



Australasian College
for Emergency Medicine

TS4 Accreditation Process Guide – Other Medical Colleges

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

To provide information and outline the administrative processes associated with the Training Stage Four (TS4) accreditation for placements accredited by other Medical Colleges.

The purpose of the FACEM Training Program is to produce emergency medicine specialist doctors with the clinical knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function safely and. These are described in the FACEM Curriculum.

In 2022, the FACEM Training Program changed to a revised structure that defined four training stages to support the sequential four stage FACEM curriculum. The intent is to define how trainees become leaders in the practice of emergency medicine in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

The intention of TS4 (the last 12 months of FACEM training) is to focus on developing and consolidating management and leadership skills. This requires the training site to provide an adequate training environment to meet TS4 requirements.

Out of scope

This guide does not apply to the Accreditation of Emergency Departments, Paediatric Emergency Departments, and Special Skills Placement (SSP) for the FACEM Training Program. For guidance on accreditation of these placement types, refer to:

- AC550 FACEM Training Program Site Accreditation – Process Guide (ED/PED)
- AC95 SSP Accreditation Process Guide.

1.2 Term definitions

When reading this guide, please refer to the glossary at the end of the document for term definitions.

2. TS4 Accreditation

TS4 accreditation is awarded to hospital subspecialties offering a specific non-ED placement over a five-year accreditation cycle. They are initially accredited against the relevant TS4 accreditation requirements in the first year of the cycle, via the process of application. A subsequent inspection, as outlined in this document, will confirm/decline on-going accreditation.

The purpose of the accreditation inspection is to assess:

- The commitment of the hospital or service to postgraduate education within a specific discipline area relevant to Emergency Medicine;
- The capacity of the placement to provide adequate and appropriate TS4 experience within the specific discipline area relevant to Emergency Medicine;
- The adequacy of the resources to support the TS4 learning outcomes;
- The veracity of any information sources that may indicate problems with the placement (such as trainee reports, other College survey tools, reports, or substantiated information).

All TS4 accredited hospital subspecialties are required to be re-assessed for accreditation against the prevailing TS4 accreditation guidelines requirements every five (5) years. Please refer to AC808 TS4 Accreditation Requirements for full details of requirements.

Additionally, the College may initiate a focused investigation (which may include a focused site visit) of a site at any point within the five-year cycle, in response to issues identified through the monitoring of accreditation conditions, the review of College data, or other substantiated information.

3. Continuous Quality Improvement and Accreditation

The College applies continuous quality improvement (CQI) principles to the site assessment process and works collaboratively with sites to ensure all requirements are met. Following inspection/review by the College, sites will be given a specific period of time to make quality improvements where specific requirements were not met at the time of inspection/assessment.

In circumstances where a site does not demonstrate sufficient progress in meeting a requirement, the College's review process is initiated. This process is outlined further in *Section 11 (Post-inspection site review)* of this document.

4. Requesting TS4 Accreditation

4.1 Application

The supervisor submits an application via email to accreditation@acem.org.au that includes:

- A completed AC820 Non-ED TS4 Application with supporting documentation.
- A cover letter, addressed to the Chair, Accreditation Committee, requesting accreditation for the service, signed by the site CEO or equivalent.

These documents, together with any previous accreditation inspection reports, feedback letters, trainee reports and other relevant documentation (including previously submitted learning portfolios and logbooks), are collated by the College Accreditation Officer for review by the Accreditation Committee.

Confirmation of receipt of the application will be sent to the site within seven working days. If there is insufficient documentation to support the application, or the application is not fully completed, the site will be requested to revise and resubmit the application.

Notes:

- The College accepts only soft copy applications or supporting documents.
- Applications for reaccreditation subsequent to the removal of accreditation will be treated as new site applications and must be submitted using the new accreditation application process.
- TS4 applications from sites subject to accreditation withdrawal by any other Medical College will be reviewed by the Council of Education (COE).
- Sites cannot reapply for accreditation within 12 months of a withdrawal of accreditation, or a decline of their previous accreditation application.

5. Non-ED Supervisors

Each non-ED placement must have a nominated supervisor who is a Fellow of the respective Medical College relevant to the SSP, e.g. FCICM, FANZCA, FRACP etc.

