

# Education Training Policy

## Special Consideration



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| Authorising Committee/ Department: | RANZCP Board                             |
| Responsible Committee/ Department: | Education Committee                      |
| Document Code:                     | POL EDT-TRN Special Consideration (18.2) |

## Contents

### 1. Policy on Special Consideration

This policy describes the process for special consideration for the examinations and centrally administered summative assessments governed by the RANZCP Fellowship Regulations 2012, including the Multiple-choice Question (MEQ) Examination, essay examinations (Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) and Critical Essay Question (CEQ) Examinations, clinical examinations, Psychotherapy Written Case and Scholarly Project.

### 2. Policy Statement

The RANZCP is obligated to ensure that candidates eligible for Fellowship have achieved the required standards for each aspect of an assessment or examination along with all other training requirements. Candidates may require special consideration for an examination or a centrally administered summative assessment in order to perform to the best of their abilities.

Candidates may apply for special consideration in order to ensure they receive equal opportunities for attendance and success.

### 3. Purpose

This policy defines the process by which candidates may apply for special consideration in relation to circumstances that may adversely affect their ability to successfully complete a RANZCP examination or centrally administered summative assessment.

This policy does not set out the process for trainees who, due to exceptional circumstances, will not meet the deadlines set out in the Progression through Training Policy (6.1) and related Trainee Progress Trajectory. The process of requesting additional time beyond these examination and assessment deadlines is detailed in the Progression through Training and Failure to Progress Policies (6.1; 19.1).

### 4. Policy Details

#### 4.1 Introduction

Candidates may submit a request for special consideration with regard to a particular examination or centrally administered summative assessment for circumstances that may adversely affect their performance on that examination or assessment. Special Consideration application details can be found in point 4.4.

Specific requests for special consideration will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the RANZCP will make its best endeavours to accommodate accepted requests.

Special consideration granted to a candidate is not ongoing and is only applicable to the particular examination or assessment attempt for which a request for special consideration has been made.

When considering requests for special consideration, the Committee for Examinations (CFE) will not grant adjusted marks for any aspect of an assessment or examination. If a candidate believes their performance is likely to be seriously affected by illness or other personal circumstances, they should

consider withdrawing from the examination attempt or deferring their assessment submission. An application to the Committee for Training (CFT) for consideration of exceptional circumstances regarding the trainee's progress trajectory may be relevant in these cases (more information can be found in the Progression through Training Policy [6.1] and the Failure to Progress Policy [19.1]).

## **4.2 Core Psychiatry Skills**

Psychiatrists in Australia and New Zealand require competence in a number of core skills that are assessed as part of the RANZCP Fellowship Program examinations and assessments. Included in these skills and knowledge are:

- the ability to produce written material in English in a manner that is:
  - generally understood in Australia and New Zealand
  - legible
  - grammatically correct
  - correctly spelled
- the ability to communicate effectively in English with patients, other professionals and the community in Australia and New Zealand
  - The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) each require a minimum standard of proficiency in written and spoken English.
- the ability to develop arguments to support a particular viewpoint and to recognise the importance of, and be able to discuss, the merits of opposing arguments
- the ability to demonstrate awareness of different models of illness and illness behaviour
- the ability to produce written material at a speed sufficient for usual psychiatric practice
- the ability to concentrate sufficiently to complete aspects of an examination reflective of usual psychiatric practice in the time allowed
- a sufficient knowledge of general medicine and the appropriate level of skill and ability to:
  - conduct an accurate physical examination
  - adequately deal with emergency situations including undertaking resuscitation
  - demonstrate an appropriate understanding of medical and surgical principles
  - manage medical situations that arise in psychiatric patients with the assistance of other health practitioners
- the knowledge of research principles, ethics, levels of evidence and the ability to recognise the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of the research.

### **4.2.1 Requests Related to Core Skills**

Requests related to core psychiatry skills generally will not be accepted as grounds for special consideration.

Therefore, for example, English as a second language generally will not be accepted as grounds for special consideration.

A request for extra time will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may not be granted if it is determined that this would not reflect requirements of usual psychiatric practice. The timed parts of an examination are designed to simulate the real-life requirement for a psychiatrist to think rapidly, adjust to the needs of the situation and to formulate solutions to problems in real time.

### 4.3 Criteria for Special Consideration

The CFE will only consider requests that could adversely affect a candidate's ability to complete the examination or assessment within the standard procedures and timing. Each application for special consideration will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The CFE may take into account other relevant information when determining the outcome of a request for special consideration, for example, the granting of special consideration for previous RANZCP examinations or assessments or special consideration granted by other organisations for any particular candidate.

The RANZCP cannot specify all circumstances that might lead to the granting of special consideration.

- With regard to examinations previous, applications have been in relation to longstanding medical conditions.
- An example of a request for special consideration for a centrally administered assessment, such as the Psychotherapy Written Case or Scholarly Project, might be a request for a brief extension should there be a sudden and significant change in the candidate's personal circumstances shortly before the submission date.
  - Note: Any exceptional circumstances related to the fulfilment of at least 40 sessions of treatment for the Psychotherapy Written Case should be handled in line with the Psychotherapy Written Case Procedure (11.1) rather than through the special consideration process.

#### 4.3.1 Requests on Religious Grounds

In considering requests based on religious grounds, the CFE will take into account reasonable workplace expectations and will consider any practical and financial impact on health services and others involved in the examination and on the viability of the examination.

The CFE may seek advice from an authority in that religion prior to making a decision.

