The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists

Selection and Appointment into RANZCO Vocational Training Program Policy

Approved by: CEO **Version:** Current **Department**: Education & Member Support	**Next review date:** May 2028 **Approval date**: May 2025 **Policy inventory number:** 42.2025.05 03

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We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to their Elders past, present and emerging.
In recognition that we are a bi-national College, we also acknowledge the Rangatiratanga of Māori as Tangata Whenua and Treaty of Waitangi partners in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish the principles and requirements for an applicant to be selected and appointed to the RANZCO Vocational Training Program (VTP) as a trainee or a Temporary Training Registrar (TTR).

This Policy:

- Provides transparency for VTP applicants in terms of understanding RANZCO's VTP selection requirements and appointments.
- Provides transparency for applicants who are appointed as TTRs and outlines the implications of this appointment regarding the RANZCO VTP.
- Outlines the requirements Network Selection Committees must follow when completing their stage of the selection and appointment process, including the appointment of trainees and/or TTRs.
- To specify any Exceptions to the above.

1.2. Who is it prepared for?

This Policy is prepared for:

- Applicants to the RANZCO VTP
- Prospective RANZCO TTRs
- Health jurisdictions and Network Selection Committees who make employment decisions
- The Censor-in-Chief
- RANZCO Fellows including, but not limited to, Network Selection Chairs, Network Education Committee Chairs and Directors of Training, any stakeholder of the RANZCO centralised selection and appointment process.

1.3. Scope

This Policy pertains to all selections and appointments to the RANZCO VTP. However, RANZCO is not an employer, and each health jurisdiction is responsible for the employment of selected applicants and/or appointees.

1.4. Definitions

Applicant means a medical practitioner who is applying for selection into the VTP.

Australian Medical College (AMC) *accredits medical colleges and their training programs.*

Censor-in-Chief (CiC) means the person appointed to oversee all aspects of training and assessment conducted as part of the RANZCO VTP.

Centralised Pool means the pool of applicants to the RANZCO VTP who have satisfactorily completed the centralised selection process and are eligible to be employed by a health jurisdiction.

CEO means the College's Chief Executive Officer, appointed from time-to-time.

Head of Department (HoD) means the person appointed with oversight and responsibility for a hospital department.

Health jurisdiction means the local health agency or board with oversight of public health services throughout a defined geographic area.

Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ)

NOMP means the National Ophthalmic Matching Program.

NOMP Coordinator means a RANZCO Fellow who oversees the matching of each Network's selections and rankings of applicants for employment in the network's training posts to applicants' employment preferences.

RANZCO or The College means The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO).

RANZCO Board means the RANZCO Board of Directors.

RANZCO Education Committee (REC) means the governing body chaired by the CiC responsible to the RANZCO Board for education and training policy and program management.

Selection Committee means the RANZCO Selection Committee as defined in the Selection Committee Terms of Reference.

Selection Panel means the RANZCO Selection Panel as defined in the Selection Panel Terms of Reference.

Temporary Training Registrar (TTR) means a medical practitioner appointed to relieve in an accredited training post due to an employment vacancy. Appointment as a TTR is not an appointment to the VTP and carries no guarantee of same.

Trainee means a medical practitioner enrolled in the RANZCO Vocational Training Program (VTP).

Network means a collection of RANZCO-accredited Training Posts.

Network Selection Committee means a Committee in each Network responsible for selecting applicants and appointing TTRs into accredited ophthalmology training positions.

VTP means RANZCO's Vocational Training Program.

2. Strategic Alignment

This Policy aligns with RANZCO's strategic goals of attracting, training and developing comprehensive general ophthalmologists. It seeks to address issues of workforce maldistribution and to attract and develop more ophthalmologists of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, Māori or Pacific, origin across Australia and New Zealand which complies with AMC and MCNZ standards.

3. Background and Issues

RANZCO delivers a VTP for medical practitioners who want to become specialist ophthalmologists in Australia and/or New Zealand. The objective of the VTP is to develop a specialist ophthalmologist who, on completion of training, is equipped to undertake safe, independent, comprehensive, general ophthalmology practice.

RANZCO defines and administers a centralised selection process that identifies a Centralised Pool of applicants from which health jurisdictions, through Network Selection Committees, can employ selected applicants. These applicants are either employed on:

- an ongoing basis and accepted as trainees by RANZCO to undertake the VTP in RANZCO accredited training posts, or
- a temporary basis (TTRs) in RANZCO accredited training posts which are temporarily vacant and are ***not*** accepted by RANZCO as trainees. (refer 5.2.5)

The Network Selection Committees have autonomy, within the bounds of the conditions set by the AMC and MCNZ and criteria approved by the RANZCO Board, to make their final selection decisions using the final Centralised Pool, and the processes, weightings, and tools they deem appropriate and published in advance. As such, applicants are advised to consider both the RANZCO weightings and those of their preferred Network(s) when preparing their application. The weightings and preferences of the networks can differ from those of RANZCO.

