



## Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery

Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, New Zealand Association of General Surgeons

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# Selection Regulations:

# 2025 Aotearoa New Zealand Selection to General Surgical Education and Training in General Surgery for 2026 intake

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Generic eligibility requirements for selection are published on the RACS website and can be found [here](#).

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Definition and Terminology**

- 1.1.1. **College** or **RACS** means the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.
- 1.1.2. **Committee** means the RACS Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery (AoNZCIGS).
- 1.1.3. **GSET Programme** means the General Surgical Education and Training Programme as approved by the Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery.
- 1.1.4. **Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee** means the New Zealand Sub Committee of the Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery (AoNZCIGS) consisting of representatives from each training hospital and provides an operational role for GSET training
- 1.1.5. **NZAGS** means New Zealand Association of General Surgeons.
- 1.1.6. **Applicant** means a person who has submitted an application for the GSET Programme to RACS.
- 1.1.7. **Interview** means the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee of the NZAGS, semi-structured, General Surgery panel interview, conducted as part of the selection process.
- 1.1.8. **Referee** means a person identified in accordance with these Regulations to professionally evaluate the Applicant's performance.
- 1.1.9. **Business Days** means Monday to Friday, excluding Public Holidays.

### **1.2 Purpose of Regulations**

The purpose of these Regulations is to set forth and establish the principles, terms, and conditions of the selection process for the RACS Surgical Education and Training (GSET) Programme in General Surgery for the 2025 Selection in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is a public document.

### **1.3 Administration and Ownership**

- 1.3.1. The RACS is the body accredited and authorised to conduct surgical education and training in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 1.3.2. The Aotearoa New Zealand General Surgery Committee in General Surgery (AoNZCIGS) is responsible for the delivery of the GSET programme, the accreditation of hospital posts, and the assessment and supervision of General Surgical Trainees.
- 1.3.3. The Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery (AoNZCIGS) delivers the GSET Programme in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 1.3.4. For further information, refer to the Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery (AoNZCIGS) Terms of Reference located on the [RACS Website](#).

### **1.4 Objectives of the GSET Programme**

- 1.4.1 The overall objective of the GSET Programme is to produce competent general surgeons with the experience, knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to provide the communities, health systems and professions they serve with the highest standard of safe, ethical and comprehensive care and leadership.
- 1.4.2 The GSET programme is structured to ensure Trainees achieve competencies in:
  - a) Medical expertise
  - b) Judgement and clinical decision making
  - c) Technical expertise
  - d) Professionalism
  - e) Health advocacy
  - f) Communication
  - g) Collaboration and teamwork

- h) Leadership and management
- i) Scholarship and Teaching
- j) Cultural Competence and cultural safety

## **1.5 Principles of Selection**

- 1.5.1 The aim of the selection process is to select the highest calibre trainees for the GSET Programme through a fair, open and accountable process.
- 1.5.2 The selection process will be well documented, transparent and objective with Applicants having access to eligibility criteria, information on the selection process, and a reconsideration, review and appeals process.
- 1.5.3 The selection process will be subject to continuous review to ensure its continued validity and objectiveness.
- 1.5.4 The selection process will abide by the principles of the [RACS Regulation: Selection to Surgical Education and Training](#).
- 1.5.5 The number of trainees selected in any year will depend on the number of eligible Applicants together with the number of accredited training posts available in the following year.
- 1.5.6 The selection process will be conducted in a fair, consistent and impartial manner.
- 1.5.7 Any factors influencing the trainee intake will be openly declared with the mechanism by which the quota or limit is reached made known.

## **2. REGISTRATION AND APPLICATION**

### **2.1 Registration**

- 2.1.1. Prospective Applicants wishing to apply to the GSET Programme in Aotearoa New Zealand must first submit a completed Registration Form to the RACS via the RACS website by the published closing date. Prospective Applicants who are not registered cannot lodge an application for the GSET Programme.
- 2.1.2. Applicants are required to meet the minimum eligibility criteria required by the Committee before submitting their completed Registration Form. Only Applicants who satisfy the eligibility and application requirements in accordance with RACS policy will be considered in open competition for selection to the GSET Programme.
- 2.1.3. For further information regarding Registration, including fees, please refer to the **RACS regulation: Registration for Selection into the Surgical Education and Training (SET)** available on the [RACS Website](#).
- 2.1.4. Applicants must have current and valid medical registration from the applicable Medical Board or Council at the time of registration. Aotearoa New Zealand Applicants must have general scope registration without restriction, or general scope registration restricted to general surgery.
- 2.1.5. Applicants must have citizenship or permanent residency status in Aotearoa New Zealand or Australia at the time of registration.

### **2.2 Submitting an Application**

- 2.2.1. Applications can only be submitted via the NZAGS online application system at [www.nzags.co.nz](http://www.nzags.co.nz) between 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025. No other form of application will be accepted, and no extensions will be granted. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that they allow enough time to complete the application. This includes completion of the Procedural Skills and Professional Capabilities Form available with the application form on the NZAGS website.
- 2.2.2. Separate applications must be made for the GSET Programme in General Surgery in Aotearoa New Zealand and the GSET Programme in General Surgery in Australia. Applicants are only able to apply to one programme.

