



College of Intensive Care Medicine  
of Australia and New Zealand  
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## ASSESSMENT OF OVERSEAS TRAINED INTENSIVE CARE SPECIALISTS

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This document outlines the procedure that should be followed when an overseas trained intensive care specialist (OTS) wishes to **obtain recognition in Australia or vocational registration in New Zealand as a specialist in intensive care medicine**. In Australia, under an agreement between the Specialist Medical Colleges' State Medical Boards and the Australian Medical Council (AMC), the application is made directly to the College of Intensive Care Medicine (CICM). For New Zealand applicants, the application will initially go to the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) before being processed by the College.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 General

Graduates of medical schools outside Australia and New Zealand are not automatically eligible for unconditional medical registration in Australia or New Zealand. Graduates must ordinarily pass examinations set by the AMC or the MCNZ and must fulfil a variety of conditions set by the respective Councils.

Medical practitioners who have satisfied all the training and examination requirements to practice in their field of specialty in another country have been granted alternative pathways to **specialist recognition** in Australia or **vocational registration** in New Zealand. If a case for consideration is requested, the College will assess the training, qualifications and experience of the applicant. An offer of employment by a hospital or public health authority outside the AMC/MCNZ pathway is no guarantee of specialist recognition.

#### 1.2 Pathway to Fellowship

The trainee pathway to Fellowship in General or Paediatric Intensive Care Medicine requires the completion of structured supervised training, various assessments and courses. An applicant is not required to complete all requirements of the trainee pathway but may be required to complete certain aspects in order to provide a standard of care comparable to a Fellow. .

The OTS pathway is **not** an alternative specialist training program and completion of this process does not automatically guarantee Fellowship of the College.

Further information on the training program can be found on the [College website](#).

## **2. OTS ASSESSMENT**

### **2.1 Assessment Process**

The Assessment Process aims to determine whether an applicant is able to perform as an unsupervised specialist in Intensive Care Medicine at a comparable standard to that of a CICM Fellow. It should be regarded as a recertification of specialists from non-Australian/New Zealand training backgrounds. The process will uphold the principles of consistency, objectivity, transparency and procedural fairness.

The OTS Committee is responsible for the assessment of all applications and the Committee's findings are recommended to the College Board.

The Committee consists of the following members:

- Censor (Chair)
- Deputy Censor
- Paediatric Deputy Censor (if applicable)
- Director of Professional Affairs
- Assessments Committee Chair
- A Fellow who has completed the OTS pathway
- A Community representative/stakeholder

#### **2.1.2 Required documentation**

All OTS applicants are encouraged to visit the following websites (if applicable) prior to applying in order to gain access to important information: [www.cicm.org.au](http://www.cicm.org.au), [www.amc.org.au](http://www.amc.org.au), [www.mcnz.org.nz](http://www.mcnz.org.nz)

Applicants in Australia are required to have their medical qualifications verified through the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) Electronic Portfolio of International Credentials (EPIC) or International Credentials Services (EICS). This process is called Primary Source Verification (PSV), is administered by the AMC and may be completed prior to, or concurrently with the application to the College. An application for assessment will not be proceed unless the applicant has an EPIC or EICS number. For further information on the PSV application process, please visit <http://www.amc.org.au/index.php/ass/psv>

In the application to the College, applicants must provide evidence attesting to qualifications, past employment and training. This documentation is to be submitted directly to the College with the OTS application form and must adhere to College standards on verification outlined in the document. The application form can be obtained by contacting the College.

Applicants in Australia will also be required to submit proof of English language proficiency in their application. The College will accept IELTS, OET, PTE Academic, TOEFL iBT, NZREX or PLAB test results at a level of achievement acceptable to the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) or the MCNZ. Results must be from the 2 years immediately prior to application.

### 2.1.3 Interim assessment

A paper-based assessment will be conducted to determine the eligibility of an applicant. If considered to be suitable, the applicant will be invited to attend a face-to-face interview.

