Position Description – NZAGS Trainee Representative

Purpose

This document outlines the responsibilities, expectations, election process and governance arrangements for the NZAGS Trainee Representative.

The Trainee Representative acts as the primary link between trainees and NZAGS, representing trainee perspectives and interests to relevant committees while supporting effective communication, engagement and advocacy across the training programme.

Related Documents

- NZAGS Code of Conduct
- RACS Code of Conduct
- NZAGS Training Regulations
- NZAGS Conflict of Interest Policy

Election of the Trainee Representative

The Trainee Representative shall be elected by current NZAGS trainees.

The representative should:

- Be a current trainee in good standing within the training programme.
- Demonstrate professionalism, integrity, communication skills and the ability to represent the interests of the broader trainee cohort.
- Be compliant with the RACS and NZAGS Codes of Conduct.
- Be willing to engage constructively with trainees, Supervisors of Training, NZAGS committees and external stakeholders.

Interrupted trainees may hold office where appropriate.

The term of office will normally be two years. A representative may seek re-election for a further term if supported by trainees.

During the second half of the second rotation, expressions of interest will be invited for the Trainee Representative position for the incoming year. Each prospective candidate will be required to submit a brief biography and a statement outlining their reasons for seeking appointment to the role. Details of all eligible candidates will be circulated to the trainee cohort, after which nominations and voting will be conducted through a fair and transparent process.

If the Trainee Representative no longer has the confidence of the trainee body, a vote of confidence may be requested by trainees. Should a majority support a change in representation, an election will be conducted as soon as practicable.

Role Overview

The Trainee Representative serves as the principal elected voice of NZAGS trainees and provides trainee perspectives to committees and governance groups responsible for surgical training.

The representative is expected to advocate for trainee interests while balancing the needs of the profession, the training programme and patient safety.

The role is intended to support constructive collaboration between trainees, NZAGS, RACS and training providers.

Responsibilities

1. Representation

The Trainee Representative is an ex officio member of:

- The Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub-Committee (AoNZTSC)
- The Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery (AoNZCIGS)
- The NZAGS Board
- The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Trainees' Association (RACSTA)

Attendance at meetings is expected whenever reasonably possible.

The representative will contribute trainee perspectives to discussions relating to:

- Surgical education and training
- Selection and recruitment
- Training quality and standards
- Assessment and progression
- Trainee wellbeing
- Workforce and training environment matters
- Policies and regulations affecting trainees

Committees reserve the right to exclude the Trainee Representative from discussions involving confidential matters relating to individual trainees, sensitive employment issues, or other matters where attendance would create a conflict of interest.

2. Advocacy

The Trainee Representative will:

- Advocate for the interests of trainees within NZAGS governance processes.
- Promote a positive, safe and supportive training environment.
- Support initiatives that enhance trainee wellbeing, education and professional development.
- Raise matters of concern identified by trainees through appropriate governance channels.

- Contribute trainee perspectives to policy, regulatory and programme development activities.

The representative acts as an advocate for trainees collectively and does not act as a personal representative for individual trainees involved in formal processes, complaints, appeals or employment matters.

3. Communication and Engagement

The Trainee Representative will:

- Maintain regular communication with the trainee cohort.
- Seek and collate trainee feedback on matters affecting training.
- Communicate relevant updates from committees and governance groups, where authorised to do so.
- Promote trainee participation in consultations, surveys and programme initiatives.
- Encourage constructive engagement between trainees and NZAGS.
- Provide a quarterly report on activities and issues to the NZAGS Board.

The representative should be approachable and responsive to trainee enquiries where appropriate.

4. Wellbeing, Inclusion and Cultural Safety

The Trainee Representative will:

- Promote trainee wellbeing and professional support initiatives.
- Encourage an inclusive training environment that values diversity and respect.
- Support principles of cultural safety and equity within surgical education and training.
- Promote awareness of professional support pathways available to trainees.
- Champion training environments that are safe, respectful and free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

The representative is not expected to provide counselling, employment advice or formal advocacy services.

5. Leadership and Professional Conduct

The Trainee Representative will:

- Demonstrate leadership consistent with the values of NZAGS and RACS.
- Model professional behaviour and ethical conduct.
- Participate in trainee engagement activities where appropriate.
- Support succession planning and handover to future representatives.
- Declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

Confidentiality

The Trainee Representative must maintain confidentiality regarding all matters discussed in committee meetings and governance forums unless specifically authorised to communicate information more broadly.

Information relating to individual trainees, patients, staff members, committee deliberations, commercial matters or legal issues must not be disclosed without appropriate approval.

Breach of confidentiality may result in removal from the role.

Support

NZAGS will provide reasonable administrative support to assist the Trainee Representative in fulfilling the requirements of the role.

Committee Chairs and the NZAGS Education and Training Manager will be available to provide guidance regarding governance processes, confidentiality obligations and role expectations.

Reporting

The Trainee Representative will provide a brief report at AoNZTSC and AoNZCIGS meetings as requested.

An annual summary of trainee engagement activities and key themes raised by trainees may also be provided to support programme improvement and future planning.

Glossary

Term	Description
NZAGS	New Zealand Association of General Surgeons
GSET	General Surgical Education and Training
SET	Surgical Education and Training
AoNZTSC	Aotearoa New Zealand Training Sub-Committee
AoNZCIGS	Aotearoa New Zealand Committee in General Surgery