



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

**Advanced Training Forum
9th December, 2013**

Report



Executive Summary

Background

The forum attendees heard presentations on:

- [Current and Planned Education Improvements](#) Dr Marie-Louise Stokes, Director of Education, RACP.
- [Education Governance and the Implications for Advanced Training](#) Professor John Wilson, Chair, CEC.
- [Education Governance Implementation](#) Dr Clare Le Roy, Senior Project Officer, RACP.
- [Trans-Tasman alignment](#) Dr Jonathan Christiansen, NZ/AMEC, CEC
- [Trans-Tasman alignment in Neurology](#) Professor Alan Barber, Chair, STC Neurology

Key Discussion Points

- Future topics for Advanced Training Fora identified, discussed and prioritised.
- The impact of governance changes, particularly in regards to the size and structure of committees and relationships with Specialty Societies and other external stakeholders.
- Consultation and the process for providing feedback on committee specific Terms of Reference.
- The Education Governance Change Kits and the timelines for providing the required information.
- Trans-Tasman alignment benefits, obstacles and potential alignment models.

Concerns

During discussion and feedback sessions the following concerns were raised:

- Delegates felt unprepared for the discussions as no agenda or pre-reading material had been supplied prior to the event.
- The timelines outlined in the Change Kit were too soon to allow for adequate consultation or provision of considered feedback.
- The role of Specialty Societies and other external stakeholders in the new Governance structure was not clear and further consultation was needed.
- Unresolved Trans-Tasman alignment issues and the lack of a suitable alignment model would affect the ability of some committees to make Governance changes.
- Workload issues associated with changes to committee size and structure.

Summary and next steps

- Capacity to Train, Assessment and Redesigning Curricula have been identified as priority topics for upcoming Advanced Training Fora.
- Updated Change Kits incorporating feedback from the event to be sent to Chairs and due date for responses adjusted to May 30th to allow time for consultation with committees.
- An online repository of AT Fora documents created
- Letter sent to Specialty Societies inviting feedback and a meeting arranged with RCPA to discuss Education Governance changes.



Contents

Advanced Training Forum Overview	4
Purpose	4
Participants	4
Overview of Current and Planned Education Improvements	5
Activity One: Topics for Future AT Fora.....	5
Outcomes	6
Education Governance and the Implications for Advanced Training.....	7
Purpose	7
Advanced Training Fora	7
Question and Answer session.....	8
Timeframes and Outcomes	8
Education Governance and your committee.....	9
Surveys.....	9
Change Support Kits	9
Activity 3: Change Kit information and committee specific draft Terms of Reference.....	10
Outcomes	10
Trans-Tasman Alignment.....	11
Potential Steps towards a Trans-Tasman Advanced Training Committee.....	11
Activity 4: Trans-Tasman Alignment	11
Appendix 1: Original Agenda	13
Appendix 2: Attendees and Seating Plan	14



Advanced Training Forum Overview

The inaugural meeting of the Advanced Training (AT) Forum was held on Monday 9 December 2013 from 10am to 4pm at the Amora Hotel Jamison in Sydney.

Purpose

The purpose of the AT Forum was to bring together all Chairs of the RACP Advanced Training Committees in Divisions, Faculties and Chapters, including New Zealand and trainee representatives to:

- Gain a broad overview of current and planned College Education improvements and their relevance for AT.
- Plan how to use the AT Forum to best meet the needs of AT committees and training programs.
- Discuss how to best implement the Board agreed education governance review plan in Advanced Training.

Participants

The invitees included representatives from each of the Advanced Training Committees across the Divisions, Faculties and Chapters across Australia and New Zealand. Representatives from the College Education Committee, College Trainees Committee, and College staff were also invited.

Appendices 1 and 2 outline the original agenda and a full list of attendees.



Overview of Current and Planned Education Improvements

RACP's strategic goal is to be the preferred educator and assessor of physician performance. There are strategic shifts the College is working towards to achieve this goal:

- From time –based apprenticeship to competency based progression and life-long learning
- From tacit requirements to explicit aligned standards
- From uncoordinated, multiple or duplicative processes to streamlined, standardised processes
- From disconnected elements of training to elements of training aligning and reinforcing one another.