The supervisor is the main point of contact for both the trainee and ACEM. Regular formal contact between the supervisor and the trainee is required throughout the placement. In general, the supervisor is responsible for ensuring trainees are appropriately orientated, provided with the appropriate education and training to achieve the learning objectives, and provided with mid and end of placement assessments.

The supervisor will also be required to perform an In-Training Assessment (ITA) of the trainee(s) every three months. The supervisor will be notified via email to complete the ITA in the ACEM Member Portal.

All supervisors will have their own login to the ACEM Member Portal. Login details will be provided by ACEM when supervisors are approved.

Note: It is the responsibility of the site to ensure there is a supervisor for the term, particularly for leave cover.

6. Education/Learning Portfolios/Logbooks

Trainees undertaking the non-ED placements are strongly recommended to complete a Learning Portfolio for personal reflection.

The Education Learning Portfolio can be completed using the Learning and Development Plan (LDP) available in the ACEM Members portal. Alternatively, a trainee can upload their own document when the ITA is submitted. Learning portfolios frequently include a logbook of patients seen or activities performed, which provides rich data from which reflective learning guided by the supervisor may be performed.

7. Outcome: Provisional Accreditation Assessment

Provisional accreditation is the period of time between the initial College approval of a site's application and the date of the site's virtual inspection.

Non-ED applications are considered by the Accreditation Committee, and an outcome is communicated to the applying site generally eight weeks after application.

Where Provisional Accreditation is approved, the DEMENT(s)/supervisor(s) must advise the College of the commencement of trainee(s) immediately via the accreditation team (accreditation@acem.org.au).

Sites granted Provisional Accreditation will be inspected virtually by the College after two (2) TS4 trainees have completed, or are nearly completing, their placement.

Sites are granted a total of twelve months of Provisional Accreditation during which time TS4 trainee(s) must be appointed to the placement. If no trainees are appointed within this period, the provisional TS4 accreditation status will lapse, and the site will be required to submit a new TS4 application before a TS4 trainee can be appointed.

8. TS4 Accreditation Site Inspections

8.1 Nomination of TS4 Sites Accredited by Other Medical Colleges for Inspection

The ACEM accreditation team staff routinely schedule sites for inspection/review for the following reasons:

- a. A New Accreditation Inspection is initiated upon notice from a site, granted Provisional Accreditation, advising the commencement of TS4 trainee(s). This inspection will be scheduled after two (2) TS4 trainees have completed or are nearing completion of their placement.

A New Accreditation Inspection will generally be conducted virtually.*

- b. A Five-Year Review/Inspection is initiated for all accredited sites five (5) years after the granting date of their initial or renewed accreditation. If a TS4 trainee is in place at the site at the time, the review/inspection proceeds. If there is no TS4 trainee in place at the site at the time, the accreditation will lapse, and the site will be required to submit a new application if they wish to place a TS4 trainee in the future.

For CICM and ANZCA accredited sites, a virtual inspection will be scheduled as these placements contribute to the mandatory critical care requirement of the FACEM Training Program.

For all others, the five-year review will generally be paper-based. The site will still be required to submit an application form with supporting documents (as per an inspection) for an assessment by a local (where possible) Reviewer.

- c. The College may instigate a Focused Investigation (which may include a Focused Site Visit) following receipt of information that indicates that a site may no longer meet College requirements. This includes failure to submit ITAs of the trainee's performance during the placement or following two (2) or more unfavourable TS4 trainee feedback.
- d. Accreditation Committee-initiated urgent or unscheduled review/inspection. The Accreditation Committee may, at its discretion, initiate an unscheduled or urgent inspection. In this situation, the timelines for the administrative process and the inspection may vary from standard timeframes described below.

* New Inspections, routine Five-Year Reviews, and a Focused Review/Inspection will be conducted virtually. However, the Accreditation Committee reserves the right to initiate an on-site inspection at any stage should it be deemed necessary.

82 Accreditation Inspection/Review Confirmation

The site supervisor must submit a completed AC820 Non-ED TS4 Application to the accreditation team (accreditation@acem.org.au) a minimum of six (6) weeks ahead of the scheduled inspection/review date.

If the College does not receive the complete documentation at least six (6) weeks prior to the inspection/review date, the inspection may be cancelled, which may impact on the TS4 accreditation status of the site.

