaken in the practice and the skills of the applicant.

**4.6 EARAON-F5 (Employer Contact Form)**

Employers should complete this form regarding relevant contact details of the practice, and the practice's involvement in the RANZCR Quality and Accreditation Program.

Only one point of contact is requested. Employers/Practices/Recruitment Agencies should be aware that the College will only respond to queries from that nominated representative.

## 5. Assessment

Applicants will be advised of the date and time of their assessment in writing.

The assessment is conducted by a trained assessment panel. All applicants are assessed face-to-face at the RANZCR College office in Sydney, Australia on pre-determined dates throughout the year (**no telephone interviews** are conducted). The schedule of dates is available on the website. Applicants are required to arrive for the assessment no later than 10 minutes prior to the start of the assessment.

If for some reason the applicant cannot make the assessment, the employer will need to contact the College to try and reschedule, although the applicant and employer must be aware that another appointment may not be possible to schedule sooner than 8 weeks later.

There are two parts to the radiology assessment process:

**1. Interview** (approximately 30 – 45 minutes duration)

The purpose of the interview is to clarify the applicant's suitability for the position, by confirming details of the training and experience provided in the written documentation. It is also to provide an opportunity for the panel to:

- explain the assessment process;
- assess the applicant against the job description;
- answer the applicant's questions.

The assessors may also ask a number of clinical case scenarios relating to specific situations in the workplace based on the job description, such as how to protocol imaging studies and what are the expected imaging findings in different clinical conditions.

**2. Clinical Competency Assessments** (approximately 40 minutes duration)

The purpose of the clinical competency assessment is to assist the assessment panel in determining the applicant's basic radiological competence. It comprises of the applicant being shown a number of imaging studies relating to basic radiology, with emphasis on the modalities in the job description for which the IMG is being considered.

It should be noted that the clinical assessments are NOT intended to serve as an examination but to give an indication of the applicant's basic competence and suitability for the position which they have applied.

Attendance at assessments is restricted to the nominated assessors and College personnel directly involved in IMG assessment administration. The presence of other stakeholders in the assessments, such as the applicant's supervisor, the practice manager or recruitment agency representative, may be considered as a potential conflict of interest and may influence not only the applicant's performance but also compromise the objectivity of the assessment, given that the stakeholders may be known to the assessors.

All information regarding an applicant's status and assessment outcome is strictly confidential and only made known to those individuals who are direct stakeholders at the appropriate time. The results of the clinical assessments will be included in Area of Need assessment reports to the AMC, relevant Medical Board and the nominating employer. The reports will outline the competencies assessed and relate those to the modalities/skills required for the position description and indicate the supervision conditions and any other special requirements.

**NB: Radiation Oncology assessments will continue to be interview based until further notice.**

## 6. Recommendations

The outcome of the assessment will be to provide the College with a recommendation regarding the suitability of the applicant for the specified position.

The applicant will be deemed:

- i. unsuitable; or
- ii. suitable to practice under supervision; or
- iii. suitable to practice unsupervised.

Supervision may involve two different types –

- (a) *DIRECT* - the applicant is not proficient to report in a particular modality. The applicant will require one-on-one supervision, which involves verification of all reports by the supervisor and/or double-reporting of films (usually specified as such in the outcome report). In addition, the supervisor must be readily available on-site to support and assist the Area of Need doctor. A report at regular intervals from a supervisor will be required at a set period in time, as specified in the outcome report.
- (b) *IN-DIRECT* - the applicant requires some level of supervision (not one-on-one) until the applicant is self proficient to report in a particular modality, as specified in the assessment outcome. Ideally the supervisor is on-site and available to provide assistance to the applicant where required. It may be useful for the applicant to attend tutorials or undertake a refresher course in the specified modalities. A report from a nominated supervisor will be required at a set point in time.

## 7. Guidance or Oversight

As part of the recommendations to the Medical Board, guidance or oversight for an AoN applicant is sought from a specialist radiologist at the practice, approved by the RANZCR, during his/her time in the AoN position. The approved overseer will submit reports to the RANZCR, Medical Board or other, as required.

Guidance is classified as not supervision, but a means of support and direction for an AoN appointee, where needed.

