

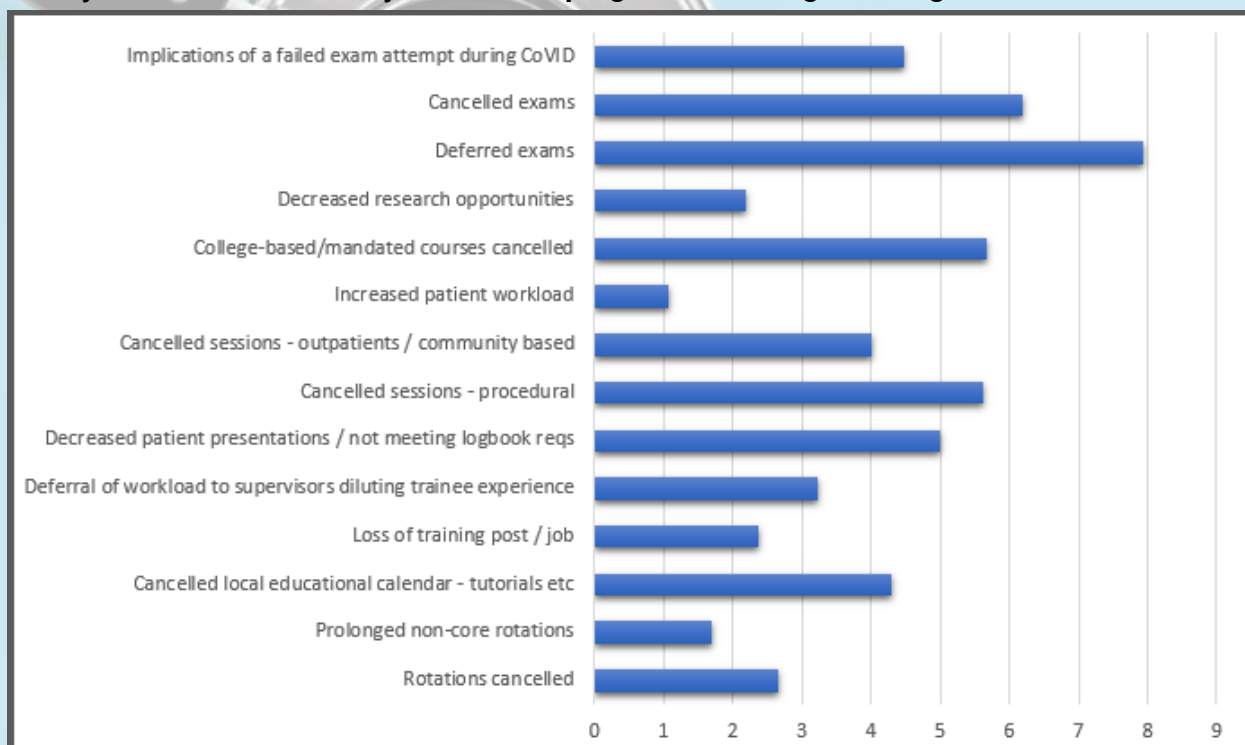
AMACDT AND MEDICAL COLLEGE TRAINEES DISCUSS COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON SPECIALTY TRAINING

- Medical College Trainee Committee Chairs and representatives reaffirmed the need for a pragmatic and flexible approach to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on trainee education and progression through training.
- Trainees commended the efforts by Specialist Medical Colleges in considering and minimising the impacts of COVID-19 on trainees and welcomed the introduction of innovative approaches to assessment and progression through training.
- Trainees considered the range of challenges to progression through training because of COVID-19. This discussion informed the themes for future priorities.

Immediate Priorities

- The key message coming out of the forum was that exam readiness and preparation have been significantly impacted by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Table 1). Cancellation and/or deferral of exams and the uncertainty about progression through training, decreased patient presentations and cancelled procedural and community based clinical sessions, and longer periods of reduced access to educational opportunities have presented challenges for trainees to meet training requirements, particularly those approaching fellowship. This has flow on effects for trainee wellbeing and can be a cause of financial strain for trainees.
- It is important that Medical Colleges are responsive to the needs of trainees moving forward and adopt a flexible and non-punitive approach to examination attempts. Innovative approaches to progression through training are encouraged to counteract any opportunity loss for exam attempts, time lost, and to maintain throughput through the training pipeline and into fellowship.
- Effective communication is vital in ensuring that trainees are aware of changes as they occur and have an opportunity to ask questions to clarify processes. Webinars were highly regarded as a mechanism to personalise and communicate changes to training under current COVID restrictions.

Table 1. Do you have concerns for your trainees progression through training due to:



Longer-Term Positioning

Trainees identified a range of initiatives they would like to see continue as part of their training post-COVID-19:

- Enhanced trainee interaction via videoconferencing and online teaching, and more consistency in training by videoconferencing. This has allowed for greater participation across jurisdictions and access to jurisdictional training from other jurisdictions, as well as across countries (Australia and New Zealand).
- Online meetings and the development of online education resources, including more recording of teaching sessions.
- Increased flexibility in college responses and requirements, and approval of flexible arrangements including flexible working hours, allowing leave/interrupted training.
- Increased flexibility in trainee progression and timeframes for assessment. Shift to workplace based assessment rather than written fellowship exams only. Flexibility around exam processes, increased number of attempts at exams, and realistic bars for passing fellowship.
- Telemedicine and telehealth initiatives.
- Excellent college engagement with trainees via multiple trainee forums from senior college leadership including at a Chief Executive Officer & President level, Censors, and Educational leads.

The online forum was attended by the following Medical College Trainee Committee Chairs and representatives:

- Australian Medical Association Council of Doctors in Training
- Australasian College for Emergency Medicine
- Australasian College of Dermatologists
- Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians
- Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetist
- Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
- Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
- College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand
- New Zealand Medical Association
- Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons
- Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators
- Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

The AMACDT Trainee Forum is designed to increase collaboration between Medical College Trainee Committees and allows trainees to share ideas and solutions to various education and training issues. The AMACDT plans to hold quarterly Trainee Forums to ensure there are regular discussions occurring to help support the various National Medical College Trainee Committees and to enhance cross specialty communication. If you have any feedback or questions, please contact us at cdt.chair@ama.com.au