The following horizons are central to current and planned Education improvements:

Horizon 1: Getting the basics right

- Clear PREP program handbooks
- Supervisor Training
- Clarity around research projects

Horizon 2: Investing in strategic change

- Exam strategy
- Impact of changes to training programs
- Upskilling staff and training committees

Horizon 3: Working towards future goals

- Integrated College wide standards
- The proposed RACP Standards Framework
- Competency based progression
- Entrustable professional activities
- Capacity to train

Activity One: Topics for Future AT Fora

Tables were given a list of identified topics for future AT Fora and invited to discuss these and rank in order of importance. Table groups were also given the opportunity to nominate other topics for consideration.

Key discussion points and questions for consideration arose from the activity as outlined below:

Capacity to train

- How do we tailor training to address future healthcare needs?
- How do we prioritise? By specialty or geographic needs?
- How can we encourage more rural training?
- Are we training people in the right areas for the future?



Trainees in Difficulty

- On what basis is failure to progress determined?
- How do we address conflicts of interest between supervisors/employers?
- How do we develop exit pathways for trainees who end BT and do not wish to continue into Advanced Training?

Assessment

- How do we make formative assessments more integrated in the workplace?
- Are the tools flexible enough to cater for the needs of different specialties?
- What sort of qualitative elements/metrics should be considered?
- Are the current guidelines surrounding research projects too restrictive?
- Will additional exam dates add to pressures on health service providers (multiple leave requests)?

Other topics for consideration

- How do we manage relationships with other Colleges, joint training programs and other stakeholders in conjunction with the proposed Governance changes?
- Who is responsible for accreditation, and what standards are currently being used?
- How do we improve communication with education committees?
- How do we work with health services and advocate for protected time for supervisory responsibilities?

Outcomes

The results from Activity One as below will guide the content for future AT Fora.

Topics	1	2	3	Total	Rank
Capacity to train	5	0	6	21	1
Assessment	1	8	3	21	2
Re-designing curricula	1	2	9	16	3
Resources	0	2	6	10	4
Trainees in Difficulty	1	0	0	3	5
Evaluation and research	0	0	0	0	6



Education Governance and the Implications for Advanced Training

Purpose

The RACP has made changes to the education governance structure to simplify and establish clear lines of reporting. The key objectives are to:

- Streamline committee structures
- Clarify reporting lines
- Reduce complexity and risk in decision-making
- Calibrate the committee terms of reference and membership across programs
- Align Australia and NZ
- Meet or exceed AMC/ MCNZ requirements
- Satisfy all stakeholder expectations for open and transparent decision making.

The implications for Advanced Training can be linked to the areas of good governance as below:

Structure

- Reduction of standing committee numbers from around 126 to 60.
- Changes to committee structure in terms of size, membership composition, name and some reporting lines.
- Continuity will take precedence over immediate change in committee sizes with an 18 month period set as a timeframe to complete the changes.
- Natural attrition is a key suggestion in the reduction of committee sizes.
- Cases can be made to increase committee sizes where special circumstances apply (e.g. large number of trainees in General Paediatrics)

Standards and Policies

- 2012 – 2013 has seen key policies around Progression Through Training and Flexible Training developed and implemented.
- Policies under review or in development include Academic Honesty and Plagiarism, Selection and Entry into Training, Supervision Policy, Supporting Trainees in Difficulty and Recognition of Prior Learning.

Quality Decision Making

- Clear Terms of Reference and standardisation of Terms of Reference to ensure quality decision making across a complex College structure.
- Professional training and support will be provided to Chairs and committee members.

Advanced Training Fora

- AT Fora will be used to guide strategy and approach in Advanced Training and provide opportunities for professional development.
- The AT Forum is interactive, collegiate, a place for calibration and problem solving and a way to ensure consistency across college training programs.
- The AT Forum is not a decision making body or a forum for discussing the progress of individual trainees.



Question and Answer session

Delegates were given the opportunity to ask questions and/or provide feedback following the presentation. Some key concerns arose as summarised below:

- Concerns were raised that defining committee size purely by ratio of number of trainees to number of committee members did not adequately reflect the complexity of training programs.
- Questions were asked about Trans-Tasman alignment and the problematic nature of reducing committee sizes whilst allowing for appropriate representation from both sides of the Tasman.
- Concerns were expressed about the lack of engagement with Specialty Societies and other key stakeholders regarding the proposed Education Governance changes.
- Concerns were raised that the change was a direct result of accreditation timelines as opposed to a considered approach of the realities of training.
- Concerns were raised that reduced committee sizes in conjunction with a lack of consistency in Education Officer support posed risks to effective succession and retention of training program knowledge.

