**AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE
FOR EMERGENCY MEDICINE**

GUIDELINES FOR INVOLVING A SUPPORT PERSON IN A FEEDBACK MEETING

1.   PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM; the College) is committed to providing training programs, that include appropriate support structures that are fair, consistent, transparent and robust. ACEM acknowledges the importance of the safety and wellbeing of trainees and Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs), and that of all whose role it is to support trainees and SIMGs. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide advice about the involvement and management of a support person before, during and after feedback meetings between a trainee or a SIMG and a Director of Emergency Medicine Training (DEMT), Primary Supervisor, Supervisor, or Assessor, should one be used.

2.   DEFINITIONS

Feedback Meeting
Feedback meetings occur at regular intervals between trainees or SIMGs and their DEMTs or Supervisors for the purposes of completing assessments such as in training assessments (ITAs). Trainees and SIMGs may receive feedback at other times whilst in the training program from other supervisors and assessors.

Feedback meetings may consist of but not be limited to:

- An ITA feedback meeting with the DEMT or Supervisor
- Feedback from a FACEM consultant after a Workplace-based Assessment (WBA)
- Supervisor Feedback about an incident, event, a difficult encounter or shift
- A discussion about preparedness to sit an Examination
- Setting goals following a Trainee Progression Review Panel or a SIMG Assessment Committee decision that a period of additional training or SIMG pathway time is required
- Setting goals following a failed attempt at an ACEM examination.
- Feedback at the time of a reflection meeting.

Assessor
means the College-recognised individual, who may or may not be a trainee's or SIMG's DEMT, FACEM Assessor or supervisor, who conducts an assessment of a trainee's performance, whether by means of a WBA or other College assessment.

Primary Supervisor (EMC, EMD, EMAD, Dip PHRM)
means the College-recognised individual who has been nominated by the trainee to conduct some assessments and is responsible for oversight of the trainee's progression through the training program.

Supervisor (SIMG)
means the College-appointed FACEMs who are responsible for the oversight of a SIMG's supervised practice placement for a particular Emergency Department placement.

Supervisor (Non-Emergency Department placement)
> means the College-recognised individual(s), other than a trainee's DEMT, who is responsible for oversight of a trainee's training for a particular non -Emergency Department placement.

Trainee
> means any trainee enrolled in the FACEM Training Program and includes Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) who are completing requirements of a pathway to qualify for Fellowship of the College and trainees who are completing the ACEM Emergency Medicine Certificate, Emergency Medicine Diploma, Emergency Medicine Advanced Diploma or Diploma of Pre-Hospital and Retrieval Medicine. Where necessary, these guidelines may specifically delineate information applicable to a specific training program.

SIMG
> means any Specialist International Medical Graduate enrolled in the ACEM SIMG Pathway who is completing specified requirements to qualify for eligibility for election to Fellowship of the College.

3.   CIRCUMSTANCES FOR REQUIRING A SUPPORT PERSON

The provision of feedback to trainees as they progress through training is an important facet of all ACEM training programs and the SIMG pathway to Fellowship. As such, the College encourages trainees and SIMGs to seek regular feedback from their DEMT/Supervisor as well as other assessors.

ACEM recognises the benefit the presence of a support person may afford trainees or SIMGs when receiving feedback and supports their appropriate use as a measure that seeks to increase the learning that results from the receipt of feedback.

Circumstances in which a trainee or their supervisor may consider that they require the presence of a support person may include, but are not limited to the following:
- It is anticipated that negative feedback will be given in a scheduled meeting
- The trainee finds receiving feedback stressful
- The meeting is about an incident, event, or encounter which was traumatic or distressing for the trainee
- The trainee feels more comfortable with another person being present at feedback meetings

4.   ROLE OF SUPPORT PERSON

As the name implies, support persons are in attendance to support the trainee, rather than to advocate for them or speak on their behalf.

Support persons may:
- Provide emotional support for the trainee
- Facilitate communication as appropriate, including supporting trainees to seek clarification about the process, questions asked, or responses given
- Take notes throughout the meeting
- Provide advice to the trainee
- Request a break either to speak to the trainee or to allow the trainee to compose themselves where they become distressed or emotional
- Be available to debrief after feedback

Support persons may not:
- Advocate or speak for the trainee
- Disrupt or interfere with proceedings

Support may need to continue after a feedback session. Wellbeing resources for trainees can be found on the ACEM website at: https://acem.org.au/Content-Sources/Members/Member-Wellbeing.aspx

5.   SUITABLE SUPPORT PERSONS

The following general guidelines should be considered by trainees when choosing a support person:
- The support person must be over 18 years of age.
- The support person should not be someone who holds a role more senior to that of the DEMT/Supervisor/Assessor, or someone involved in the issues that may be discussed.
- The support person should demonstrate commitment to the feedback process and engage with the process in a constructive manner.

The support person may, but need not necessarily, be a trainee's mentor (if applicable).

6.   NOTIFICATION OF FEEDBACK MEETINGS

In circumstances where a DEMT/Supervisor/Assessor thinks that the trainee may need support during the course of a meeting, it is best practice to:
- Where possible, notify the trainee in advance of arrangements for and the purpose of the meeting;
- Notify the trainee if any other persons will be present at the meeting and the purpose of their attendance (e.g. HR to assist with notetaking and support for all parties);
- Provide advice on the role of a support person;
- Offer the trainee the opportunity to have a support person present at the meeting; and
- Consider rescheduling the meeting to enable a suitable support person to attend.

7.   CONDUCT OF MEETINGS AT WHICH A SUPPORT PERSON IS TO BE PRESENT

Prior to the meeting, the trainee should:
- Advise the DEMT/Supervisor/Assessor that a support person will be at the feedback meeting.
- Ensure that the support person's name and contact details are recorded, along with the relationship to the trainee.

The DEMT/Supervisor/Assessor may request an alternate support person if the chosen person is deemed not to be suitable.

The support person may participate:
- in person
- via telephone
- via skype or another videoconferencing system

The DEMT/Supervisor/Assessor must communicate the role of the support person at the start of the meeting to all present. If the DEMT/Supervisor/Assessor finds the support person to be getting overly involved in the process, the DEMT/ Supervisor/Assessor can suspend the meeting until the role of the support person is clarified or an alternative support person is selected. In the case of the latter, the meeting may need to be re-scheduled for a date and time when all are able to participate.

8.   DOCUMENT REVIEW

Timeframe for review: every two (2) years.

8.1   Responsibilities

Document authorisation: Council of Education
Document implementation: Executive Director Training
Document maintenance: General Manager, Governance and Standards

8.2   Revision History

Version	Date of Version	Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision
v1	Aug-2018	Approved by COE
v2	Mar 2022	Revisions to reflect current terminology and training programs