- 2.2.3 Applicants must pay the application fee before their application can be considered. Applicants who have not paid the application fee within 10 working days of the invoice will be deemed ineligible for consideration for the current year of selection.
- 2.2.4 Each application is assessed as it was submitted. No active follow up will take place in instances where the application is incorrect or the evidence is absent.
- 2.2.5 The information collected as part of the application and during the selection process will be used to assess the Applicant’s suitability for the GSET Programme. Information may be disclosed to other parties for the purpose of selection or where required to do so by law. The Committee may verify the information provided within the application with external institutions or individuals and gather additional information to process the application. Failure to provide the information requested by the Committee may deem the Applicant ineligible for selection and their application will be withdrawn.
- 2.2.6 By submitting the application, the Applicant is consenting to the collection, use, disclosure and storage of the information by the Committee, the RACS or its agents.
- 2.2.7 By submitting an application, the Applicant is consenting to references being collected, and to the nominated referees within the application disclosing the information requested as part of the Structured Referee Report process.
- 2.2.8 By submitting an application, the Applicant certifies the information provided is correct and in accordance with these Regulations. The Applicant also verifies no false or tampered documentation will be submitted. It is a condition of application for selection that, should at any time during the selection process or in the future, the Committee become aware that any evidence submitted as part of the application was false or tampered with, or the responses in the application are incorrect, misrepresented, or are untruthful, the Applicant may be deemed unsuitable for selection, not considered further in the selection program, and the Committee may, at its absolute discretion, report this to the relevant authorities and/or disqualify the Applicant from making further application to the GSET Programme. If the Applicant has already been selected, the Applicant may be dismissed from the GSET Programme. It would be sufficient grounds for dismissal that the Committee has sufficient reasonable information to conclude that the answers to these questions were incorrect, misrepresented or untruthful.
- 2.2.9 By submitting an application, the applicant is consenting to members of the Committee and other persons appointed by the Committee Chair, in accordance with these Regulations, conducting the selection process and making decisions relating to their application and selection despite having made decisions previously that may be adverse to the Applicant. This includes decisions made during the current and previous selection processes and other training and assessment matters.

**2.3 Eligibility Requirements – Clinical Rotations**

2.3.1 Applicants must note the following General Surgery specific eligibility requirement:

<b>Rotation Type</b>	<b>Minimum Duration</b>	<b>Validity Period</b>	<b>Completed By</b>
<u>General Surgery</u> 52 weeks of general surgery at registrar level in New Zealand	1 x 52 weeks or 2 x 26 weeks	3 years prior to application, extended up to 4 years by a period of full-time study in a medically-related discipline, or because of parental/sick leave, or other circumstance, as approved in writing in advance of Selection opening.	52 weeks fulltime equivalent in the 36 months prior to February 2025

2.3.2. The validity period will only consider terms undertaken in the last three (3) years except where 2.3.3. applies.

- 2.3.3. Where the Applicant has been undertaking full-time research towards a higher degree in a medically-related discipline in the two or more consecutive years prior to the application year, scoring and eligibility will consider the last two (2) clinical years prior to entering research, up to four (4) years. Where the Applicant has been on parental leave, illness or other pre-approved interruption, for at least six months during the two years prior to the application year, eligibility and scoring will consider the last two clinical years, up to four (4) years.
- 2.3.4. Applicants must provide proof of past and future rotations in the form of a letter of confirmation from the hospital. A contract will not suffice as documentation.
- 2.3.5. Documentation not provided on letterhead or signed will not be accepted, and the rotation will be discounted.

## 2.4 Eligibility Requirements - Procedural Skills and Professional Capabilities

- 2.4.1 Applicants must submit the completed Procedural Skills and Professional Capabilities Form available on the Selection section of the NZAGS website, with each procedural skill and professional capability listed verified by the consultant supervising the rotation(s).
- 2.4.2 Each Procedural Skill and Professional Capability listed must be verified by the consultant surgeon supervising the rotation(s). A consultant is defined as one of the following:
- Fellow of RACS employed in an Aotearoa New Zealand or Australian Public hospital as a specialist surgeon/senior medical officer; or
  - A vocationally-trained surgeon employed as a specialist surgeon/senior medical officer.
- 2.4.3 Each procedure must be verified during rotations taken in the twelve (12) months prior to the closing date of applications, except where 2.3.3. applies.
- 2.4.4 Applicants who do not have each procedural skill and professional capability verified by a suitable consultant surgeon will be deemed ineligible, and will not proceed in the selection process.

## 2.5 Eligibility Requirements – Generic Surgical Sciences Examination and Clinical Examination

- 2.5.1 Applicants must have successfully completed the RACS Generic Surgical Sciences Examination (GSSE) by the application closing date.
- 2.5.2 Applicants are no longer required to sit the Clinical Examination in order to be offered a place on the Training programme. Applicants who have passed the clinical prior to and including the October 2024 sitting will be considered under clause 4.7.6.

