Policy and Procedure for the Recording of Stations at the Fellowship Clinical Examination (OSCE)

College Policy and Procedure
Document Review

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Revision History

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline policy and procedure(s) relating to the recording of stations at the conduct of the Fellowship Clinical Examination (OSCE; the examination) of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM; the College) and the permitted use of those recordings.

Recording is primarily undertaken for College internal quality assurance and continuous improvement of processes relating to the Fellowship Clinical Examination, but may be used for other purposes in special circumstances.

It has been prepared as a guide to all stakeholders involved in the conduct of the examination, including candidates and their supporters, Directors of Emergency Medicine Training (DEMTs), examiners, examination writers, standard setters, members of the Board, the Council of Education (COE), the Examinations Subcommittee (ESC) and the Specialist Training and Assessment Committee (STAC), examinations working groups and other key personnel, including ACEM staff.

For the avoidance of doubt, this document applies solely to the recording of stations at the conduct of the Fellowship Clinical Examination (OSCE); the College does not record the conduct of stations of the Primary Examination (Viva).

2. Definitions

ACEM / the College
means the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine.

Candidate
means any trainee who enrols in and attempts the Fellowship Clinical Examination (OSCE).

Member
means a person admitted as a member of the College pursuant to the provisions of the ACEM Constitution and associated regulations, and, for the purposes of this policy, also includes trainees as well as any other person serving on any College entity or as a College representative.

OSCE / the examination
means the Fellowship Clinical Examination (OSCE).

Recording
means the recording of both video and associated audio components of an examination in real time in digital format.

Trainee
means trainees enrolled in and undertaking the FACEM Training Program and, for the purposes of this policy, also includes Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) undertaking College requirements for the purpose of attaining eligibility for election to Fellowship of the College.

3. Practical aspects

3.1 The process of recording

The examination is conducted at the Australian Medical Council’s (AMC’s) National Test Centre (NTC), located in Melbourne, Australia. The NTC has technology that enables the recording of all stations conducted as part of the examination.

From the Fellowship Clinical Examination conducted in March 2019 (OSCE 2019.1) all OSCE stations will be recorded utilising the recording facilities that are available at the NTC. All stations will be recorded at the time they are conducted, and the resultant recordings will be held in a secure format by the College, operated by and accessible only to authorised staff and officers of the College. Although the facilities of the NTC will be
utilised for the initial recording, these recordings will be transferred to the College at the conclusion of each sitting of the examination. No copy of any recording of any examination will be held at the NTC or by the AMC following the conduct of any examination.

3.2 Legal and privacy matters

ACEM appreciates the importance of ensuring that all material supplied by members and others who have dealings with the College is treated in a manner that respects the rights of all individuals (including examiners and candidates) and which meets the requirements of all relevant privacy and related legislation. The College’s Privacy Policy may be accessed through the College website.

Accordingly, appropriate consent for the recording of all stations will be obtained from all participants involved in the conduct of examination stations (candidates, examiners, confederates, standardised patients and others as identified).

Video footage that is not used within twelve months of recording, will be either destroyed/deleted from College files, or retained for designated training or examiner calibration purposes.

Access to recordings of stations will not be available to trainees other than as expressly stated in this document or as required through relevant legislation.

3.3 Examination processes

Every station of the OSCE is assessed by two (2) examiners marking independently. On occasion, there may, however, be three (3) examiners present as part of the training of new examiners. Examiners are members of the ACEM Court of Examiners and are appointed by COE following consideration of applications received by ESC, following a call to all College Fellows inviting applications. Examiners undergo initial and ongoing training as part of the requirements of their role and, on each day of the examination, attend a briefing in relation to the OSCE, and participate in station workshopping and calibration of the stations they examine.

Examiner performance at the OSCE is monitored by Peer Support Examiners (PSEs) and examiners are further audited and calibrated across all OSCEs they examine. PSEs are examiners of more than five years’ experience who have been appointed to this senior role within the Court of Examiners by COE on the recommendation of ESC, to provide leadership, training and support to members of the Court of Examiners.