## 8. Follow Up Assessments

Assessment reports will be required from the nominated supervisor to be completed on the applicant at 3 months and 12 months after commencement in the position (or at other intervals specified at the time of the assessment), and these are forwarded confidentially to the College by the supervisor. The College may contact the supervisor to obtain further information and clarification on the applicant. The aims of the assessment are to review the appointee's performance in the position and to obtain feedback on the applicant.

If a report received from the supervisor is unsatisfactory, the College will arrange for an on-site visit of the appointee in the practice setting environment within two months. The cost of the visit (travel, accommodation, incidental expenses) will be borne by the employer. The College will forward the report of the visit to the employer and Medical Board.

If the assessor reports that the appointee's performance is unsatisfactory, a repeat site visit will be required three months later. If there is no obvious improvement in performance, the appointee will be deemed unsuitable for the position.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to review the limitations of practice of the AoN doctor, as outlined in the AoN assessment report, and to comment on the training and/or experience that the AoN doctor has gained to satisfy the conditions.



In order for conditions relating to limitation of the scope of practice of an AoN radiologist to be lifted, the employer, in conjunction with the supervisor, must do the following:

- Write to the College outlining why the restrictions should be lifted
- Provide documented verification on the relevant training and experience in the restricted areas, such as attendance at courses, seminars, CPD, weekly clinical meetings, or other, to substantiate the claims

The documentation will be sent to the IMG committee chair for review and the employer will be notified of the outcome. It is recommended that a review of restrictions occur no earlier than 6 months after the AON doctor has commenced in that position.

### 9. Re-Applications

Successful applicants are approved by RANZCR to work only in a specific AoN position. This means that they cannot work in that post for a period of time and then decide to move to another position or employer. If the AoN appointee wishes to move to a new position, he/she will need to consult with the College and a new application will be required.

The **new employer** is to provide:

*EARAON-F3 (Position Description)*

*EARAON-F4 (skills Audit)*

*EARAON-F5 (Employer Details)*

Applicants will still need to be re-assessed face-to-face against the new position description, including undergoing the relevant key competency assessment. The full fee is payable.

If an employer wishes to vary an AoN position for an applicant previously approved, the employer is to provide the new job description to the College, along with a copy of the State Health certification. It will then be forwarded to the chief censor and chair of the IMG Committee to determine whether an assessment is required.

Applicants who have previously been assessed for **specialist recognition** (eligibility to sit the FRANZCR Part II examinations) and then apply for an Area of Need position, will need to pay the full AoN application fee and need to be re-assessed face to face for the Area of Need position by undergoing the relevant key competency assessments.

### 10. Short Term (Locum) Positions

If the contract period is less than 12 weeks duration, the IMG committee chair and chief censor will consider the nature of the position and the appropriate process to be followed.

Any position greater than 12 weeks duration will be treated as a standard AoN application.

### 11. Membership of the RANZCR

Applicants are encouraged to become a member of the RANZCR. The College has a membership category for AoN applicants distinguished as Educational Affiliates.

Membership entitles you to receive –

- the College's quarterly Newsletter;
- "Australasian Radiology", the College's quarterly journal;
- access to the members section of the RANZCR web page (via a password system);
- access to participate in the RANZCR Continuing Professional Development Program
- other mailings and relevant correspondence

Subscriptions are paid annually and the memorandum of fees is available from the College website.

## 12. Specialist Recognition and Fellowship of the College

As of 1 July, 2010, medical practitioners with limited registration for area of need must comply with the Medical Board of Australia's registration standard on limited registration for area of need which includes if the IMG is intending to practise radiology or radiation oncology in Australia longer term, the individual must provide evidence to confirm the satisfactory progress towards meeting the qualifications required for general registration or specialist registration.

This means that an AON specialist must apply for specialist recognition, either concurrently with the AON application or while they are working in the AON position.

Further information regarding the requirements for limited registration for area of need can be found at the Medical Board of Australia website: <http://www.medicalboard.gov.au/>.

Should the applicant wish to apply for specialist recognition, they must undergo reassessment under the Specialist Recognition pathway which is a separate process. Once they have completed the requirements for specialist recognition satisfactorily, they will be eligible for Fellowship of the College.