## 3. SELECTION PROCESS OVERVIEW

### 3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1. Applicants who satisfy the eligibility and application requirements in accordance with RACS policy and these Regulations will be considered in open competition for selection to the GSET Programme.
- 3.1.2. On completion of the relevant components of the selection process, eligible Applicants will be classified as one of the following:
- Unsuccessful** being an eligible Applicant suitable for selection but who did not rank highly enough in comparison to the intake to be made an offer.
  - Successful** being an eligible Applicant suitable for selection and who has ranked highly enough in comparison to the intake to be made an offer.

### 3.2 Ranking

- 3.2.1. Applicants suitable for selection will be ranked. The ranking will be determined by applying the following weightings to the percentage adjusted score out of 100 obtained for each of the three (3) selection tools, providing an overall percentage score:
- Structured Curriculum Vitae 25%

- b. Structured Referee Reports 25%
- c. Semi-Structured General Surgery Panel Interviews 50%

### **3.3 Offers**

- 3.3.1. It is expected that due to attrition and requests for interruption / deferral, there will be several rounds of offers to the GSET Programme.
- 3.3.2. Applicants who do not rank highly enough to receive a first-round offer to the GSET Programme, will still be considered eligible for subsequent rounds of offers made by the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee.
- 3.3.3. Applicants who do not wish to receive a later round offer to the GSET Programme must advise the Aotearoa New Zealand Sub Training Committee by 31 July 2025, but this may be extended at the discretion of the Committee.
- 3.3.4. Once an offer has been accepted, the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Committee will allocate the successful Applicant to a Training Rotation according to the following guidelines:
  - a. Allocation will be based on preference and the number of available positions.
  - b. While every effort will be made to match Applicants to their preference, this will not always be possible, and new trainees are required to accept the rotation allocated to them.
  - c. In the interests of fairness, allocations to posts may not be made until several rounds of offers have been finalised.
- 3.3.5. Applicants who do not rank highly enough to receive an offer by the final round will be considered **unsuccessful**. Unsuccessful Applicants will be notified in writing as outlined in section 7.2 of these Regulations.
- 3.3.6. When the number of Applicants ranking highly enough to receive an offer exceeds the number of available positions these Applicants ranking lower than the available positions may be placed on a waiting list. Those on the waiting list will be notified of their status and offered training positions, should any become available, in rank order and no later than 07 November 2025.

## **4. STRUCTURED CURRICULUM VITAE – ONLINE APPLICATION**

### **4.1 Overview and Purpose**

- 4.1.1. The online application form captures information relevant to the eligibility of the Applicant, the administration of the selection process, and referees. In addition, it includes the Structured Curriculum Vitae which collects information on experience, education, research, publications, presentations, development activities, and referee names and contact details.

### **4.2 Scoring**

- 4.2.1. Each Structured Curriculum Vitae will be scored by two (2) people nominated by the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee Chair without reference to the opinions of others using a structured scoring system. Where any discrepancy between any pair of scores occurs provided by the two (2) scorers, the Chair of the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee (or their delegate) will score the Structured Curriculum Vitae to identify the anomaly and determine the correct score.
- 4.2.2. The Structured Curriculum Vitae has a maximum score. This will be pro-rated up to a score out of 25. The components scored are:
  - a. Surgical and Medical Experience in addition to 52 weeks eligibility (Maximum 4 points)
  - b. Regional/Rural Exposure (Maximum 2 points)
  - c. Qualifications (Maximum 3 points)
  - d. Presentations and Publications (Maximum 4 points)
  - e. Courses (Maximum 2 points)
  - f. Prizes/Awards for Excellence (Maximum 1 points)

- g. Leadership/Community Contribution (Maximum 1 point)
- h. Scholar and Teacher (Maximum 1 points)
- i. Te Ao Māori (Maximum 2 points)

#### **4.3 Surgical and Medical Experience**

- 4.3.1. Scoring will only consider terms undertaken within the validity period, except where 4.3.2 applies.
- 4.3.2. Where the Applicant has been undertaking full-time research towards a higher degree in a medically-related discipline in the two or more consecutive years prior to the application year, scoring and eligibility will consider the last two (2) clinical years prior to entering research, up to four (4) years. Where the Applicant has been on parental leave, illness or other pre-approved interruption, for at least one year during the two years prior to the application year, eligibility and scoring will consider the last two clinical years, up to four (4) years.
- 4.3.3. The first fifty-two (52) weeks of general surgery experience are an eligibility requirement and as such will not be scored. Only subsequent experience will be considered for scoring purposes.
- 4.3.4. Terms of less than ten (10) consecutive weeks will not be scored.
- 4.3.5. Medical terms not of a surgical nature will not be scored.
- 4.3.6. Applicants must provide proof of rotations in the form of a letter of confirmation from the hospital. A contract or roster will not suffice as documentation. Entries where adequate documentation is not provided will not be scored.
- 4.3.7. A General Surgical Relieving term will be scored. This is for a clearly defined General Surgical term and not surgery in general. Documentation must be provided, from the hospital concerned, stating the composition of the relief run. If a requirement of the relief run is to cover RACS specialties other than General Surgery then it will be noted as a surgery in general run.