83 Composition of the Inspection/Review Team

Accreditation Inspection Team

The inspection team will comprise:

- a locally based lead inspector, who is a member of the Panel of Inspectors.
- a second inspector/observer, who is a FACEM, and who may have specialist skills in the discipline area, may also be in attendance.
- ACEM staff may also be in attendance.

Accreditation Reviewer for paper-based assessments:

- One local (where possible) assessor who is a member of the Panel of Inspectors, or a FACEM who may have specialist skills in the discipline area being reviewed.

The ACEM accreditation team provides the AC820 Non-ED TS4 Application and other relevant data to the inspection team or the reviewer.

All members of the Inspection Team, and the Reviewer, are required to declare any conflict of interest related to the site to be inspected, as outlined in the ACEM COR139 Conflict of Interest Policy. In the event of a declared conflict of interest, the inspector will be removed from the inspection/review team and the position reassigned.

84 Inspection Program (not applicable to paper-based reviews)

The accreditation team staff will liaise with the site and coordinate the creation of an inspection program.

After reviewing the AC820 Non-ED TS4 Application, the lead inspector confirms members of staff from the site to be interviewed.

<i>Interview/activity</i>	<i>Time frame</i>
Tour of service (if applicable)	30 mins
Inspectors' private pre-inspection discussion (if applicable)	10 mins
Supervisor(s)	30-40 mins
Director of Unit / DEMENT (if applicable)	15 mins
Minimum of two trainee interviews: 15 mins each (include previous trainees who have completed the term to ensure an adequate number of trainees interviewed)	15 mins each
Other staff who work in the area (if applicable)	15 mins each
Inspectors' private discussion (if applicable)	15 mins
Concluding meeting with supervisor(s)	15 mins

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to organise the inspection program with the College Accreditation Officer. The inspection timetable must be received by the College at least three weeks (3) prior to the inspection. The lead inspector will review the submitted timetable to ensure it reconciles with the inspection team's objectives.

- The site supervisor(s) organise the specific times for individual interviews, within the constraints of the inspection program requirements.
- Interviews with trainees are essential and are the most important component of the inspection. The number of current and previous trainees interviewed should be maximized to ensure that all issues surfaced. Ideally each trainee should be interviewed separately.
- The accreditation inspection must be of sufficient rigour to allow the preparation of a detailed report. A rigorous inspection will typically require a visit of approximately two (2) to three (3) hours in duration. The inspectors will meet with the supervisor(s) at the conclusion of the visit to discuss the identified strengths of the placement, issues of concern and the likely conditions. Inspectors will not communicate an outcome of the inspection at this time. The outcome of the inspection will be decided by the Accreditation Committee after the inspection report is submitted and considered.

The final inspection program with all changes (if any) finalised must be provided to all participants a minimum of two (2) weeks ahead of the scheduled inspection date.

The College will work with the site to attempt to minimise inspection costs for both the site and the College.

9. Conduct of an Accreditation Inspection/Review

9.1 College Regulations and Policies Governing Conduct

The Inspection Team conducts the site visit/review in accordance with all relevant College regulations, policies and procedures, which include but are not limited to:

- ACEM Conflict of Interest Policy (COR139)
- ACEM Code of Conduct Policy (COR235)

- ACEM Discrimination, Bullying and Sexual Harassment Policy (COR133)
- ACEM Privacy Policy (COR200)
- ACEM Policy on Procedural Fairness (COR140).

92 The Accreditation Inspection (Virtual or On-site)

The inspector(s) will review the relevant accreditation documentation and inspect the site. Within the service, interviews are required with the supervisor(s), the Director of the Unit, Department or Service, if applicable, and other relevant staff who work within the discipline area.

The Chair of the Accreditation Committee may provide specific advice regarding the structure of the inspection program, particularly for an inspection of the type described in *Section 8.1(c) or (d)*.