Timeframes and Outcomes

- The new Education Governance structure is currently being implemented with all process and procedural changes to be completed prior to AMC reaccreditation visits in the latter half of 2014.
- A Chair for the Advanced Training Fora is to be elected from within the group and an Expression of Interest process will be conducted for this. The documentation and process for EOI to be distributed to all invitees over the coming weeks.
- In the short term (6-9 months) individual committees should review their own draft Terms of Reference incorporating Trans-Tasman alignment, approve and make notes in the minutes to reflect this. They can then commence meeting in the new format under the new Terms of Reference.
- In the medium term (1 -2 years) individual committees should optimise their membership sizes, give consideration to delegation, relationships with Specialty Societies and joint training programs.
- Dates for 2014 Advanced Training Fora are to be announced in the New Year.
- An online repository of Advanced Training Fora documents has been established and the link sent to delegates with this report.

Following the Q&A/Feedback session outlined above the decision was taken to skip Activity 2 (looking at the draft Terms of Reference for the AT Forum) and to move to Session 3 to give table groups more time to look at their own committee specific draft Terms of Reference.



Education Governance and your committee.

Education Governance implementation is overseen by a working group of the College Board. Over the last few months the group has spent time mapping current committees and workloads against future committees and workloads to identify gaps and risk areas.

Surveys

Two surveys have been undertaken to gather details on workloads of College committees with educational responsibilities.

The first survey was sent to all college staff with responsibility for education committees across Divisions, Faculties and Chapters in both Australia and New Zealand. The key issues arising from the survey as follows:

- There is a lack of understanding of education governance changes and a need for greater communication with staff.
- Continuity of corporate knowledge and a lack of succession planning in committees was an area of risk
- Concerns over how Trans-Tasman alignment will function in practice.
- Concerns over committee workloads and representation with reduction in committee sizes.

The second survey was sent to the Chairs of all College Education committees:

- Most reported that their committee had a manageable workload
- Site accreditation and project assessment were the two highest workload areas. There is strong support for finding new ways of working in committees around these areas.
- Concerns over staff turnover and the variation of support provided to committees and implications for induction.
- Concerns, particularly from Chairs of NZ committees over workload implications associated with Trans-Tasman alignment.
- Chairs tend to have a higher workload than other committee members.

Addressing the concerns will involve finding new ways of working including looking at distribution of workloads, delegation and relationships with Specialty Societies.

Change Support Kits

Change Support Kits have been developed to assist the committees in implementing the changes.

- RACP staff will be provided with Change Kit training so they can assist with queries.
- There are Frequently Asked Questions inside the kit
- Much of the material provided is in the form of appendices, making the kit seem more daunting than it actually is.



Activity 3: Change Kit information and committee specific draft Terms of Reference

Table groups were given the opportunity to review their committee specific draft ToR and to make some notes regarding questions/suggestions and required support.

Questions and Suggestions

- What are the benefits of this for supervisors, trainees and the committees?
- Provision of feedback needs to come prior to work on implementation/operational procedure.
- Clarification is needed on point of interaction with specialty societies.
- Clarification required on joint committee representation and this requires consultation.
- Clarification on how to manage increasing workloads with smaller committees.
- Clarification on the appropriate use of delegation to manage workload.

What other support is needed?

- A list of College responsibilities towards the committee and what it will do to provide support should be provided.
- More time is required to provide feedback – 28th February is too soon. Requests for confirmation that an extension on this will be given.
- Face to face or teleconference committee meetings need to take place to discuss Change Kit and ToR prior to providing feedback.
- Support in fully understanding the by-laws and implications of these on decision making.
- Senior College staff should be available for a Q&A session at committee meeting.
- A front page flagging the changes pertinent to each committee.

Outcomes

- The request for an extension has been acknowledged and the new due date for Change Kits is May 30th, 2014.
- Change Kits have been updated following feedback from the Advanced Training Forum. The new Change Kits will be issued with this report.
- A meeting has been arranged with the RCPA to discuss Education Governance change.
- Specialty Societies have been sent a letter inviting them to provide feedback on Education Governance change.