#### **4.4 Regional/Rural Exposure**

- 4.4.1. Regional Exposure is defined as a predominantly General Surgical term at one of the following hospitals: Whangarei, Tauranga, Rotorua, New Plymouth, Hawkes Bay, Palmerston North, Nelson. Applicants will receive 1 point for a full year at one of these centres. A maximum of 1 point will be scored for this work.
- 4.4.2. Rural Exposure is defined as a predominantly General Surgical term at one of the following hospitals: Whakatane, Thames, Gisborne, Whanganui, Masterton, Blenheim, Greymouth, Timaru, Invercargill. Applicants will receive 2 points for a full year, and 1 point for six months at one of these centres.
- 4.4.3. The maximum number of points allocated for regional and/or rural exposure is two (2). Rotations undertaken in the previous five (5) years will be considered.
- 4.4.4. Applicants must provide proof of rotations in the form of a letter of confirmation from the hospital. A contract or roster will not suffice as documentation. Entries where adequate documentation is not provided will not be scored.
- 4.4.5. House Officer posts will be eligible for a maximum of 1 point for work in Rural Hospitals as listed in 4.10.2.
- 4.4.6. House Officer terms will be counted as a minimum term of 3 months, with two three month runs required for one point. Registrar terms will be counted in 26-week blocks.



## **4.5 Qualifications**

- 4.5.1. Scoring only includes higher degrees successfully completed at the time of application at a recognised institution as determined by the Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery. Scoring includes:
  - a. Master's degree/s in a medically-related area and for thesis-based study only – 1 point. A taught Master's course will not be scored.
  - b. PhD in a medically-related area – 3 points
- 4.5.2. Higher degrees must be awarded by the time of application to be considered and not be awaiting marking.
- 4.5.3. Scoring does not include primary medical qualifications including the MBChB / MBBS or overseas equivalent, other Bachelor's degrees, diplomas, graduate diplomas (including the Graduate Diploma in Anatomy), or certificates.
- 4.5.4. Scoring does not include completion of the RACS Basic Surgical Examination (completed prior to February 2008), Surgical Science (Generic or Specific), or Clinical Examinations.
- 4.5.5. Scoring does not include the Membership Examination of the Royal College of Surgeons (UK) qualification, or any other international body.
- 4.5.6. Documentary evidence of completion must be provided at the time of application. Entries where adequate documentation is not provided will not be scored.

## **4.6 Presentations and Publications**

- 4.6.1. Scoring will consider presentations (undertaken in the past five (5) years), and medical publications (no time limit), up to 30 June 2025, and must include the document of acceptance or published article/presentation.
- 4.6.2. Prospective presentations and publications from 01 July 2025 will not be scored.
- 4.6.3. Scoring only includes presentations relevant to surgery.
- 4.6.4. A maximum of one (1) non general surgery or non-basic surgical sciences presentation or publication will be scored and must have a strong NZ Cultural and/or diversity content. Further non general surgery or non-basic surgical sciences presentations and/or publications will not be taken into consideration.
- 4.6.5. Scoring only includes presentations personally given by the applicant.
- 4.6.6. Scoring only includes presentations at scientific meetings or conferences subject to abstract selection. Hospital or regional based presentations will not be scored.
- 4.6.7. Poster presentations will be scored only once where the applicant is the first author and the named presenter in the meeting programme.
- 4.6.8. Presentations that have sufficiently similar topics or that have been presented at more than one scientific meeting or conference will be scored only once.
- 4.6.9. Presentations will be scored depending on national, or international level.
- 4.6.10. Scoring only includes medical publications relevant to surgery in a peer reviewed publication including internet journals, and excludes published abstracts.
- 4.6.11. Scoring excludes letters to editor and media releases.
- 4.6.12. Each publication can be scored only once.
- 4.6.13. Scoring includes case reports, articles and book chapters with extra weighting on articles and book chapters where the applicant is the first author.
- 4.6.14. The applicant must demonstrate how the publication or presentation is relevant to general surgery or to the basic surgical sciences.
- 4.6.15. Acceptable evidence does not include a letter from the supervisor.
- 4.6.16. Acceptable documentary evidence of presentations includes official meeting programme or letter from convenor or conference organiser. Evidence must clearly state the date of presentation.
- 4.6.17. Acceptable documentary evidence of publication includes copy of publication or official letter from the editor clearly stating acceptance for publication.

## 4.7 Courses

APPLICANT NOTE: The Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery will be reviewing this section in its entirety for the 2026 Regulations.

- 4.7.1. Scoring will consider courses undertaken in the past five (5) years.
- 4.7.2. Scoring includes courses related to the development of professional competencies such as communication, teamwork, and leadership and personal development such as medical mindfulness course
- 4.7.3. Courses must be complete at the time of application closing date and must be accompanied by documentation as evidence of attendance / completion.
- 4.7.4. Courses must be delivered by a recognised training provider as determined by the Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery.
- 4.7.5. Attendance at workshops, seminars, and conferences will not be scored.
- 4.7.6. Applicants who have passed the clinical exam prior to and including the October 2024 sitting will be allocated 1 point on their CV in 2025 and 2026. No points will be allocated for passing the clinical Exam after October 2024 sitting in General Surgical selection.  
From 2026, this course will be phased out from General Surgery New Zealand Selection and will not be allocated any CV points.
- 4.7.7. Scoring does not include ASSET, CCrISP, EMST, CLEAR, TIPS or Statistics for Surgeons.
- 4.7.8. Professional development skills courses must be greater than one calendar day in duration.
- 4.7.9. Scoring does not include hospital-based courses or meetings, Morbidity and Mortality meetings, Basic Life Support courses, Intermediate Life Support courses, Postgraduate course in Anatomy, and Primary Health Care courses.
- 4.7.10. Certificate of attendance and a screenshot/PDF of the course syllabus or course outline, from the organiser or official website, must be provided as documentary evidence including the duration of the course. Entries where adequate documentation is not provided will not be scored.
- 4.7.11. Under exceptional circumstances (such as Covid-19), the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee may alter the scores allocated to courses.