Applications for special consideration due to religious observance prohibiting participation in an examination at a particular time or on a particular day should be made in writing to the CFE via the RANZCP Head Office. These requests must be received 12 months prior to the date of the examination or (where relevant) as soon as practicable once the examination timetable is released so that alternative arrangements may be considered.

### 4.4 Application and Process for Special Consideration

A request for special consideration must be addressed to the Chair, Committee for Examinations, at the RANZCP Head Office. It should accompany the application for the particular RANZCP examination or be submitted prior to the relevant assessment submission close date.

A new application for special consideration must be submitted for each further attempt or each examination or summative assessment. However, the supporting documentation will only be required to be resubmitted if there is a change in circumstances (see point 4.4.1).

#### 4.4.1 Supporting Documentation

Requests for special consideration should state the specific special arrangements requested, for example, access to food and/or fluids in the examination room or the use of special equipment.

Requests should include supporting documents from treating health or other professionals, including letters, reports or statutory declarations describing the practical impact of the limitation or circumstance in the specific examination setting. Supporting documentation will be verified and will generally not be accepted when signed by a member of the candidate's family.

Requests must include a letter of support from the candidate's current principal supervisor or Director of Training (DOT).

#### **4.4.2 Further Information**

The CFE may require further information from the applicant. On request, candidates must submit such supporting and/or clarifying information and documentation as the CFE requires to reasonably consider the application. Such information may include:

- updated reports or letters from treating health professionals
- documentary evidence of any related previous granting of special consideration for the candidate (including in secondary or tertiary education)
- additional detail stating the reasoning for the special consideration request for the particular examination or assessment.

The CFE may approach the candidate's DOT or principal supervisor for further comments on the application. The CFE may also seek permission from the candidate to contact and request information from institutions or organisations where previous applications for special consideration have been granted.

#### **4.4.3 Late Requests**

Requests for special consideration related to medical conditions, compassionate grounds or significant changes in personal circumstances that occur after the application closing date for the relevant examination must be submitted as soon as possible after they arise. The granting of such requests can have a significant impact on examination venue resources and processes; therefore, late applications must provide the reason for submitting the request after the examination application close date as well as the nature of the issue that has arisen. Requests for special consideration received after application closing date may not be accommodated.

Requests for special consideration must be received at the RANZCP Head Office no later than 3 weeks prior to the date of the examination or the assessment submission closing date.

### **4.5 Outcome and Implementation**

The candidate will receive written notification of the outcome of their request for special consideration, which will specify any special arrangements where the request has been granted.

The CFE will liaise with the appropriate examination coordinators and assessment subcommittees as required with regard to any special arrangements for candidates granted special consideration.

### **5. Privacy and Confidentiality**

The RANZCP and its committees must comply fully with the requirements of Australian and New Zealand privacy legislation, as well as the RANZCP Privacy Policy, with regard to the collection and distribution of information pertaining to special consideration. Discussions relating to requests for special consideration must be documented and maintained in accordance with the RANZCP Privacy Policy.

### **6. Review of Decisions**

Any request by trainees for review of a decision in relation to special consideration should follow the formal education review process (X.X).

### **7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Education Committee (EC) shall implement, monitor and review this policy and report on anomalies and issues as these arise.

This policy will be reviewed biennially and updated as required.

## 8. Associated Documents

- 8.1 Regulation:**      **18.1** Essay Examinations Education Training Regulation  
                             **18.2** Clinical Examinations Education Training Regulation
- 8.2 Policy:**            **18.1** Multiple Choice Questions Examination Policy and Procedure  
                             **18.1** Essay Examinations (MEQ and CEQ) Policy and Procedure  
                             **18.5** Objective Structured Clinical Examinations Education Training Policy and Procedure  
                             **6.1** Progression through Training Education Training Policy  
                             **19.1** Failure to Progress Education Training Policy  
                             **2.1** Reviews and Appeals Education Training Policy  
                             RANZCP Privacy Policy
- 8.3 Procedure:**        19.1 Failure to Progress Education Training Procedure
- 8.4 Forms**        :      Written Examination Application Form – MCQ Examination  
                             Written Examination Application Form – MEQ Examination  
                             Written Examination Application Form – CEQ Examination  
  
                             Clinical Examinations Application Form  
                             Psychotherapy Written Case Submission Form  
                             Scholarly Project Submission Form
- 8.5 Other:**            Cancellation and Refund Schedule

## REVISION RECORD

| Contact: |         | Projects Officer, Education and Training |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------|---------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date     | Version | Approver                                 | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 27/10/13 | v.1.0   | RANZCP Board                             | First version approved by RANZCP Board B2013/6 R10.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 15/05/18 | v.1.1   |                                          | Removal of Definitions & Abbreviations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 12/04/19 | v.1.2   | Education Committee                      | Amendment to 4.3, removal of example of longstanding medical conditions e.g. diabetes mellitus and 4.4.3, requests made for special consideration after application date may not be accommodated and requests received at RANZCP no later than 3 weeks prior to the date of the examination or assessment submission |

closing date. Previously reviewed by the CFE 20/03/19, approved by EC with changes 12/04/19.

|                   |       |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------|-------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>12/05/2020</b> | v.1.3 | Education Committee | Minor Amendments, approved by EC with changes 21/03/2020                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>05/03/21</b>   | v.1.4 | RANZCP Board        | Amendments of the policy as a result of decoupling the previous Essay-style Examination into two independent examinations: Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) Examination and Critical Essay Questions (CEQ) Examination. (EC approved 23/04/2021) |

**July 2022**

**NEXT REVIEW**