It is important to note that an applicant who is assessed to be partially comparable cannot apply to sit for the FRANZCR Part II examinations until they have completed 12 months in the one AON position. These 12 months are **not** cumulative between positions.

## 13. Appeals

The College has a comprehensive appeals process to enable candidates who do not agree with the College's decision to have a process that would ensure their concerns are addressed in a fair manner.

A full description of the appeals policy is available on the College website.

## 14. When to Contact the College

It is very important that the College is contacted **immediately** when the following occur:

- a. The practice undergoes changes that affect the place of employment of the Area of Need doctor, i.e. addition of modalities to the practice, changes in workforce numbers of radiologists/radiation oncologists (that may affect the limitations of practice)
- b. Changes to the scope of employment (see section 9)
- c. Changes to the supervision of the Area of Need doctor.
- d. If the Area of Need doctor resigns from the position

## 15. Enquiries and Further Information

**The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists**

Education Officer, IMG

International Medical Graduate Assessment

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists

Level 9, 51 Drutt Street

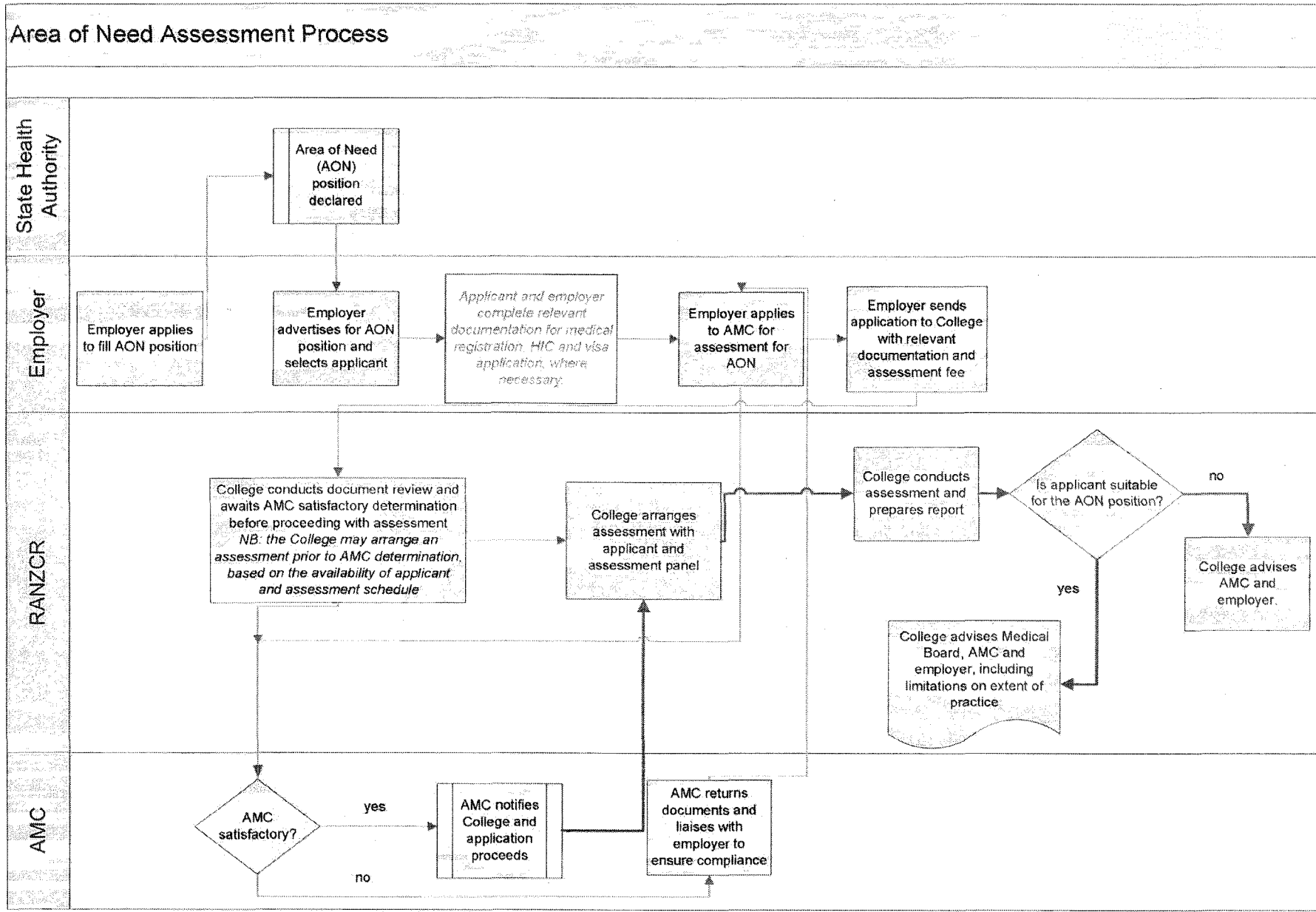
SYDNEY NSW 2000

AUSTRALIA

Ph: 61 2 9268 9724

Fax: 61 2 9268 9799

E-mail: [Phillip.Munro@ranzcr.edu.au](mailto:Phillip.Munro@ranzcr.edu.au)



College assessment process is 8 weeks from satisfactory AMC determination.

## **7 Assessment of Overseas-trained Radiologists and Radiation Oncologists**

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### **7.1 AMC accreditation standards**

The AMC accreditation standard is as follows:

- The processes for assessing specialists trained overseas are in accordance with the principles outlined by the AMC and the Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges Joint Standing Committee on Overseas Trained Specialists (for Australia) or by the Medical Council of New Zealand (for New Zealand).

### **7.2 The College's assessment role**

As noted earlier in this report, the International Medical Graduates Committee, which is a sub-committee of the two Education Boards, coordinates the assessment of specialists trained overseas. The activities of the Committee are supported by an assessment panel consisting of 34 fellows.

Like other specialist medical colleges, RANZCR has two principal processes for the assessment of overseas-trained specialists seeking registration to practise in Australia:

1. The specialist assessment procedure is used to determine the comparability of training and qualifications of overseas-trained specialists with Australian-trained specialists. The procedure is administered by the AMC, but assessment of the applicant's training and experience is undertaken by the College.
2. The area of need assessment process is used to assess the doctor's qualifications for a particular position following the declaration of an 'Area of Need' by a state or territory health department. The procedure is administered by the AMC, and assessment of the applicant's training and experience is undertaken by the college. While the documentation requirements and processing arrangements are broadly similar to those for applicants through the specialist pathway listed above, some differences arise because of the need for accelerated and parallel processing of area of need applications by the AMC and the assessing college.