## 4.8 Prizes and Awards

- 4.8.1. Scoring only includes prizes or awards for excellence in a medically-related field, including prizes for presentations.
- 4.8.2. Scoring does not include Honors, Deans Honour Roll, Distinctions, CME points, honorary mentions, Letters of Appreciation, commendation and special mentions.
- 4.8.3. Scholarships will not be scored.
- 4.8.4. Documentary evidence of award or prize must be provided at the time of application. Entries where adequate documentation is not provided will not be scored.
- 4.8.5. There is no validity period to prizes and awards.

## 4.9 Leadership/Community Contribution

- 4.9.1. Applicants may score for an elected or appointed position of responsibility on a board, committee, or other appropriate body in a community service or professional organisation, as determined by the Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery Committee in General Surgery.
- 4.9.2. Applicants may score for community and cultural involvement or sporting activities as determined by the Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery Committee in General Surgery.
- 4.9.3. Sporting achievements only include those where the Applicant has represented at a national or international level.

- 4.9.4. Applicants may score for volunteer work undertaken on a continual basis of at least two (2) hours per week for six (6) months. One-off volunteer activities will not be scored, unless it is a block activity of at least one (1) week.
- 4.9.5. Scoring does not include providing monetary donations or other types of donations.
- 4.9.6. Evidence of involvement from the relevant organisation must be supplied.
- 4.9.7. Entries for which documentation cannot verify the activities and time commitment will not be scored.
- 4.9.8. Scoring only includes activities undertaken in the last ten years.

#### **4.10 Scholar and Teacher**

- 4.10.1. Applicants may score for involvement in continued teaching and/or administration of teaching that is not a part of the normal day to day activities of the role.
- 4.10.2. Scoring only includes teaching relevant to the medical field.
- 4.10.3. Scoring only includes teaching that occurred for a period of six (6) continuous months or more by the time of application.
- 4.10.4. Scoring does not include undertaking presentations at seminars, workshops, or hospital meetings, including ward rounds and Mortality and Morbidity meetings.
- 4.10.5. Scoring does not include teaching of medical students or interns as part of a normal medical employment.
- 4.10.6. Evidence of involvement including timeframe and hours worked per week from the relevant institution must be supplied, in the form of a contract with a named teaching role.
- 4.10.7. Entries for which documentation cannot verify the activities and time commitment, including dates and hours per week, will not be scored.
- 4.10.8. Scoring only includes teaching undertaken in the last three years.

#### **4.11 Te Ao Māori**

- 4.11.1. Applicants who Whakapapa to Māori will be allocated 1 point. Applicants will need to supply either proof of registration with an iwi or membership of Te Ora.
- 4.11.2. Leadership in cultural groups and events, fluency, in Te Ao Māori will be allocated one (1) point. Applicants will have a level of Te Reo above a full year of part time study or equivalent. Assessment of Te Reo will be in the form of written proof from the language institution an applicant studied at such as Kura, university, Wananga o Aotearoa etc. If the applicant is fluent and a native speaker a letter of support from a kaumatua, kaiako, principal can be attached to the application. If there is doubt then NZAGS will refer to the Māori Health Advisory Group to determine if it is adequate.
- 4.11.3. A personal statement of no more than 100 words must be provided outlining any significant leadership in Te Ao Māori. Evidence must be included of any voluntary, community work, language level spoken, or leadership role, including name of the organisation, the role title, when started and expected completion date, as appropriate.

## **5. STRUCTURED REFEREE REPORTS**

### **5.1 Overview and Purpose**

- 5.1.1. References are collected to obtain information, in confidence, about the history of the Applicant as well as assessments regarding a number of areas such as personal attributes, quality of work and suitability for the GSET Programme.
- 5.1.2. In 2025 referee reports will be collected from allied health professionals and non-surgical SMO doctors, in addition to supervising consultants.

## 5.2 Process

### 5.2.1. The Applicant must provide:

- a. The names of up to five (5) supervising consultants (up to a maximum of three (3) consultants per rotation) who had the greatest period of supervision over the Applicant surgical rotations undertaken in the two (2) clinical years prior to the closing date for applications. The applicant is also required to list all the supervising consultants they have worked with for more than three (3) months over these previous two years in addition to the 5 listed above. NZAGS will randomly choose three consultants from the list who will be contacted and asked to provide a referee report. If the applicant has worked in a smaller hospital and is not able to supply extra consultant names this will be taken into account and no candidate will be disadvantaged.
- b. The names of three (3) allied health professionals, of which one must be a charge nurse who the candidate has interacted or worked closely with in the two (2) clinical years, prior to the closing date for applications.
- c. The names of two (2) SMO doctors from non-surgical specialties who the candidate has interacted or worked closely with in the two (2) clinical years prior to the closing date for applications.