The ACEM Procedure for the recruitment, training and appraisal of OSCE non-examiner personnel outlines procedures undertaken for the recruitment, training and appraisal of non-examiner personnel at the OSCE to ensure the maintenance of high standards of consistency across the stations and the candidate cohort. These non-examiner personnel include simulated patients, as well as FACEM confederates, nurses, technicians and medical students who may be used for roles where specific medical knowledge is required.

4. Use of recordings

The recording of each OSCE has been introduced by the College to allow for the review of the conduct of individual stations under specific circumstances. This is primarily for the purposes of quality assurance and continuous improvement, as well as for review of borderline candidates. In some special circumstances, approved in accordance with this policy, a recording may be used where a candidate is of the view that an error has occurred in the conduct of a station(s) that has resulted in them being disadvantaged on that station(s).

The recordings are not available to be used as a vehicle for reconsideration of a candidate’s marks in an examination where, for example, a candidate is of the view that they should have passed that sitting of the examination and are seeking to have their examination ‘remarked’.

In summary, recordings of OSCE stations may only be utilised under the circumstances outlined below.
4.1 As a resource for training purposes

Recorded OSCE stations have the potential to provide relevant and valuable source material for the calibration and training and education of examiners and other station personnel. Any use for this purpose will be approved by the CEO (or their nominee) or in accordance with guidelines approved for this purpose.

4.2 For quality assurance and continuous improvement

Recorded OSCE stations have the potential to enable the College to improve future examinations through the review of stations for the purposes of designing new stations, or revising stations for use in future examinations. Recorded stations are also of use in enabling the College to audit the performance of examiners or any other individuals involved in the conduct of examinations. The College regards these activities as being in the best interests of all involved in the examination and will not, as a matter of course, seek further consent from individuals for the purposes of the use of station recordings for audit and/or quality improvement processes. Any use for this purpose will be approved by the CEO (or their nominee) or in accordance with the guidelines approved for this purpose.

4.3 For review of results of borderline candidates

As part of the College’s processes, and prior to the finalisation and release of examination results, where a candidate’s score for an examination was such that they:-

- Have achieved a score that is below, but within 1 SEM of the examination passing score; and
- Have at least one station in which the mean of the differences between the domain scores for examiner pairs for the station(s) concerned, (i.e. the mean disparity of examiners’ scores across all the domains for that station) is greater than or equal to 1,

a review of the recording of the relevant station(s) will be undertaken by a senior examiner nominated by ESC who, where possible, is familiar with the station, however, did not examine the candidate in question.

The reviewing examiner will:

- View the recording in consideration of the requirements of the station, and
- Remark the station domains.

Note: Reviewing examiners will not have knowledge of the scores given by the original examiners.

When the marking for a station has been completed by the reviewing examiner, the candidate’s score for that station will be recalculated using the mean of the two highest scores (of the two original examiner scores and the reviewing examiner’s score) for each domain.

The candidate’s total OSCE score and examination result will be recalculated using the revised station score/s.

Reviewing examiners will not be required to give a Global Rating for the purposes of Standard Setting, as examiners’ global ratings are reviewed for all candidates prior to the calculation of the examination raw cut score, and where a disparity is found between examiners’ global ratings for a station, these are adjusted to ensure no candidate is disadvantaged by such disparity. The procedure for the review and adjustment is described in the ACEM Procedure for Determining Minimally Competent Criteria for FEx OSCE 2019.

In order to mitigate against possible bias regarding stations being reviewed as part of this process, examiners may be asked to review stations for the purposes of Quality Assurance and calibration, as well as for the purpose of review of candidate scores. To that end, examiners will not be made aware of which stations of those they are assigned are for the purpose of candidate score review, routine Quality Assurance and/or calibration.

As part of College Quality Improvement activities, records will be kept in relation to the number of such reviews undertaken and their outcome, and this information will be reported routinely to ESC and COE.
4.4 For review for candidate feedback after a third unsuccessful attempt

An amendment to ACEM Regulation B in December 2018 permits candidates a maximum of four (4) attempts at the OSCE.

