



1. TITLE: SPECIAL CONSIDERATION IN ASSESSMENT AND RECONSIDERATION OF EXAMINATION RESULTS POLICY

- 1.1 Policy reference: CO-A-003-02
- 1.2 Category: Academic – Assessment
- 1.3 Approval date: September 2023
- 1.4 Approved by: Chief Executive
- 1.5 Effective date: January 2024
- 1.6 Review/revision date: December 2024
- 1.7 Unit responsible: Academic team

2. Policy declaration

2.1 Purpose

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (the College) is committed to a valid, fair and transparent process for all registrars enrolled in the General Practice Education Programme (GPEP or the programme) undertaking summative assessments (written and clinical examinations) and for examination decisions and final results.

This policy should be read with the College’s Appeals Policy (CO-A-002-06). The Appeals Policy applies when a registrar who is dissatisfied with the outcome of a special consideration in assessment, a request for recount of marks, or a reconsideration of examination results wishes to formally appeal that decision.

3. Background

3.1 Objectives

This policy sets out the mechanisms for registrars to apply for special consideration for a summative assessment (written and clinical examination), a recount of marks, and/or a reconsideration of written and/or clinical examination decisions and final results. It defines the scope and range of applications and possible outcomes.

3.2 In scope

Registrars undergoing summative assessments (written and clinical examinations) and Fellowship.

3.3 Out of scope

The following are not covered by this policy:

- summative assessments related to registrars enrolled in the Division of Rural Hospital Medicine's (the Division's) Rural Hospital Medicine Training Programme
- academic papers offered by other educational institutions, where that institution's assessment policies will be applied instead
- requests arising from candidates who have not read/understood the rules relating to the examination/assessment
- formative assessment activities
- exhausted examination attempts
- exhausted time limits to complete training
- a candidate that has breached the GPEP Written and Clinical Examination Rules
- a candidate that has not met the requirements for the Fellowship Assessment visit
- a decision by the Censor in Chief that a candidate has breached the GPEP Written and Clinical Examination Rules*
- a decision by the Censor in Chief following a Fellowship Assessment visit that a candidate has not met the requirements for Fellowship.*

4. Definitions

All definitions are available in the College's *Academic Regulatory Framework for Quality Assurance*.

5. General policy

5.1 Special Consideration in Assessment

Special Consideration in Assessment is the process by which the College seeks to ensure just and equitable treatment of registrars who suffer a disability, longstanding condition or unexpected and significant impairment (e.g. serious illness) that impacts or has the potential to impact on their performance in an assessment.

It may be applied in a circumstance not ordinarily encountered or anticipated and that is beyond the control of a registrar.

5.1.1 Applications may be submitted prior to the examination and up to four working days after the examination date.

5.1.2 Circumstances that may require special consideration and/or special arrangements are:

- disability, permanent and longstanding impairment, e.g. deafness, dyslexia, physical impairment
- temporary impairment
- non-medical compassionate grounds or serious disruption

* These decisions may be appealed on the grounds set out in the Appeals Policy (CO-A-002-06).

- > essential commitments (religious, cultural, societal or legal)
- > technical problems during an examination, including health and safety risks arising.

Refer Appendix A: Categories for Special Consideration

5.1.3 An application will not be considered when:

- i. a candidate has attained a pass or a conceded pass for a written or clinical examination.
- ii. an application has been completed on behalf of another registrar, except under extraordinary circumstances (e.g. candidate illness).

5.2 Applications for Special Consideration

5.2.1 Medical grounds

Applications must be accompanied by a medical certificate from the treating practitioner that details the following:

- i. The date on which the medical practitioner examined the individual, which should be prior to or on the date of the scheduled assessment; and
- ii. The severity of the medical condition; and
- iii. The medical practitioner's opinion on the effect of the condition on the ability of the individual to present for the assessment.

5.2.2 Compassionate grounds

Applications must be accompanied by relevant supporting documentation. This documentation may include:

- i. a bereavement notice and statutory declaration stating relationship to deceased;
- ii. a notice from the treating practitioner where illness of a close relative is involved;
- iii. a copy of a police incident report;
- iv. a letter outlining the circumstances impacting on the candidate's ability to complete the assessment task.

5.2.3 Disability grounds

The College will endeavour to provide the optimal assessment environment for candidates with a disability. Individuals applying for the use of specialised equipment, aids or special assessment conditions as a result of a disability should contact the College in writing and provide clear, documented requirements. This may either be at the time of enrolment for the assessment or at least 90 working days prior to the scheduled date of the assessment.

Applications must be accompanied by relevant supporting documentation. This documentation must include:

- i. a medical report or certificate confirming the nature of the disability and substantiating the grounds for the special consideration in assessment application; and
- ii. clear instructions for the provision of specified requirements.