5.2.2 Applicants who have been undertaking a period of full-time study in a medically-related discipline within the previous two years may extend the validity period of references by the period of the full-time study, up to a maximum of four (4) years. Where the Applicant has been on parental leave for at least one year during the two years prior to the application year, that period of eligibility of referee reports may be extended for the period of parental leave taken.

5.2.3. Applicants must confirm that the nominated consultants, allied health professionals and SMO doctors from non-surgical specialties have agreed to act as a referee.

5.2.4. If an Applicant elects not to provide the details for supervising consultants as stipulated by these Regulations, or it is subsequently discovered that the Applicant has provided incorrect or misleading information either intentionally or unintentionally, including listing supervising consultants who do not strictly comply with these Regulations, or omitting supervising consultants in preference for others who have had a lesser supervisory role, the Applicant may be automatically withdrawn from the selection process and their application will not be considered further.

5.2.5. The units in which the Applicant has worked may be contacted as part of the selection process to verify that the supervising consultants listed on the application form comply with these Regulations. The supervising consultants will also be asked to verify compliance with these Regulations.

5.2.6. The Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee will select at its discretion three (3) primary supervising consultants, two (2) allied health professionals and one (1) SMO doctor from non-surgical specialties from the referees named to be contacted as part of the selection process. In selecting supervising consultants, the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee will endeavour to obtain **at least** one (1) report from each General Surgery term (where applicable) and the remaining from other terms with consideration given to the duration and type of term.

5.2.7. The remaining nominated consultants, allied health professionals and SMO doctors from a non-surgical specialty will be considered alternative referees. Reports completed by alternate supervising consultants, allied health professionals and SMO doctors from a non-surgical specialty will only be used as part of the selection process if one (1) or more of the supervising consultants, allied health professionals and SMO doctors from non-surgical specialty reports identified in Section 5.2.6. are not received by the final submission date or if a report is deemed invalid (as in clause 5.4.2.). The alternate supervising consultant reports, allied health professionals reports and SMO doctors from non-surgical specialties, where required, will be used in order of their submission date.

5.2.8. The allied health professionals and SMO doctors from non-surgical specialties will complete an abridged version of the surgical consultant referee report.

5.2.9 The selected referee names **will not** be released to the Applicants.

### 5.3 Assessment Areas

5.3.1 On the report the supervising consultant will be asked to select one (1) of five (5) options for each of the ten (10) assessment areas that they believe best describes the Applicant. The selection criteria that will be scored within the reports can be generally categorised as follows:

- a. Medical Expertise
- b. Judgement and Clinical Decision Making
- c. Communication
- d. Collaboration and teamwork
- e. Cultural competence and cultural safety
- f. Scholarship and Teaching
- g. Professionalism
- h. Leadership and management
- i. Health Advocacy
- j. Technical expertise

5.3.2 On the report the allied health professionals and non-surgical SMO doctors will be asked to select one (1) of five (5) options for each of the six (6) assessment areas that they believe best describes the Applicant. The selection criteria that will be scored within the reports can be generally categorised as follows:

- a. Judgement and Clinical Decision Making
- b. Communication
- c. Collaboration and teamwork
- d. Cultural competence and cultural safety
- e. Professionalism
- f. Leadership and management

### 5.4 Scoring

- 5.4.1. The individual report scores will be converted to a percentage score rounded to two decimal places, calculated by dividing the total score for the report by the total number of questions for which the referee has provided a response.
- 5.4.2. If the referee has provided a response for less than 77% of the report, the report will be deemed invalid and will not be used as part of the selection process. In these circumstances an alternate report will be sought (as in Section 5.2.7).
- 5.4.3. The percentage scores for the five (5) individual reports will be added to provide an overall percentage score, rounded to two decimal places, for the Structured Referee Report selection tool.

### 5.5 Eligibility to Proceed to Interview

- 5.5.1. If, having applied Section 5.2, the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee has not obtained five (5) valid reports prior to the final submission date determined by the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee, the Applicant will be **formally withdrawn from the selection process and their application will not be considered further.**
- 5.5.2. The Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee is responsible for contacting referees to request reports. Applicants will not be provided with updates on the reports collected; nor will they be involved in the collection process in any way. All supervising consultants, allied health professionals and SMO doctors from non-surgical specialties contacted as part of the selection process will be advised of the confidential nature of the reports.