The interim assessment will take into account evidence of:

- a) A basic medical qualification that is recognised by the AMC or the MCNZ;
- b) Completion of a recognised specialist training program to practice intensive care medicine in their country of training;
- c) Recognition as an intensive care specialist in their country of training;
- d) Any previous work experience as an intensive care specialist.

The interim assessment will also identify any gaps/deficiencies in the applicant's training compared to the College's training program. In some cases the College may choose not to interview an applicant if their documentation indicates that the applicant's training and experience is not comparable to that of a CICM Fellow.

### 2.1.4 Face-to-face Interview

In Australia, the interview will be conducted by selected members of the [OTS Committee](#). In New Zealand, the National Committee (NZNC) shall form a panel of three from New Zealand Board Member(s), members of NZNC, CICM Fellows or a community member. The Chair of the NZNC should not normally be a member of the panel. The panel may include a member of the MCNZ who would act as an observer only.

The interview will be organised by the College at a time and location that is suitable for all parties. The applicant is required to make their own travel arrangements and is responsible for all associated costs.

### 2.1.5 Interview process

The panel will review the applicant's application and supporting documentation in detail prior to the interview commencing. The panel will then collaborate and plan the interview and use structured.

### 2.1.6 Interview criteria

The panel will make recommendations based on the following criteria:

- i. Specialist degree and previous practice of intensive care medicine in the country of training. There must be documentation of medical registration, specialist qualifications in intensive care medicine and details of specialist practice in intensive care medicine. Consideration is given to the *curriculum vitae*, references, and any other documents that portray the candidate's previous practice as an intensive care medicine specialist. Evidence of completed specialist exit examinations or formal assessments should also be included. Stated experience and qualifications must be substantiated by statements of training and original or certified copies of diplomas from relevant bodies.
- ii. Training in intensive care medicine must be equivalent with the CICM training in its duration, structure and content, assessments and supervision. Details of the various components of examinations and/or assessments will assist the panel to assess comparability
- iii. Any previous experience as a specialist in terms of management of patients with adequate case mix and severity of illness, use of equipment and procedures, and compliance with standards of good practice in intensive care medicine, must be equivalent to the standards promoted in [College Policy Documents](#).
- iv. Participation in continuing education and quality assurance activities must be similar to the Continual Professional Development Program (CPD). A continuous involvement in recent years is important.

## 2.2 Comparability

Following the face-to-face interview, the panel will arrange to convene with the wider OTS Committee to decide on the comparability of the applicant. Written confirmation of the recommendations will be sent to the applicant and relevant bodies following the interview.

The College undertakes an assessment to determine if the applicant's qualifications, training and experience are:

- Not comparable or
- Partially comparable or
- Substantially comparable

Outcome	Definition
Not comparable	The applicant is assessed as being unable to reach comparability within a 24 month full time equivalent time frame of supervised clinical practice. They may be eligible to seek formal training and assessment via the trainee pathway.
Partially comparable	<p>The applicant is assessed as suitable to undertake a defined scope of practice in a supervised capacity.</p> <p>Applicants must satisfy all requirements in relation to previous training, assessment, recent specialist practice and continuing professional development (CPD) within a maximum period of 24 months full time equivalent of supervised clinical practice. The College will determine the length of supervised practice and nature of assessment(s) on a case-by-case basis, however the supervised practice period must not exceed 24 months full time equivalent of practice.</p> <p>During this period, the applicant will undertake up skilling with prescribed assessment(s) that include a formal examination.</p> <p>Following satisfactory completion of these requirements, the applicant may be eligible to apply for Fellowship of the College and may apply for registration as a specialist. Partially comparable applicants will not be eligible to apply for specialist registration during the period of supervised practice.</p>
Substantially comparable	<p>The applicant is suitable to undertake the intended scope of practice, taking full responsibility for individual patients with only oversight of their practice by a supervisor. Applicants have satisfied all requirements in relation to previous training, assessment, recent specialist practice and continuing professional development (CPD).</p> <p>The applicant may be required to undertake a period of up to 12 months full time equivalent of supervised clinical practice under peer review by a reviewer approved by the College. The College will determine length of peer review and nature of assessment(s) on a case-by-case basis, but the peer review period must not exceed 12 months.</p> <p>Following satisfactory completion of these requirements, the applicant may be eligible to apply for Fellowship of the College without formal examination, and may apply for registration as a specialist. Substantially comparable applicants will not be eligible to apply for specialist registration during the period of peer review.</p>

The above definitions are in accordance with the definitions outlined by the Medical Board of Australia and the [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency](#).

