



The Royal Australian and New Zealand  
College of Radiologists®

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# Dual Area of Need and Specialist Assessment Process

*Information for Applicants and Employers*





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## 1. Introduction

This manual has been developed to provide International Medical Graduates (IMGs), employers and recruiters with information on the College's assessment processes regarding area of need (AON) applications.

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.

If an IMG applies to the College for specialist assessment for the first time for an AON position, they will also be assessed for comparability to the skills, qualifications and experience of an Australian (or New Zealand) trained specialist for the purposes of specialist registration and pathway to fellowship. Please note that information regarding specialist assessment can be found on the College website under "Specialist Recognition".

If an applicant wishes to change location and reapplies for another area of need position, they will only be assessed for suitability to the new AON position (see Section 9).

The manual has been prepared to enable applicants to undertake the appropriate preparation of documentation and applications and includes the:

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

## 2. Applications

Upon receipt of a completed application forms and supporting documentation, including College requested referee reports, an acknowledgement 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 and assessed as complete. Applicants are required, ideally, to submit their application forms at least one month prior to the assessment date to allow the College to contact and receive feedback from the nominated referees in time.

## 3. Document Verification

To make an application to the College, the employer/applicant must send the following documents to the College:

1. Application to be Assessed for Recognition as a Specialist
2. Supporting documents, as specified in the application (above)
3. Curriculum vitae, in the approved format
4. Area of need – Attachment 1
5. Payment form
6. State Health area of need declaration

Please ensure that copies of documents requiring certification/ notarization are certified correctly, otherwise your application will be assessed as incomplete and delay your assessment.

## 4. 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 or video-link 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.

There are two parts to the radiology AON 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 30 minutes duration)

The purpose of the clinical competency assessment is to assist the assessment panel in determining the applicant's basic radiological competence and level of supervision required in the position. 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.

**NB: Radiation oncology assessments are interview based.**

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, suitability and level of supervision required for the position which they have applied.

In addition, based on the interview and clinical competency assessments, the assessment panel will also ascertain whether the applicant is substantially comparable, partially comparable or not comparable to an Australian (or New Zealand) trained Fellow.

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, Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) 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.

**5. Recommendations**

The outcome of the assessment will provide a recommendation regarding the suitability of the applicant for the specified position along with the level of supervision required AND the comparability to an Australian (or New Zealand trained) specialist.

NB: Area of Need applicants who have not completed a minimum of five (5) years radiology training in an accredited department are required to have obtained a minimum of five (5) years clinical experience at a consultant radiologist level in an accredited training site to be considered suitable for the AON position.

The applicant will be deemed:

- i. unsuitable; or

- ii. suitable to practice under supervision;

**AND**

1. **Substantially** comparable, whereby they are able to take up appointment in a specialist position under supervision at a RANZCR accredited site and undertake a peer-assessment in the work place;

**or**

2. **Partially** comparable –where the applicant is required to either:
- To undertake a prescribed period of supervised training in an accredited training site not exceeding 24 months and to sit and pass the College Part 2 / Phase 2 examinations; or
  - To sit and pass the College Part / Phase 2 examinations without additional training.

**or**

3. **Not** comparable, where they are then referred to the AMC and may proceed down one of their pathways leading to general registration: -
- Competent Authority
  - Standard pathway (work-place based assessment) or
  - Standard pathway (AMC examination)

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

The level of supervision required as determined from the assessment outcome follows the Medical Board of Australia (MBA)<sup>1</sup> guidelines as below:

**Level 1 supervision (Direct/ Double reporting)**

The supervisor takes direct and principal responsibility for each individual patient.

- The supervisor must be physically present at the workplace at all times when the IMG is providing clinical care.
- The IMG must consult their supervisor about the management of all patients at the time of the consultation and before the patient leaves the practice.
- Supervision via telephone contact or other telecommunications is not permitted.

**Level 2 supervision (Direct)**

The supervisor shares with the IMG, responsibility for each individual patient. The supervisor must ensure that the level of responsibility that the IMG is allowed to take for patient management is based on the supervisor's assessment of the IMG's knowledge and competence.