In New Zealand, practitioners are registered under the *Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003*. The pathway for assessment of overseas-trained specialists is based on the statutory test in New Zealand (specified in Act), that is, 'equivalent to or as satisfactory as' a New Zealand specialist practicing in the same area of medicine. The New Zealand assessment committee of the College advises the Medical Council of New Zealand on whether or not an international medical graduate meets this test. Until 2007, for those doctors deemed suitable for registration, the Council granted provisional vocational scope of practice to work under supervision and assessment for a period of between twelve months and two years and authorised a change from provisional to vocational scope of practice when the doctor had satisfactorily complete the period of time, and other requirements. In 2007, the Medical Council of New Zealand implemented a new policy for the assessment of performance of international medical graduates registered in a provisional vocational scope. A successful assessment would enable the international medical graduate to gain full registration in a vocational scope.

The College's accreditation submission outlines the following process for dealing with applications referred from the AMC:

- The RANZCR advises the applicant in writing on the next step of the assessment process, which is a structured, face-to-face interview.
- The interview runs for one to one and a half hours and is conducted by the appropriate branch education officer with a senior fellow of the College, both of whom are trained assessors. The interview is described as an opportunity for the panel to explain the assessment process; clarify the applicant's training and experience; and determine the applicant's suitability for practice in Australia.
- The interview panel determines if the applicant is substantially comparable to an Australian-trained specialist, partially comparable or not comparable. If substantially comparable to an Australian-trained specialist, the applicant is required to take up appointment in a specialist position under supervision and undertake a peer assessment in the workplace within 24 months, but typically 12 months. The peer review assessment includes: practice under supervision/guidance; a review in conjunction with the branch education officer or others as determined by the Chief Censor and/or Education Board; and periodic assessments at times nominated in the assessment report, with a more detailed multi-sourced feedback required at the end of the peer review period. If partially comparable, the applicant is required either a) to undertake a prescribed period of supervised training in an accredited training site not exceeding two years and to sit and pass the College Part II examinations; or b) to sit and pass the College Part 2 examinations without additional training. Applicants judged as not comparable to an Australian-trained specialist are referred to the AMC. They may proceed down one of their pathways leading to general registration.