For the purpose of assisting trainees who have attempted and been unsuccessful at the OSCE on three (3) occasions, trainees may apply to view the recorded performance of their most recent attempt strictly in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

Trainees may apply to view their performance at stations under the following conditions:

- Applications may be submitted only after the publication of candidate results, candidate feedback letters and the examination report.
- A fee aligned to cost recovery will be payable at the time of application.
- Trainees will be permitted to view the recorded stations at a venue, and at a date and time as determined by the College.
- When viewing the recorded stations, trainees must be accompanied by their DEMT or another FACEM support person approved by the Chair of ESC or their nominated representative.
- A College staff member will be in attendance when the recorded stations are viewed.
- Duly signed and completed confidentiality agreements from both the trainee and their support person must accompany the application.
- Such viewing may not be used as the basis for any challenge to the result or outcome of the stations viewed.

Records will be kept in relation to the number of applications received under this section of the policy, the nature of the application and the outcome of the application. This information will be reported routinely to ESC and COE, and forwarded to the Office of the CEO for compilation and reporting as part of College processes.

4.5 For review in the event of a candidate complaint about the conduct of a station

Where an adverse incident is alleged to have occurred during the conduct of a particular station, such that a candidate believes they suffered a disadvantage, that candidate may submit a request within three (3) business days of the relevant examination as per the provisions of the ACEM Exceptional Circumstances and Special Consideration Policy, for the conduct of that station to be reviewed.

- Applications must give a full account of the circumstances leading to the application and the basis on which the application is made.
- The application will be reviewed by the ESC Chair or nominated ESC member(s), and, if accepted, they shall authorise a review of the recording of that station. Applications will only be accepted if it alleges that there were adverse or unusual conduct or circumstances occurring at that station which affected the outcome, and not simply a challenge of the marking or assessment.
- Where an application is accepted, an independent review of the recording of the station will be conducted by two examiners nominated by the ESC Chair. Where feasible, the reviewing examiners will be examiners who are familiar with the station, either as a reviewer or examiner, but who did not examine that candidate in that station.
- After reviewing the station, the reviewers will make a recommendation as to whether the ground(s) on which the application is made is valid and make a recommendation as to whether the application is to be upheld or dismissed. The Chair of ESC or nominated ESC member(s) where the recommendation is made by the Chair, will determine whether or not the recommendation is approved.
- If the application is upheld, the station will be removed from the calculation of the candidate’s OSCE result when examination results are being compiled. If the application is not upheld, no further challenge to the result or outcome may be made. The College’s Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy will not apply to this decision.
Records will be kept in relation to the number of applications received under this section of the policy, the nature of the application and the outcome of the application. This information will be reported routinely to ESC and COE, and forwarded to the Office of the CEO for compilation and reporting as part of College processes.

4.6 For use in reconsideration, review and appeals

Where a specific allegation is made in relation to a matter(s) occurring at a station, which may have adversely affected the result or outcome of that station, and where that allegation is accepted for progress according to the College’s Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy:

• The College, acting through the CEO, may, in its discretion, provide a transcript derived from the recording of that station(s) for the purposes of any reconsideration, review or appeal relevant to that allegation.

• The person conducting (or Chair of the committee conducting) the reconsideration, review or appeal may request that the College provide a transcript derived from the recording of the station, or in exceptional circumstances, may request a viewing of the recording for the purposes of the reconsideration, review or appeal by that person (or committee, as the case may be).

In each case above, where the transcript or recording has been provided to an individual (or committee as the case may be) to assist in the consideration of a reconsideration, review or appeal, the transcript may be provided to, or the viewing may be permitted for, the candidate/applicant. Where a viewing of a recording is permitted, it will be conducted under the following conditions:

• Candidates/applicants will be permitted to view the recorded station in question, at a venue, and at a date and time as determined by the College.

• When viewing the recorded station, candidates/applicants may be accompanied by a support person or representative assisting in their application for reconsideration, review or appeal.

• A College staff member will be in attendance when the recorded station is viewed.

• Duly signed and completed confidentiality agreements from both the candidate/applicant and their support person must be completed prior to the viewing.

Records will be kept in relation to the number of applications received under this section of the policy, the nature of the application and the outcome of the application. This information will be reported routinely to ESC and COE, and forwarded to the Office of the CEO for compilation and reporting as part of College processes.