- Supervision must be primarily in person - the supervisor must be physically present at the workplace a minimum of 80% of the time that the IMG is practising. Where the supervisor is not physically present, they must always be accessible by telephone or video link.
- The IMG must inform their supervisor on a daily basis about the management of individual patients.

**Level 3 supervision (Indirect/ Guidance)**

The IMG takes primary responsibility for each individual patient.

- The supervisor must ensure that there are mechanisms in place for monitoring whether the IMG is practising safely.
- The IMG is permitted to work alone provided that the supervisor is contactable by telephone or video link.

**Level 4 supervision (peer review/ substantially comparable)**

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<sup>1</sup> [MBA Guidelines: Supervised practice for limited registration](#)

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The IMG takes full responsibility for each individual patient.

- a) The supervisor must oversee the IMG's practice.
- b) The supervisor must be available for consultation if the IMG requires assistance.
- c) The supervisor must periodically conduct a review of the IMG's practice.

## 6. **Guidance or Oversight**

As part of the recommendations to the AHPRA, supervision 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, AHPRA or other, as required.

Guidance is classified not as supervision, but a means of support and direction for an AON appointee, where needed, and is equivalent to Level 3 supervision or above of the MBA guidelines.

## 7. **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 every 12 months thereafter whilst in the AON position. These are forwarded 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 AHPRA.

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 consultant, as outlined in the AON assessment report, and to comment on the training and/or experience that the AON consultant 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 consultant has commenced in that position.

## 8. **FRANZCR Part 2 examination and ongoing levels of supervision**

When an AON doctor undertakes the FRANZCR Part 2 examination, their result and performance in every component of the examination is reviewed in context with the level of supervision that they have in their AON position as determined at the time of the AON assessment.

If it is deemed by the chief censor that the IMG's examination performance is a cause for concern, the IMG chair will be notified and the IMG's level of supervision is reviewed immediately.

The employer and MBA will be notified of any changes in level of supervision, whether it be increased or decreased, and ongoing support for the IMG in the position is reviewed.

Alternately, if other documentation/information is presented to the College, such as reports from an independent external review of the IMG or an internal review by the employer, then this information is considered by the IMG chair and a determination of supervision level may subsequently be made.

## 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 AHPRA and a new application will be required.

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** and then apply for an area of need position, will need to pay the full AON application fee and be re-assessed face-to-face for the new area of need position by undergoing the relevant key competency assessments. They will not be reassessed for comparability and will not require reapplication to the AMC for primary source verifications.

## 10. Short Term (Locum) Positions

If the contract period is less than six (6) months 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 six (6) months duration will be treated as a standard AON application.

## 11. Membership of RANZCR

Applicants are required to become a member of 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:

- Meeting the minimum English language proficiency standard, which is a minimum score of 7 in each of the four components (listening, reading, writing and speaking) and an overall score of 7.
- Complying with the supervision plan approved by the AHPRA.
- Complying with the professional development plan approved by the AHPRA.
- ensuring that clinical supervisors provide regular reports to the AHPRA regarding the registrant's safety and competence to practise
- Ongoing satisfactory performance in the area of need position.
- Ensuring that their practice be restricted to the approved position in the defined area of need.

- Providing evidence to confirm the **satisfactory progress towards** meeting the qualifications required for general registration or **specialist registration** if the applicant is intending to practice medicine in Australia longer term.

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/>.

### 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 College's Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy is available on the College website. [Reconsideration, Review and Appeal of Decisions Policy](#)

### 14. When to Contact the College

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

- The practice undergoes changes that affect the place of employment of the area of need consultant, i.e. addition of modalities to the practice, changes in workforce numbers of radiologists/radiation oncologists (that may affect the limitations of practice);
- Changes to the scope of employment;
- Changes to the supervision of the area of need consultant;
- If the area of need consultant resigns from the position.

### 15. Enquiries and Further Information

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