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# GUIDELINES FOR AREA OF NEED ASSESSMENT

## 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information on the Area of Need (AoN) assessment processes of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM; the College), including general information on the College's criteria for suitability of applicants.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The AoN process aims to meet gaps in service delivery in Australia, primarily in rural areas where there is an acute shortage of practitioners, including specialists in emergency medicine. The AoN process enables a hospital or health service to obtain the services of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) if the applicant meets the requirements for the role as stated in the relevant position description.

## 3. PROCESS

### 3.1 Declaration of a Position as an 'Area of Need'

Employing authorities, such as a hospital or health service, which are unable to fill an employment position through standard recruitment processes apply to the relevant State or Territory Department of Health to have the position in question formally declared as an AoN position. Once declared as an AoN position, the employing authority may seek to recruit a Specialist IMG (SIMG) from overseas to fill the position.

### 3.2 Application for AoN Assessment

SIMGs who have been offered an AoN position by a hospital, health service or other such employing institution, must first apply to the Australian Medical Council (AMC) for Primary Source Verification (PSV) of their medical education and registration credentials. The SIMG, in conjunction with the employer, then applies to ACEM, which assesses the suitability of the SIMG for the specific AoN position that they are intended to fill.

The application form is available on the College website and should be submitted together with all relevant information, including the AoN declaration, position description, offer of employment and location details. Incomplete applications will not be progressed for assessment and a fee may be payable.

## 4. AON ASSESSMENT

AoN applications are initially considered by the Chair of the SIMG Assessment Committee. Where the Chair of the Committee is unable to make a determination on the information submitted, the applicant will be invited to attend an assessment interview.

### 4.1 Assessment Criteria

AoN assessment involves a determination of whether an applicant is suitable to undertake the position in question as described in the relevant position description. In making this determination, consideration may be given to:

- (a) the depth and breadth of the specialist training program completed by the applicant

- (b) the duration of any subsequent practice as a specialist in emergency medicine and the country(ies) in which this has been undertaken;
- (c) the on call and roster arrangements for consultant staff within the emergency department;
- (d) where applicable, the on call and roster arrangements for consultant anaesthetists and intensive care specialists within the hospital;
- (e) the number, if any, of ACEM trainees (Specialist, EMC and EMD training programs) working in the emergency department.

## 4.2 Assessment Outcome

ACEM outcome of the AoN assessment will be that the SIMG is either:

- 'suitable for the AoN position for which they are being considered'; or
- 'not suitable for the AoN position for which they are being considered'.

Where an SIMG is assessed as suitable for the AoN position, ACEM will recommend to the MBA that the applicant be granted the appropriate medical registration. The employer will also be notified of the College's decision.

SIMG applicants dissatisfied with their AoN assessment outcome may seek reconsideration, review and/or appeal of the decision through College processes (the [Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy](#)). The employing hospital may also seek reconsideration, review and/or appeal of the decision on behalf of the applicant.

## 5. AON PRACTITIONERS

### 5.1 Oversight Reports

All AoN practitioners approved by the College are subject to supervision for the first 12 months of their appointment. As such, they are supervised by an ACEM Fellow located at the relevant hospital who will also ensure the completion of oversight reports every three (3) months. AoN supervisors will generally be at least three (3) years post award of ACEM Fellowship (FACEM).

### 5.2 Review

SIMG applicants assessed as suitable for the specific AoN position for which they are being considered and who commence employment in that position ('AoN practitioners') will be interviewed by ACEM approximately four (4) to eight (8) weeks after they commence. This interview is conducted by the Chair or Deputy-Chair (Australia) of the SIMG Assessment Committee. The interview is conducted by phone and serves to obtain feedback on the position in terms of educational, training and continuing professional development support available to the AoN practitioner.

## 6. CONCURRENT ASSESSMENT

SIMG applicants are assessed by ACEM for their suitability to fill the specific AoN position for which they are being considered; the AoN assessment process does not involve an assessment of the applicant's comparability to an Australian-trained specialist in emergency medicine for the purposes of attaining specialist registration with the Medical Board of Australia. AoN applicants may, however, apply to ACEM for concurrent assessment under both the specialist and AoN assessment pathways.

## 7. DOCUMENT REVIEW

Timeframe for review: every two (2) years, or earlier if required.

### 7.1 Responsibilities

Document authorisation: Council of Education  
Document implementation: Director, Education / relevant Unit Manager  
Document maintenance: Manager, Standards

### 7.2 Revision History

Version	Date of Version	Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision
v1	Jul-2016	Approved by Council of Education

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