Harassment of any kind of any individual involved in the completion or collection of the reports is a serious matter and may result in the Applicant being deemed **unsuitable** for selection and removed from the selection process. Harassment includes but is not limited to repeated requests by the Applicant to any supervising consultant, allied health professionals, SMO doctors from non-surgical specialties or GSET staff member involved in the selection process. Inappropriate, aggressive or bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

## **6. INTERVIEWS**

### **6.1 Overview and Purpose**

- 6.1.1. The interview has been designed to:
  - a. Identify factors deemed important to the practice of General Surgery.
  - b. Address the RACS competencies.
  - c. Assess the suitability of the Applicant for training.
- 6.1.2. The interview seeks information on a variety of attributes including the ability to:
  - a. Interact effectively and cordially with peers, mentors, members of the health care team, hospital administrators, patients and their families.
  - b. Contribute effectively as a member of the health care team.
  - c. Act ethically, responsibly, and with honesty.
  - d. Demonstrate concern and sensitivity to the needs of others and capacity to care.
  - e. Communicate effectively orally.
  - f. Assimilate and organise information and to adapt accordingly.
  - g. Present concisely within a time frame.
  - h. Demonstrate commitment to a career in General Surgery.
  - i. Recognise and respond appropriately to cultural and/or ethical issues.
  - j. Promote health maintenance and respond to the health needs of the community, patients, colleagues, and self.
  - k. Demonstrate cultural competency and ability to practice in a culturally safe environment.

### **6.2. Notification of Interview**

- 6.2.1. Applicants will be notified of the date, time and location of the interview at least ten (10) business days prior.
- 6.2.2. It is the Applicant's responsibility to make the appropriate travel arrangements and to meet any costs incurred in attending the interview. The Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee accepts no responsibility for any costs incurred by Applicants in attending the interview, or Applicants who fail to satisfy the minimum eligibility requirements who are not permitted to attend an interview.
- 6.2.3. Interviews will be held in Wellington.
- 6.2.4. Applicants are required to provide proof of identification at the interview.
- 6.2.5. Interview date(s) will be published on the NZAGS and RACS websites.
- 6.2.6. Applicants must make themselves available at the scheduled interview time and must attend the interview in person. Applicants who do not present for the interview at the scheduled time will not be considered further in the selection process and their application will be withdrawn.
- 6.2.7. Applicants will be provided with a brief on the structure of the interview at the time of notification.

- 6.2.8. Applicants must attend the interview in person, but an invited applicant who cannot attend due to very exceptional circumstances may be eligible to have their CV and reference points carried forward to the following year's Selection, but this is entirely at the discretion of the Training Sub Committee.

### 6.3 Conduct

- 6.3.1. The interviews will be conducted by a series of six (6) interview panels, each comprising of two (2) to three (3) members of the Training Sub Committee. Each panel will conduct a designated section of the interview for all Applicants, with Applicants rotating between panels.
- 6.3.2. An observer may be present at the interviews, but their role is to observe and not participate.
- 6.3.3. Applicants will spend approximately 10 minutes with each panel.
- 6.3.4. The semi-structured interview will be approximately 70 minutes in total duration.
- 6.3.5. During the semi-structured interview process, Applicants will be asked initiating questions by each panel, with follow-up probing questions to explore the breadth and depth of the Applicant's experience and insight in relation to each selection criterion, particularly as they relate to the RACS core competencies. Follow-up questions may vary based on Applicant responses to initial standardized questions.

### 6.4 Composition of Interview Panels

- 6.4.1. The Interview Panel has been designed to ensure a representative balance of gender and experience.
- 6.4.2. The Interview Panel will comprise the members of the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub Committee i.e. the Hospital Supervisors in every training hospital in Aotearoa New Zealand, or their approved proxy.
- 6.4.3. Observers – There may be observers in some or all of the interview rooms. The purpose of the observers is to observe the interview process only.

### 6.5 Scoring

- 6.5.1. Applicants will be scored using a structured scoring system and criterion statements relating to assessment areas outlined in Section 6.3.5.
- 6.5.2. Each question will be accompanied by a standardised marking guide.
- 6.5.3. Each panel member will score each Applicant individually on a specific form with a consensus score for the interview panel to be arrived at following the interview. The score for each panel will be out of ten (10). The consensus score will be used in the final ranking of suitable Applicants.
- 6.5.4. Applicants will be scored using the following structured scoring system and criteria:
- Unsatisfactory (0 points): The Applicant failed to articulate appropriate responses and did not cover any of the key points related to the scoring criteria and did not demonstrate the potential for appropriate knowledge, skills or abilities **and/or** did not demonstrate some of the personal qualities and behaviours sought.
  - Basic (1-2 points): The Applicant articulated appropriate responses covering some of the key points related to the scoring criteria and demonstrated the potential for suitable knowledge, skills and abilities with further experience **and** demonstrated the personal qualities and behaviours sought.
  - Intermediate (3-4 points): The Applicant articulated appropriate responses covering the key points related to the scoring criteria and demonstrated appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities **and** the personal qualities and behaviours sought.
  - Advanced (5-7 points): The Applicant articulated good responses covering all the key points related to the scoring criteria and demonstrated good knowledge, skills and abilities **and** the personal qualities and behaviours sought.

- e. Expert (8–10 points): The Applicant articulated excellent responses covering all the key points related to the scoring criteria and demonstrated exceptional knowledge, skills and abilities **and** the personal qualities and behaviours sought.

