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Dear A/Prof Veysey

Thank you for an opportunity to provide comment on your draft Selection into Training Policy. The draft addresses many of the important issues in respect of College and employer responsibilities and due process relating to entry into a specialist training program. The AMA congratulates the College on its work and has the following comments to make.

In relation to Section 3: Roles and Responsibilities in Selection of Trainees, Point 1.5

The AMA suggests the addition of an additional dot point to reflect a responsibility to make provisions for a process for formal review of decisions in relation to selection which is outlined to candidates prior to the selection process.

Suggested wording or similar:

“Developing processes to support a review of decisions in relation to selection.”

This is consistent with the Australian Medical Council proposed revised accreditation standards for specialist medical programs and continuing professional development programs.

In relation to Section 4: Eligibility to apply for RACP training

Trainee comments suggest they would like to see:

- Further clarity on the rationale behind the first two stages for selection into the training program. For example, if a trainee meets the eligibility criteria, completes the application form and pays the application fee, what is the rationale behind the second selection into training process?
- Further clarity about the timeframe for completion of eligibility and selection prior to registration so that trainees can progress from eligibility to registration in a timely manner.
- Further clarity about why two years has been selected as the period of validity for eligibility by the college, and what specific criteria are dynamic to require an assessment every two years if unsuccessful on getting onto the training program.
- Further transparency about the cost of the selection process and how the fee reflects the cost of the process to assess trainees.

In relation to Section 5. Selection into an RACP training program

In this section it would be useful if RACP were able to define, objectively, the 'appropriate level of ability' for prospective applicants against each of the different standards. This would uphold the characteristics of the selection process as being 'rigorous' and 'fair'. The AMA acknowledges that defining the appropriate level of ability could be very challenging in some of these domains. In this respect it may be useful to consider whether the objective is to assess the potential of the prospective applicant to become competent in these domains as opposed to requiring the applicant to demonstrate an existing level of competence.

The AMA also suggests the addition of content in respect of point (g) Ethics & professionalism to emphasise the need to look after one's self and colleagues, and to contribute to a healthy workplace. This is in light of the findings from the beyondblue survey on the mental health of doctors and medical students and in response to recent discussion about bullying and harassment, and in particular sexual harassment, in the workplace.

Suggested wording or similar taken from RACP *What is Good Work?* Policy:

“Physicians advocate for improvements in health through improved workplace culture, and contribute to a sense of support, mutuality and a workplace where colleagues contribute and feel valued.”

In relation to 1. Standards for Stage 2 Selection into Training (p8)

Transparent

The AMA suggests that wording be incorporated to reflect that:

1. Any weighting system/and or points attached to specific entry requirements be documented and published to the greatest extent possible.
2. Requirements should be made publicly available to applicants within a sufficient time frame prior to the application and selection process.
3. The criteria and process for seeking exemption from such requirements are made clear
4. Processes for formal review of decisions in relation to selection are outlined to candidates prior to the selection process.

This is consistent with the Australian Medical Council proposed revised accreditation standards for specialist medical programs and continuing professional development programs. The inclusion of

Suggested wording or similar:

*“...Eligibility and selection criteria are made publicly available **within a sufficient time frame to allow potential applicants to prepare an application. The criteria and process for seeking exemption from such requirements are made clear.***

Where possible, any weighting system/and or points attached to specific entry requirements will also be published. Processes which allow for formal review of decisions in relation to selection are outlined to candidates prior to the selection process... ”

The RACP may also wish to consider the addition of a point in relation to timeliness which ensures that information on entry requirements and selection processes are made publicly

available within a sufficient time frame prior to the selection process to allow potential applicants sufficient time to prepare their application.

Suggested wording or similar:

“Timely: Information on entry requirements and selection processes are made publicly available within a sufficient time frame prior to the selection process to allow potential applicants sufficient time to prepare their application.”

The AMA recently endorsed a position on *Entry requirements for vocational training (2014)* which has informed our response. This is available at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/entry-requirements-vocational-training-2014>

Finally, while the AMA appreciates that this draft pertains specifically to the processes sitting behind the application and selection processes for entry into the RACP training program, the recent Roundtable on sexual harassment hosted by the AMA on 1 April 2015 highlighted the need for information on entry requirements into specific training program to include information on flexible training options for trainees. Participants suggested that this should be made known to trainees prior to applying for a training program so as to attract a diverse range of applications and to allow trainees to make an informed decision about the specialty they were entering in terms of work life balance. A report from the Roundtable will be distributed in due course however strategies in support of intentional inclusion are among those that the College may wish to consider as part of its overall review of entry into training policy and process.

Please contact Sally Cross, Senior Policy Adviser, Workplace Policy on 02 6270 5400 or scross@ama.com.au if you have any questions relating to this response.

Yours sincerely



A/Prof Brian Owler
President



Dr Danika Thiemt
Chair, Council of Doctors in Training

15 April 2015

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