### **2.2.1 Supervised Clinical Practice (Clinical Practice Assessment Period)**

If the OTS Committee recommends a period of supervised practice it is in order to assist the applicant with the transition to the Australian/New Zealand health system and provide professional support. In certain circumstances this period may be completed on a part-time basis, subject to prospective approval from the Censor.

Following approval of the post, the OTS may commence the Clinical Practice Assessment Period from the date of the interview (if appropriate). Work in Australia or New Zealand before the interview may be considered retrospectively. In exceptional circumstances, following satisfactory completion of a performance evaluation, the Clinical Practice Assessment Period may be reduced.

The College will nominate a supervisor to oversee the candidate's Clinical Practice Assessment Period. This supervisor will be required to complete In-Training Evaluation Reports (ITER) as specified by the OTS Committee. Based on these reports, the OTS Committee may review the initial assessment of the applicant.

For further information on the ITER, please refer to the [Guide for CICM Training](#).

### **2.2.2 Second Part Examination**

Applicants found to be partially comparable may be recommended by the OTS Committee to complete a formal examination. The formal examination is called the Second Part Examination.

The examination is modelled on clinical assessment consisting of:

- Two 150 minute short answer questions (SAQ) written papers, involving fifteen questions in each. Standardised vivas that evaluate theoretical knowledge, communication skills, procedures and use of specialised equipment; and
- An assessment of clinical skills using critically ill patients in an intensive care.

In order to complete this assessment satisfactorily, the candidate must attain at least 50% of the overall mark, and achieve a satisfactory mark in the assessment of clinical skills. Failure in more than one section will constitute overall failure.

The outcome of the examination will be forwarded to the OTS Committee. The examination may be attempted again should the assessment be unsatisfactory. In the event of two unsatisfactory attempts, the College will review the original OTS assessment.

A candidate who presents for either the written or oral component has a maximum of five attempts. If unsuccessful on the fifth attempt the candidate will not be eligible for further examination candidacy and will no longer be registered with the College.

For further information refer to the examination section of the [College website](#).

### **3. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

#### **3.1 Areas of Need**

Special consideration in the assessment process is given to an applicant appointed to an Area of Need post. College support for specialist recognition will not be granted after the applicant completes his/her appointment in an Area of Need post without completion of the OTS assessment process.

For further information refer to document [T-28 Intensive Care Services for Areas of Need](#)

#### **3.2 Specialist Registration in Intensive Care Medicine**

The College will recommend an OTS who satisfies all the requirements of the assessment process to the AMC or the MCNZ for **recognition as a specialist in intensive care medicine**. Such an OTS is eligible to be considered by the Board of the CICM for possible [admission to the Fellowship of the College](#), upon recommendation of the OTS Committee.

### 3.3 Fees

All OTS applications are subject to fees during the assessment process and throughout training with CICM. Please visit the [fee section](#) of the College website for more information.

### 3.4 Review and maximum time frames

OTS applicants found to be partially comparable will have a total of four years to complete all supervised practice and assessment requirements recommended by the College. The starting point for this time frame will be from the date of the applicant accepts their requirements.

OTS applicants found to be substantially comparable will have a total of two years to complete peer review/oversight requirements recommended by the College. The starting point for this time frame will be from the date of the applicant accepts their requirements.

If an OTS fails to complete their requirements within the above time frames, their assessment will lapse. Leave granted for 'exceptional circumstances' is not counted as part of the maximum timeframe.

The OTS assessment process will be subject to on-going review.

### 3.5 Appeal Procedure

All applicants may appeal against a decision on a matter of process. The appeal will be considered according to the appeal procedure of the College outlined in section 15 of the [Regulations](#).

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