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Overarching education and training principles to guide decision making during the COVID-19 pandemic

We recognise many trainees and training settings are concerned about the impact of postponing exams and cancelling training events on job applications, training time, progression through training and accreditation.

We've established two new groups to advise on key decisions in these areas — the COVID-19 Examinations Advisory Group and the COVID-19 Training and Accreditation Advisory Group.

We've also developed a new set of education and training principles to guide our decision-making during the pandemic and provide our position on potential impacts to training.

Overarching education and training principles

1. Providing patient care for individuals and the community whilst maintaining a healthy workforce are fundamental priorities at this time.
2. Trainees should be reassured that the impact of COVID-19 will be considered “exceptional circumstances” and any absences from training as a result will be treated fairly and with compassion.
3. The College recognises that approved training may be significantly disrupted in the coming months. Trainees may be redeployed in order to support the COVID-19 response. For each training program, guidance will be developed in consultation with Training Committees on how COVID-19 support rotations will be assessed, taking into account the current training requirements.
4. All College Training Committees will act consistently, transparently and fairly.
5. Trainees must continue to receive appropriate orientation and supervision, even if they are redeployed to a different clinical area.
6. Support is available to trainees and supervisors who may want to consider or discuss increasing or decreasing training hours or apply for interruption of training as a result of family or personal commitments changes resulting from COVID-19.
7. The exceptional circumstances and possible program exceptions recognised in the 2020 training year will, at this stage, not apply to subsequent training years. However, it is recognised that the disruptions to training this year may well have flow on effects to subsequent years for some trainees. Trainees should keep detailed and accurate records of changes to their training program.
8. The College appreciates the overload on health systems during this crisis and understands that the normal cycle of accreditation may require adjustment. Any requirement for accreditation site visits will be reviewed on a case by case basis and in consultation with the site.
9. The College will communicate updates to all members as decisions are made, including information relating to exams, training requirements, training time and accreditation.
10. Matters that are common to all training programs will be the responsibility of the College Education Committee. Matters relating to specific training program requirements and individuals will still be the responsibility of the respective Training Committees.
11. The health and wellbeing of trainees, educators and their families or whānau is paramount. [RACP support resources](#) are available, including access to a free confidential and independent [help line](#).