93 Accreditation Inspection Findings

At the conclusion of an inspection, the Lead Inspector will write the AC203 Non-ED Accreditation Report to reflect the findings of the Inspection Team, specifically on the following:

- The recommended number of TS4 trainee positions sustainable within the placement;
- Recommendations (suggestions/comments) relating to the quality assurances or best practices for further improvement of the TS4 training program (not mandated);
- Conditions to address accreditation issues in unmet TS4 accreditation requirements (mandated and normally with a six (6) month timeframe); but the Accreditation Committee reserves the right to impose a shorter or longer timeframe if it deems it appropriate.
- Any requirement for a further focused inspection/review.

94 Paper-based Accreditation Review Findings

At the conclusion of the paper-based review for the routine five-year assessment, the Reviewer will recommend the findings specifically on the following:

- The recommended number of TS4 trainee positions sustainable within the placement;
- Recommendations (suggestions/comments) relating to the quality assurances or best practices for further improvement of the TS4 training program (not mandated);
- Conditions to address accreditation issues in unmet TS4 accreditation requirements (mandated and normally with a six (6) month timeframe); but the Accreditation Committee reserves the right to impose a shorter or longer timeframe if it deems it appropriate.
- Any requirement for a further focused inspection/review.

10. Approval of the Inspection/Review Team Findings

10.1 Accreditation Inspection Approval Process

Following the inspection, if applicable, the AC203 Non-ED Accreditation Report from the lead inspector will be forwarded to all members of the Inspection Team for confirmation and endorsement (where applicable).

Once approved by the Inspection Team, the AC203 Non-ED Accreditation Report will be submitted to the Accreditation Committee for its review and approval.

The Accreditation Committee may seek clarification or request amendments from the Inspection Team.

The Accreditation Committee will provide an outcome of either 'accredited', 'conditionally accredited' or 'not accredited'. Where the outcome is 'accredited', the report is updated to reflect this outcome.

Where the outcome is 'conditionally accredited with conditions to be addressed', the process outlined in *Section 11 (Post-inspection or Post paper-based site review)* is initiated.

Should the Accreditation Committee be unable to provide a clear outcome of either 'accredited' or 'not accredited', the report will be forwarded to the Council of Education to determine the outcome.

At the conclusion of this process, the approved AC203 Non-ED Accreditation Report is sent to the site for factual verification. Once the report is finalised, the site is notified of the outcome.

102 Paper-based Accreditation Review Approval Process

Following the assessment, the Reviewer will provide an outcome of the review:

- **Full re-accreditation**

The non-ED post will be reaccredited for another five (5) years.

- **Conditional, downgrade or withdrawal of accreditation**

Should the Reviewer recommend conditions be placed on the non-ED post, or a downgrade or withdrawal of TS4 accreditation, the application will be escalated to the Accreditation Committee with all relevant documentation and the Reviewer's reasons for the assessment.

The Accreditation Committee will review the assessment and will provide an outcome of either 'accredited', 'conditionally accredited' or 'not accredited'. Or, alternatively, the Accreditation Committee may initiate an inspection if it deems it necessary before deciding on an outcome. If an inspection is initiated, the process described in *Section 8.2* will commence.

Where the outcome is 'accredited', the site will be reaccredited for TS4 for another five (5) years.

Where the outcome is 'conditionally accredited with conditions to be addressed', the process outlined in *Section 11 (Post-inspection or Post-paper-based site review)* is initiated.

Should the Accreditation Committee be unable to provide a clear outcome, the assessment will be escalated to the Council of Education for resolution.

Once there is a clear outcome, the site will be notified.

11. Post Inspection or Post Paper-based Review

11.1 Site Response to Conditions

In circumstances where the Accreditation Committee has defined a site as 'Conditionally accredited' with conditions to be met, the site DEMT(s)/supervisor(s) must provide a response to all conditions in the report/notification and submit their response to the accreditation team (accreditation@acem.org.au) by the specified due date (normally six (6) months from date of outcome notification).

11.2 Resolution of Accreditation Conditions

The Accreditation Committee will assess the response and determine a finding for all conditions imposed as follows:

1. A finding of 'satisfied and closed' indicates the site has satisfactorily addressed the conditions and now meets the relevant accreditation requirement. The site is no longer required to report against the condition.

2. A finding of 'progressing' indicates satisfactory progress is being made against the condition, but further reporting is necessary. A further period (generally of up to six (6) months) will be granted to the site for resolution of the condition (once only).
3. A condition finding of 'unsatisfactory' will trigger the submission of a report from the Accreditation Committee to the Council of Education, requesting a determination on the appropriate next steps (see *Section 11.3 Management of 'unsatisfactory' condition progress*).