## **7. FEEDBACK**

### **7.1 Unsuitable Applicants**

- 7.1.1. Applicants who have been deemed unsuitable for selection will not be considered further in the selection process. These Applicants will be notified in writing of the following:
  - a. That they have been deemed unsuitable for selection and will not be considered further in the selection process.
  - b. Information on their overall scores
  - c. Notification of the eligibility requirements or selection process Regulation that they failed to satisfy.

### **7.2 Unsuccessful Applicants**

- 7.2.1. Applicants who have been deemed unsuccessful will be notified in writing of the following:
  - a. That they have been deemed suitable for selection but have not ranked highly enough to be made an offer in accordance with the intake and have therefore been unsuccessful.
  - b. Information on the overall scores and ranking they received for each of the selection tools completed, following final rounds of offer have occurred. Should they desire further feedback, they may discuss the information on their overall scores for each of the selection tools with their supervisors.

### **7.3 Successful Applicants**

- 7.3.1. Applicants who have been deemed successful in the selection process will be notified in writing via email of the following:
  - a. That they have been successful in the selection process and are being offered a position on the GSET Programme subject to the conditions outlined in Section 7.3.4.
  - b. Information on the process for allocation to a training post.
  - c. The due date by which their Offer Form must be returned.
- 7.3.2. Applicants will not be notified of their overall ranking.
- 7.3.3. The Offer Form has four (4) options – accept, pending, decline, or defer:
  - a. Accept – the Applicant accepts the offer of a position on the General Surgery programme.
  - b. Pending – the Applicant wishes to await the outcome of an application to any other surgical training programme before deciding on the General Surgery offer.  
An Applicant who selects “Pending” must advise the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Committee whether they accept or decline the General Surgery offer by the date stipulated on the Offer Form.
  - c. Decline – the Applicant declines the offer of a position on the General Surgery programme.
  - d. Defer – the Applicant wishes to defer commencement of training until 2026. A letter outlining the reasons for deferment must be supplied with the offer form.
- 7.3.4. Acceptance of the offer to the GSET Programme in General Surgery will be conditional on the following:
  - a. The Applicant having the appropriate medical registration in Aotearoa New Zealand.
  - b. The Applicant will be expected to be employed by the relevant Te Whata Ora district.
  - c. The information submitted in the application form being true, correct and verifiable.



- d. Satisfactory completion of all minimum eligibility criteria before the start of the training year in Aotearoa New Zealand.
  - e. Provision of any outstanding documentation required by the Aotearoa New Zealand General Surgery Committee in General Surgery.
  - f. Provision of a signed "Training Agreement" in accordance with instructions given, by the stipulated deadline.
  - g. Payment of all monies owed to the RACS.
- 7.3.5 Applicants who fail to satisfy any of the conditions outlined in Section 7.3.4. will automatically forfeit the offer.
- 7.3.6. Applicants who fail to return the acceptance of offer form by the stipulated deadline, or who decline the offer, will automatically forfeit the offer.
- 7.3.7. Applicants who accept a position on the General Surgery programme will be allocated to a training post.

#### **7.4 Deferral**

- 7.4.1. Applicants who wish to defer the commencement of their General Surgical Education and Training must lodge a request to the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Committee at the time of acceptance using the following procedure:
- a. Complete the required section on the Acceptance Form and provide a letter outlining the reasons for requesting deferral.
  - b. The request will be considered by the Aotearoa New Zealand General Surgery Committee in General Surgery for final decision.
- 7.4.2. All applications for deferral or interruption are governed by the RACS regulation: [Trainee Registration and Variation](#) available on the [RACS website](#). The Aotearoa New Zealand General Surgery Committee in General Surgery does not have the authority to grant requests that do not comply with RACS Policy.
- 7.4.3 For Applicants to the GSET programme, requests for deferral must be submitted at the time of acceptance of offer. Requests submitted after this time will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.4.4 The standard period of deferral will be 12 months (one year). In the case of parental leave or exceptional circumstance, the Aotearoa New Zealand General Surgery Committee in General Surgery may approve a variation to the standard period of deferral. Approval will only be given where it can be demonstrated that the varied period will not result in another Applicant being prohibited from commencing training, and that any resulting vacancy is supported by the training hospital.
- 7.4. 5 The Aotearoa New Zealand General Surgery Committee in General Surgery does not have the authority to alter RACS Policy or approve non-compliant requests.
- 7.4. 6 Requests for flexible training will be considered by the Aotearoa New Zealand Training Committee and accommodated if possible.
- 7.4.7. Deferrals will not be granted within three (3) months prior to the start of the training year due to logistical considerations.
- 7.4.8 All requests for deferral will be considered but not necessarily granted. The Committee in General Surgery will make a determination on the approval or otherwise taking into consideration the reasons for the request and logistical considerations.

#### **8. Reconsideration, Review and Appeal**

- 8.1 In the absence of manifest error in the scoring of the Structured CV for selection to the GSET programme, applications concerning CV scoring will not be accepted.
- 8.2 Referee report scores are determined by an applicant's nominated referees and are not subject to Committee in General Surgery discretion. Accordingly, these scores are not subject to Reconsideration, Review or Appeal. Outside of these parameters applicants are able to utilise the RRA Policy to appeal the Selection process and decisions made.