There are two other pathways for applicants considered substantially comparable to an Australian-trained specialist:

- **Sub-specialist Assessment**, whereby an individual applies to be assessed within their sub-specialty only. Subject to meeting eligibility prerequisites, the applicant may be granted specialist recognition after passing the subspecialty component of the Part 2 exams and then is eligible for full fellowship;
- **International Recognition** is available for individuals judged to be of extremely high calibre; with an extensive record of publications, presentations, recipient of academic awards and a high level academic appointment. Applicants are assessed through interview. Admission to fellowship under this provision is recommended only upon taking up a position in Australia or New Zealand.

### 7.3 Stakeholder comments on the College's assessment processes

During this review, the AMC sought written feedback from a range of stakeholders about the College's processes for assessment of overseas-trained specialists. The Team also interviewed stakeholders during site visits. Those invited to comment included health service managers, medical boards, medical school deans, and the overseas-trained specialists who have sought assessment through the College's processes.

In general, health services managers commented on the thoroughness of the College's processes. It was suggested that the College's processes for assessing comparability could be improved, with greater clarity about how a decision is made on whether or not an applicant is

comparable to an Australian-trained specialist or not. The new radiology and radiation oncology curricula, with their clearer statements of outcomes should assist in providing this clarity.

#### 7.4 Team's findings

The College is an Australian and New Zealand College. It has clear assessment frameworks for international medical graduates:

- seeking specialist recognition in Australia;
- seeking area of need registration in Australia;
- seeking registration within a vocational scope in New Zealand.

In 2007-2008, the College reviewed its policy and procedures for the assessment of specialists trained overseas, in line with changes in national policies and Government initiatives. The College uses the three categories of 'substantially comparable', 'partially comparable' and 'not comparable' when classifying overseas-trained specialist based on their training, assessment and practice, which is in line with the guidelines for assessment of overseas-trained specialists endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments IMG Technical Committee.

The Team noted that the assessment tools being developed and implemented for the new radiology and radiation oncology training programs may be applied in the assessment of overseas-trained specialists as appropriate. Multi-source feedback is being used for those overseas-trained specialists proceeding on the peer-assessment pathway.

It was pleasing to see the high proportion of international medical graduates who passed the College Part 2 examination between 1997 and 2008. Two hundred and thirteen attempted the examination in this period and 170 passed, with the large majority passing in their first three attempts.

The number of international medical graduates applying for specialist recognition in Australia has increased substantially over the period 2006 to 2008 inclusive; from 16 in 2006 to 37 in 2008. Those applying for area of need assessment increased from 21 to 39 in the same period. The number of international medical graduates applying for registration within a vocational scope in New Zealand is substantially lower than in Australia, with around two to three international medical graduate applicants per year.

As described earlier, a new Medical Council of New Zealand policy, implemented in 2007, provides for the assessment of performance of international medical graduates registered in a provisional vocational scope. There are international medical graduates registered in a provisional vocational scope whom are waiting for an assessment. The College recognises that performance assessment is a key component of the New Zealand pathway and needs to support the Council by ensuring resources are available for its implementation.

International medical graduates registered in a vocational scope in New Zealand are not automatically recognized as fellows of the College but may join College programs, such as CPD, by joining as an educational affiliate.

The College has a process for educational affiliates to become fellows of the College without the need to pass the Part 2 examination and this is to be commended.

**Commendations and Recommendations**

Commendations

N The College's processes for educational affiliates to become fellows of the College without the need to pass the Part 2 examination.

*Recommendations*

*That the RANZCR:*

27 *Use the educational objectives established for the radiology and radiation oncology programs to inform the process of assessment of overseas-trained specialists.*