Exception:

Where the 'unsatisfactory' finding relates to the recommended number of TS4 trainee positions sustainable within the placement, the Accreditation Committee may determine that be downgraded to a lesser number. This decision is made by the Accreditation Committee and does not require further approval from the COE (in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Accreditation Committee).

Note:

No trainees will be disadvantaged by any change in the accreditation status of a site. Current trainees, and trainees who have signed contracts prior to the change in accreditation status, will be allowed to complete their term as agreed and have it counted towards their FACEM training time.

113 Management of 'unsatisfactory' condition progress

COE will review the report and either:

- Determine that the site has addressed the condition(s) and overturn the finding of 'unsatisfactory' to 'satisfied and closed' and issue a TS4 accreditation outcome (as above).

or

- Uphold the finding of 'unsatisfactory' and formally advise the site that the Accreditation Committee is recommending to the COE the removal of TS4 accreditation. The notification may include (any or all of the following), but is not limited to:
 - specific details of the type of removal/downgrade;
 - the date the removal/downgrade will be effective from;
 - invitation to show cause within the specified timeline; and
 - invitation to seek assistance from the College to facilitate remediation.

or

- COE may make an alternative determination requiring the site to take appropriate steps to remedy the condition within a specified timeframe.

Following the invitation to the training site to submit further evidence to show cause as to why TS4 accreditation should not be withdrawn, any further information that is submitted will be forwarded to the Accreditation Committee for review and to provide a recommendation before COE makes its final determination.

Notes:

1. Sites cannot reapply for TS4 accreditation within 12 months of a withdrawal of their TS4 accreditation.
2. Sites cannot apply for an upgrade of their TS4 accreditation within 12 months of a downgrade.

- In circumstances where there is a change in accreditation status in the final outcome, the College reserves the right to act swiftly to address substantiated immediate threats to an individual trainee's safety. This includes but is not limited to the immediate withdrawal of trainees from the site. The trainees will not be disadvantaged, and the situation will be assessed, and assistance will be offered on a case-by-case basis.*

12. Accreditation Inspection/Review Outcomes

Where TS4 accreditation is approved, the following outcomes will be defined and communicated to the site, together with an Accreditation Certificate:

- Approval of accreditation as a TS4 accredited training site.
- A specified maximum number of TS4 trainees the site can support.

13. Maintaining TS4 Accreditation – TS4 Accredited Sites

13.1 Twelve Month Follow Up

The ACEM accreditation team may request, on behalf of the Accreditation Committee, a progress report from any site 12 months after the provision of a TS4 accreditation outcome.

13.2 Application for increase to trainee numbers

Sites seeking an increase in the number of TS4 trainees at the site, at any point during the five-year cycle, must make a request to the College via submission of an updated AC820 Non-ED TS4 Application. Adequate evidence to support the training site's assertion that it can support the higher number of trainees must be supplied.

The Accreditation Committee will assess the request and respond within eight (8) weeks of receipt of the application. The Accreditation Committee may require an inspection/review in order to make a final determination on the application.

13.3 Complaints or Grievances

In circumstances where the Accreditation Committee, or the accreditation team receives, notification of a complaint or grievance from a single person, or from a small number of persons, regarding a site, the person/s is referred to the College relevant policies regarding complaints management.

Following investigation of the complaint, the College may determine that the issue relates to a site's accreditation and a Focused Investigation is warranted. This determination is made by the Office of the CEO following consideration of the information submitted to the College and of the potential impact on the FACEM Training Program.

13.4 Notification of Issues Relating to Accreditation – Focused Investigation

The College may become aware of an issue(s) relating to trainees, the training program or the training environment at an accredited site during the accreditation cycle. The issue(s) may be identified through monitoring of College survey tools, College generated reports, or other substantiated information.

If the College determines the issue(s) to be such that the site may no longer be meeting TS4 Accreditation Requirement(s), a Focused Investigation will be initiated, whereby the College will conduct an assessment of the performance of the site with respect to the specific TS4 Accreditation Requirement(s) identified.