Trans-Tasman Alignment

There are a variety of scenarios with current Advanced Training Committees in terms of Trans-Tasman alignment including:

- Single Trans-Tasman committees already in existence (e.g. Neurology, Nuclear Medicine)
- NZ only committee (Dermatology)
- Separate AUS/NZ committees but a single Australasian Specialty Society (e.g. Cardiology)
- Separate AUS/NZ committees and separate AUS/NZ Specialty Societies (e.g. Gastroenterology)
- Joint Specialty Advisory Committees with other Colleges (e.g. Immunology – RCPA)

Potential Steps towards a Trans-Tasman Advanced Training Committee

Neurology applied to formally merge in 2013 and took the following steps towards a single Trans-Tasman Advanced Training Committee

- Align training requirements and site accreditation standards
- Develop Terms of Reference for a single ATC for governance, ensuring adequate NZ representation
- Consider a period of overlap in regards to operational aspects if required.
- Move to a single Trans-Tasman ATC

Activity 4: Trans-Tasman Alignment

Table groups were given the opportunity to discuss Trans-Tasman alignment in relation to their individual committees (and with AUS/NZ Chairs working together where possible) with reference to their current stage of alignment, the benefits of a merge, the barriers to a merge and the support required to merge successfully. Feedback obtained from the Activity discussion sheets as below:

Current Stage of Alignment

- Chairs of some NZ Committees already sit on AUS committees for updates.
- Some committees are already aligned in many areas.
- All Chapters and Faculties are aligned with one training program and curriculum.
- Some committees have had minimum progress due to Specialty Society issues.
- Some committees don't have a great deal of communication with their Trans-Tasman counterparts.
- Some committees have no trainees/training sites in NZ.

Benefits of alignment

- Alignment of assessments and equity for trainees in terms of program requirements.
- Efficiency and less duplication
- Consistency and transparency.
- Clear contact points.
- Easier for trainees to move across Tasman for training opportunities.



Barriers to alignment

- How will NZ be adequately represented with the proposal to reduce committee sizes?
- How will dual training requirements be addressed?
- Distance and time differences could make meetings more costly and difficult to arrange.
- Site accreditation could be difficult to work out. Will AUS committee representatives accredit NZ sites?
- Multiple Speciality Societies across Australasia – how will equal representation work in the committee structure?
- Start and completion dates are different.
- Clinical practice can be quite different between the two countries.

Support required to ensure successful alignment

- College staff with the ability to work across both sites and clear commitment to staff retention/training and succession planning.
- Videoconferencing and face to face opportunities for joint committee meetings.
- Still need one EO in each country with the two EOs interacting on a regular basis.
- Facilitation of arrangements with Specialty Societies and explicit mention of their role rather than implicit.
- Active NZ representation on committees.

Outcomes

- Today's presentations on Trans-Tasman alignment to be saved in an online repository for ease of access to potential models for alignment.
- Change Kits have been updated following feedback from the Advanced Training Forum.



Appendix 1: Original Agenda

Time	Session
10:00am	Meeting open
	Welcome and introduction
	Session 1: Overview of current and planned Education improvements
	Activity 1: Topics for future Advanced Training Fora
11:00-11:15 am	Morning break
	Session 2: Overview of education governance changes and the implications for Advanced Training
	Activity 2: Feedback on the AT Forum – Purpose and Structure
	Session 3: Education Governance and your Committee
	Activity 3: Implementing Governance Changes in Advanced Training
1:00 – 2:00 pm	Lunch break
	Session 4: Trans-Tasman alignment of Advanced Training
	Activity 4: Trans-Tasman alignment of Advanced Training
3.00 – 3.15 pm	Afternoon break
	Priority areas for 2014, summation of today and next steps
4:00pm	Meeting close



