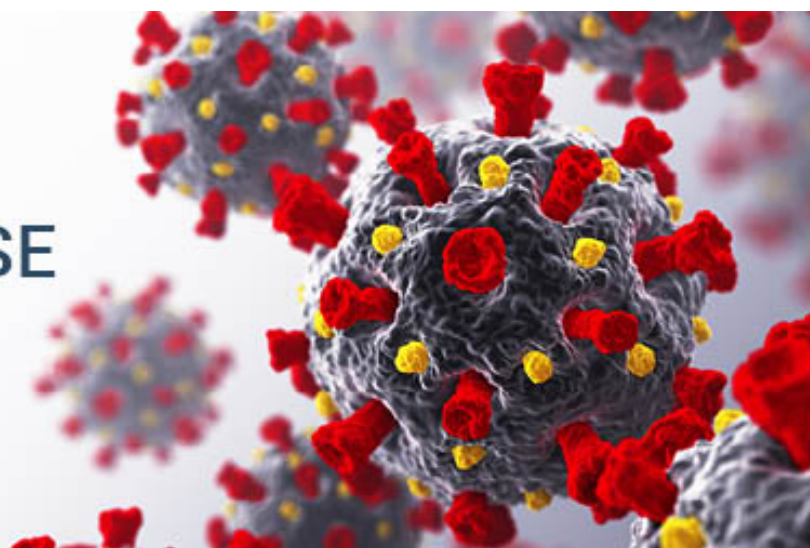


UPDATE

RACP COVID-19 RESPONSE



7 August 2020

Advocacy

- Planning has commenced on a 'virtual town hall' on telehealth involving the Commonwealth Health Minister and RACP members, with the timing subject to COVID-19 related developments.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): On 30 July 2020, a voluntary survey on PPE access by members was sent to all practising Australian members, with a deadline of close of business 3 August 2020. The results of the survey will be used in further advocacy on member access to PPE.
- AFOEM Fellows have published some further guidance on '[COVID-19 Workplace Risk Management](#)' following approval from the Infection Control Expert Group that advises the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee.

Advisory Groups – Education Learning and Assessment (ELA)

- A large amount of consultation was conducted over May/June 2020 to discuss the delivery/format options and dates for the postponed Divisional Clinical Exam (DCE), with many stakeholders keen for the DCE to be moved back to 2020 if possible. A new modular exam delivery approach was approved by the College Education Committee (CEC) on 26 June 2020 and rescheduled dates were approved out-of-session on 7 July 2020, which has the exam spanning from the end of 2020 to early 2021. Trainees, DPEs and examiners were informed on 15 July 2020. Negative feedback was received from a large group of trainees, especially Victorian-based trainees, regarding moving all, or elements of, the exam to this year when previous communication had been that it would all be postponed to 2021. Many were concerned about the time to prepare and the changes arising from the modular approach. The CEC approved on 24 July 2020 that the exam attempt will not count if they are unsuccessful in passing the exam. Communication was sent to trainees on 31 July 2020 informing them of this and that dates for Victoria are under review due to the increased number of COVID-19 cases in the state throughout July 2020. A survey has been opened to all eligible DCE candidates to get their feedback on exam preparation and dates.
- Weekly meetings of the DCE Implementation Working Group have been held from the beginning of July 2020 to progress how the modular format will work. Trials of Virtual Long Cases have been underway by examiners and will be evaluated in early August 2020. A large amount of other work has been progressed by the project team to prepare for the DCE.
- A webinar for national and state DCE examiners is being organised for mid-August 2020.
- 2021 Contingency planning arrangements for all College exams is underway and will be discussed at the next Examinations Advisory Group on 21 August 2020.
- AChSHM Sexual Health Exit Assessment is scheduled for delivery on 14 August 2020, using video conference technology.
- There are planned communications to all Faculty trainees in August 2020, providing updates on the individual delivery of exams in 2021.
- A paper was sent to the August Board meeting on a communications approach for COVID-19 updates by the ELA Team.

Professional Practice

Trainees

An Adult Internal Medicine (AIM) webinar (Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand) held on 20 July 2020 and Paediatric and Child Health (PCH) webinar (Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand) held on 23 July 2020 provided an update on recent COVID-19 changes, including DCE and pAT.

The AIM webinar was not well received by trainees; there was not enough time for trainee questions and presentations needed to be tailored more for the audience. Trainees also wanted answers to many questions which were not yet available as answers were pending the outcomes of the DCE trials and Committee and Advisory Group meetings scheduled for August.

The PCH webinar approach was amended to reflect feedback from the AIM webinar. Lessons learned will be applied to all future webinars. All questions received pre, during and after the webinar have been themed and collated, with responses published along with the webinar recordings on 31 July 2020. A Post Event Survey Report has been created and provided to the College Trainees' Committee.

Member meetings

All face-to-face member meetings and events across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand were cancelled and replaced where possible with Zoom meetings. As a result of the current resurgence of COVID-19 cases in eastern Australian states and ongoing physical distancing rules, the Australian RACP offices remain closed. Due to the different circumstances in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Wellington office is open to staff, with face-to-face member meetings being reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The College is mindful that members are essential healthcare workers and that risk management strategies must also take this

community responsibility into consideration. Face-to-face meetings remain constrained by domestic and international travel conditions with respect to both scheduling and cost.

CPD

As of 30 July 2020, 93.2 per cent of Fellows completed their 2019 CPD record. The extended deadline for submissions closed on 31 July 2020. Throughout August, the College will contact all Fellows with an incomplete record to offer additional support for them to achieve CPD compliance.

For the 2020 CPD year, Aotearoa New Zealand Fellows are exempt and whilst the Medical Board of Australia is encouraging Fellows to continue to do CPD, no action will be taken if 2020 CPD requirements are not met. The College acknowledges that Fellows will complete a multitude of CPD activities this year, whether up-skilling in the use of telehealth for virtual consultations, reviewing online mental health resources, or of course vaccine development for those who are involved in immunology and infectious diseases research. The types of innovation the College is seeing from our medical profession at present is perhaps the ultimate CPD. The College will not monitor or audit CPD records in 2020, but CPD records will still be open if Fellows wish to record their CPD.

Overseas Trained Physicians (OTPs)

The College continues to support OTPs experiencing difficulty as a result of COVID-19. Their Issues include:

- OTPs who are unable to return home and require ongoing College support to remain practising in Australia
- delays in commencement of assessment positions due to travel restrictions
- the consequences for a very small group of OTPs required to sit the DCE.

In June, the OTP Assessment Subcommittees considered the impact on six OTPs to determine whether alternative assessments can be completed or whether they are required to complete the DCE when next scheduled.

Extensions continue to be provided to OTPs on a case-by-case basis, in line with regulatory advice issued in March 2020. The College also continues to expedite applications for OTPs currently in Australia with a job secured and are providing additional health services support.

RACP Facilities and staff

- Notices at all RACP entry points advising visitors not to enter will shortly be updated to include if visitors have been in contact with a COVID-19 positive person and or been to a 'hotspot' (which will apply to all jurisdictions).

RACP Resources

- [College COVID-19 webpage](#)
- [National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce – evidence-based clinical guidelines](#)
 - [Living Guidelines](#) – High-priority, evidence-based clinical COVID-19 guidelines updated weekly with the latest research.