At the commencement of a Focused Investigation, the site will be asked to respond to the identified issue(s) and provide information that supports its ongoing compliance with the requirement(s). A Focused Investigation may include a Focused Site Visit.

At the conclusion of a Focused Investigation, the College will provide a determination as to whether the identified issue(s) is resolved. A determination of an issue not being successfully resolved will result in further condition(s) placed on the site, and the process outlined in *Section 11 (Post-inspection and Post-paper-based site review)* will be initiated. Failure to have satisfactorily addressed the issue(s) of concern, or undertaken the prescribed changes, in the proposed time frame may lead to immediate loss or downgrading of accreditation.

14. Reconsideration, Review and Appeal

A site may request a reassessment of an Accreditation Outcome via the process defined in the ACEM [COR355 Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy](#).

15. Glossary

Accreditation Report

The Accreditation Report is a comprehensive document detailing the Accreditation Status of a site. It is used to record the findings of the appointed Inspection Team to reflect their assessment against each of the non-ED TS4 Accreditation Requirements.

Accreditation Committee

The Accreditation Committee is appointed by the Council of Education to review and consider applications for accreditation as an ACEM accredited non-ED training site.

Commendation

A commendation is a notation in an accreditation report that highlights particularly good practice or achievement by a site in respect to TS4 accreditation requirements.

Conditions

Actions required by the site to remedy unmet non-ED TS4 accreditation requirements. These actions will have an associated timeline (generally six (6) months from notification).

Council of Education

The Council of Education (COE) is the body appointed by the College to oversee the activities of all educational committees of the College.

Duration of Training Time

This duration is the maximum length of time at a non-ED site that a TS4 trainee's training time will be recognised by the College. If a TS4 trainee's training time exceeds the maximum allowed according to the training regulation, any excess time will not be counted towards training and the trainee will have to apply for an interruption to training.

Five-Year Review Inspection

The five-year review inspection occurs at the end of the accreditation period and is a full and comprehensive assessment of the site to confirm that the site continues to meet all the relevant accreditation requirements.

The review can be conducted virtually, on-site or paper-based.

Focused Investigation

A focused investigation is an additional review of a site prompted by receipt of information that suggests the site may not be compliant with TS4 accreditation requirements. The investigation may be undertaken by telephone, written correspondence, a focused site visit (see below) or other methods of communication as appropriate to the circumstances.

Focused Site Visit

An ad hoc inspection to determine the ongoing accreditation of the site with respect to specifically identified issues with site compliance with requirements. The inspection may be conducted on-site or virtually.

Inspection Program

The list and duration of interviews, site tours, facility inspections and meetings that the site is expected to facilitate for the site inspector(s). The required interviewees will vary from site to site but must include trainees, unit directors, DEMENT, supervisors and other key staff associated with the delivery of the placement.

Maximum Number of Trainees

The number of TS4 trainees the site is permitted to have in the placement.

Factors that influence this determination include, but are not limited to:

- Individual TS4 trainee exposure to TS4 activities
- Available supervisor [clinical] supervision of the TS4 trainee.

New Accreditation Inspection

A New Accreditation Inspection is the initial inspection of a site that has been granted Provisional TS4 Accreditation (a site not previously accredited or a site for which TS4 accreditation has lapsed and that has applied for new TS4 accreditation.) The inspection can be conducted on-site or virtually.

Panel of Inspectors

The Panel of Inspectors is a group of FACEMs authorised to conduct inspections and which is appointed according to the Terms of Reference (TOR312).

Provisional Accreditation

Provisional Accreditation grants a site permission to proceed with placing TS4 trainees while waiting for a site inspection.

Recommendations

A recommendation or suggestion for improvement may be provided where College has identified quality initiatives that a site is encouraged to consider as part of its quality improvement processes. They relate to matters that the College considers best-practice, and which may enhance the training provided at the site. Recommendation/suggestions for improvement are not mandatory and have no due dates.

Removal/Downgrade of Accreditation

The withdrawal or downgrading of accreditation due to failure to address accreditation conditions within prescribed timelines.

Specialist Training and Assessment Committee

The Specialist Training and Assessment Committee (STAC) is a committee appointed by the Council of Education to oversee operational matters relating to the FACEM Training Program including the application for special consideration.

STAC reports directly to the Council of Education.



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