5.3 Outcomes of Special Consideration in Assessment

5.3.1 The granting of special consideration may include:

- the provision of specific equipment or materials that may physically assist a registrar with a medical condition or disability but that does not impart an advantage in either examination; the provision of special accommodation or time to complete the written examination but that does not impart an advantage in the examination
- approval to defer a registrar's examination(s) for one year
- the provision of a re-sit of either examination at the next opportunity with no mark being recorded for the impaired performance.

5.3.2 Deferral of examination(s)

A registrar that applies to the College for deferral of their examination(s) is required to meet the GPEP summative assessment requirements outlined in the Fellowship Pathway Regulations that are in place at the time of their enrolment.

An application for a deferral does not imply that this will automatically be approved.

5.4 Recount and/or reconsideration of examination results

5.4.1 Recounts and/or reconsiderations provide a mechanism for candidates to request a review of the assessment or marking process, and/or raise concerns or claims of prejudice or bias in the examination process. A recount and or reconsideration will only be carried out on final examination results.

This may include, if the candidate has reason to believe:

- i. there has been an error in the calculation or collation of their marks
- ii. there was an irregularity in the examination
- iii. an examiner was prejudiced or biased against the candidate.

5.4.2 A candidate may not apply for a reconsideration on the grounds that they wish to challenge the academic judgement of an examiner concerning their performance in the examination (or include any such ground in their application).

5.4.3 Applications for recounts/reconsiderations must be made in writing on the approved form. Applications must be submitted within 10 working days of the candidates receiving their results. No late applications will be considered except in exceptional circumstances.

5.3.4 The Head of Learning (or delegate) will undertake an investigation into all claims of a recount/reconsideration and recommend a decision to the Censor in Chief who will make the final decision.

5.5 Outcomes of investigations

5.5.1 If a reconsideration of an examination result concerns an alleged error in the calculation or collation of the candidate's marks, and the investigator is satisfied that there was such an error, the investigator may recommend to the Censor in Chief that the candidate's results be amended. If the investigator finds that there was no such error, the Censor in Chief must uphold the original result.

5.5.2 If a reconsideration of an examination result concerns an alleged irregularity in the examination or an allegation that an examiner was prejudiced or biased against the candidate, the investigator must recommend that the original result be upheld unless they are satisfied that:

- i. there was such an irregularity, prejudice or bias; and
- ii. there is a real likelihood that the irregularity, prejudice or bias materially affected the candidate's result.

5.5.3 The Head of Learning (or delegate) may make one of the following recommendations to the Censor in Chief:

- i. that the candidate's original result be upheld;
- ii. that the candidate's original result be adjusted;
- iii. that the candidate be permitted to re-sit the examination without having to pay the applicable fee, when the examination is next held;
- iv. that the candidate is given the opportunity to sit an alternative assessment.

5.6 **Alternative assessment**

An alternative assessment may be offered to a candidate under the following circumstances:

- a. Three failings of a summative assessment where the candidate has been provided with appropriate ongoing support; and
- b. has demonstrated consistent competent practice (as assessed by their peers); and
- c. has the application supported by their Medical Educator.

6. **Related policies, documents and legislation**

- > Academic Regulatory Framework for Quality Assurance (CO-A-001-00)
- > Special Consideration in Assessment and Reconsideration of Examination Results Procedure (CO-A-003-02A)
- > Special Consideration in Assessment application form
- > Reconsideration of Examination Results form
- > GPEP Written and Clinical Examinations Rules
- > Appeals Policy (CO-A-002-06)

7. **Administrative procedures**

7.1 **Promulgation of published policy**

This policy will be available via the College website.

Appendix A: Categories for Special Consideration

- > **Permanent and/or longstanding impairment:** A permanent or longstanding condition that may limit the participation or performance of a registrar.
- > **Temporary impairments – medical grounds:** Acute medical condition or serious injury that may cause substantial disruption to a registrar’s preparation for or performance during an examination, prevent attendance at the examination or impact a work-based assessment.
- > **Non-medical compassionate grounds or serious disruption:** Situations that may cause substantial disruption to a registrar’s preparation for, or performance during assessment, or prevent attendance at, or submission of the assessment.
- > **Essential commitments:** Considerations due to religious or cultural observance prohibiting participation in an assessment at a particular time, significant societal obligations or legal commitments.
- > **Technical problems during examination:** Circumstances resulting in a significant disturbance to the normal course of the examination that could reasonably be expected to have hindered an individual registrar’s performance and where satisfactory adjustment to allow for such circumstances could not be made on the day.

Any other circumstances that do not fall within the stated categories above may be considered under exceptional circumstances by the College on a case-by case basis.