Appendix 2: Attendees and Seating Plan

Table 1	Position
Prof John Wilson	Chair, College Education Committee
A/Prof Mitra Guha	Chair, Adult Medicine Education Committee / CEC
Dr Jonathan Christiansen	CEC/ NZ Adult Medicine Education Committee
Dr Amin Sheikh	Advanced Trainee, CTC (NZ)
Dr Anna Hume	Advanced Trainee, CEC / College Trainees' Committee
Jennifer Alexander	CEO, OPCEO
Marie-Louise Stokes	Director of Education, Education Services
Clare Le Roy	Senior Project Officer, Education Governance
Table 2	Position
Dr Jan Sinclair	Chair, JSAC Immunology & Allergy (NZ)
Dr Tiffany Hughes	Chair, JSAC in Immunology/Allergy (AUS)
Dr Stella Milsom	Chair, SAC Endocrinology (NZ)
A/Prof Ashim Sinha	Member, SAC Endocrinology and JECPS (AUS)
A/Prof Geoffrey Playford	Chair, SAC Infectious Diseases (AUS) and Joint ID/Micro Subcommittee
Dr Sarah Metcalf	Chair, SAC Infectious Diseases (NZ)
Jane Moginie	Manager, NZ Training and Assessment
Sally Timmins	SEO, Advanced Training (AUS)
Table 3	Position
Dr Hala Katf	Chair, SAC in General Paediatrics (AUS) SAC in Community Child Health Paediatric & Child Health Education Committee / CEC
Dr Danny (Andrew) Stewart	Chair, SAC General Paediatrics (NZ)
Dr Andy McPhee	Chair, SAC in Neonatal/Perinatal Medicine
Dr Fiona Thomson	Chair, JTC in Paediatric Emergency Medicine
A/Prof Michael Gabbett	Member, SAC in Clinical Genetics
Susi McCarthy	SEO, Education Program Development Unit
Jacqui Hall	SEO, Advanced Training (NZ)
Table 4	Position
Dr Brian Le	Palliative Medicine Education Committee
A/Prof Lewis Marshall	Sexual Health Medicine Education Committee
Dr Mark Montebello	Addiction Medicine Education Committee
A/Prof Timothy Driscoll	CEC / AFOEM
Tania Leong	Senior Education Officer, AT
Erin Murphy	SEO, Supervisor Learning & Support



Table 5	Position
Prof Alan (Peter) Barber	Chair, STC in Neurology (AUS)
Dr Janak de Zoysa	Chair, SAC in Nephrology (NZ)
Dr Peter Steele	Chair, STC in Cardiology (AUS)
Dr Aravind Ravi Kumar	Chair, JSAC in Nuclear Medicine
Dr Matt Doogue	Chair, STC in Clinical Pharmacology
Julie Gustavs	Manager, Education Development, Research and Evaluation
Keith Johnstone	Governance Consultant, Education Governance
Rebecca Udemans	SEO, Education Development, Research and Evaluation
Table 6	Position
Dr Caroline Rhodes	Advanced Trainee, College Trainees Committee (AUS)
Dr Rob Pickles	Chair, SAC in General and Acute Care Medicine (AUS)
Dr Stephen Dee	Member, SAC General & Acute Care Medicine (NZ)
A/Prof Matthew Links	CEC - Interim Member - CPD Group
A/Prof Geoff Hebbard	Chair, SAC in Gastroenterology (AUS)
A/Prof Linda Mileshkin	Chair, SAC in Medical Oncology (AUS)
Dennis Sligar	Manager, Exams, Assessment & Trainee Support
Katherine Deller	Education Program Development Officer
Table 7	Position
Dr Sadasivam Suresh	Representative - OTP Group
A/Prof Matthew Peters	Member, STC in Respiratory and Sleep Medicine (AUS)
Dr Sally De Boer	Member, SAC Respiratory and Sleep (NZ)
A/Prof (Ernst)Michael Shanahan	Chair, STC in Rheumatology (AUS)
Prof Chris Etherton-Beer	Chair, STC in Geriatric Medicine (AUS)
Dr Valerie Fletcher	Chair, SAC Geriatric Medicine (NZ)
Christina Dawson	SEO, Basic Training
Jen Wright	SEO, Advanced Training (AUS)
Table 8	Position
Kate White	Senior Comms Officer, Education Governance
Margaret Harburg	SEO, Site Accreditation
Victoria Baker-Smith	SEO, Training Support
Jessica McCormick	Senior Education Officer - AT
Chula Murray	Senior Education Officer, AT
Bev Bucalon	Senior Education Officer, AT
Mari-Anne Houghton	Senior Executive Officer, AFOEM