4. Objectives

- Ensure transparency and fairness in the selection and appointment of trainees and TTRs.
- Provide a consistent and robust centralised selection process.
- Ensure the medical practitioners accepted by RANZCO to undertake the VTP have the potential to satisfactorily complete the program.
- Support the RANZCO-led centralised process using evidence-based tools to assess applicants' attributes against RANZCO's selection criteria.
- Influence workforce composition in favour of developing a larger rural and regional workforce and increasing the numbers of First Nations ophthalmologists,

5. Policies

5.1. Application

5.1.1 Application Eligibility Criteria

The application and eligibility criteria for all medical practitioners, including trainees and TTRs, who are selected and appointed by RANZCO and employed by health jurisdictions to accredited training posts are:

a) Medical degree with full registration to practice medicine in either Australia or New Zealand at the time of applying.

b) Citizenship or permanent resident status of Australia or New Zealand. An applicant's Citizenship or residency status must be confirmed by 1 April of the year/s they apply.

c) Completion of a minimum of two years, full time post graduate prevocational experience, (including the intern year), when they commence the VTP, which must include a minimum of 18 months of broad experience in medical, clinical and surgical settings other than ophthalmology. **A minimum of 47 weeks full-time equivalent (FTE) per year is required.**

Meeting the RANZCO eligibility criteria does not guarantee appointment to a RANZCO accredited training post or RANZCO accepting a medical practitioner into the VTP.

There is no limit to the number of times an applicant can apply.

Applicants are required to complete all application forms in full and honestly, meet published deadlines and provide payment as outlined in the published forms. RANZCO audits 5% of applications annually including all documents and references. Applicants are advised to ensure the information they provide is complete and not misleading. A requirement of application is to sign a statutory declaration to this effect.

Applicants waive their right to privacy as RANZCO may investigate claims made by the applicant during the selection process. Applicants consent that all information captured during the centralised selection process can be shared with the Selection Committee and Network Selection Committees. In all investigations, RANZCO will adhere to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. During the application process, if RANZCO obtains information about an applicant from a third party that could reasonably affect the outcome of their application, RANZCO will take all reasonable steps to provide that information to the applicant. RANZCO's process for investigating claims about an applicant is detailed at Appendix 1.

Applicants who believe a Conflict of Interest exists can access the RANZCO Conflict of Interest Policy and corresponding Concerns Notice Form.

RANZCO does not generally allow applicants to defer their first year of training.

Under limited circumstances supported by appropriate documentation, RANZCO may allow applicants selected to undertake the VTP in RANZCO accredited training posts, to defer their training start date up to 9 months in their first year of training. If a trainee is not able to commence training after this period, they must relinquish the training position and reapply at a later stage.

The training network must agree to the deferment, and an Application for Interrupted Training must be lodged. The period will count as part of the 12-year maximum rule. Refer RANZCO Progression Policy.

5.1.2 Application Process

RANZCO staff administer the application process and use a range of third-party suppliers to manage various components of this. RANZCO has absolute discretion to determine the tools and methods to assess applicants. RANZCO reserves the right to change the process due to unforeseen circumstances. Should this occur, all reasonable steps will be taken to inform applicants of changes.

RANZCO reserves the right to reduce the number of applicants at any stage in the selection

process until the final Centralised Pool is approved by the Selection Committee.

While applicants can lodge requests to change the date, time or location of an assessment, RANZCO is not required to meet such requests, regardless of the underlying circumstances of the request. These decisions are not subject to reconsideration, review or appeal.

Applicants requiring reasonable adjustments to the format of a selection assessment must submit requests in writing by the time Registrations close. RANZCO will make all reasonable efforts to meet such requests. Where a cost exists to allow an applicant to undertake an assessment at different time, date or location, this cost may be passed on to the applicant.

Applicant requests to deviate from the established process will generally not be considered. In exceptional cases, the Selection Committee Chair, in consultation with the RANZCO CEO and Censor-in-Chief, may review the request and make a determination. Their decision is to be documented and is not subject to reconsideration, review, or appeal.

To develop more ophthalmologists of Māori, Pacific, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin across Australia and New Zealand, those applicants receive additional points for their Indigeneity/Ethnicity (current scoring criteria can be found on the Selection website). They are also granted a place at the Multiple Mini Interviews **and** at their local Network Selection Committee Interview stage.

The Australian and New Zealand Eye Foundation (ANZEF), the philanthropic arm of RANZCO, also supports eye health equity with scholarships and grants aimed at easing financial barriers and enhancing opportunities for ophthalmic training and professional development for applicants of Māori, Pacific, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (detailed information is available at https://anzef.org/scholarships/).

5.1.3 Centralised Selection Assessment

On the recommendation of the Selection Committee, the RANZCO Education Committee (REC) and Board approve the weightings of tools and criteria used in the centralised selection assessment. RANZCO publishes the VTP Selection Criteria, Selection Methods and Weightings used in this assessment on its website. RANZCO maintains the right to adjust these on an annual basis and a finalised version will be available to applicants at the time the annual Selection registrations open.

The annual Centralised Pool is determined following the collection of data from the centralised selection assessment and sign-off from the Selection Committee. This marks the end of each years' centralised selection assessment.

5.1.4 Network-based Shortlisting

The Network Selection Committee must only shortlist applicants from the current years' Centralised Pool. Network Selection Committees must use the 65 centralised points without changing the weighting in any of the categories. For the remaining 35 points they have autonomy, within the bounds of the conditions set by the AMC and MCNZ and criteria approved by the RANZCO Board to make their selection decisions using processes, weightings and tools they deem appropriate and published in advance, including speaking with referees and conducting local interviews. The Network Selection Committees must disclose the weightings/process for shortlisting applicants for local interviews and the composition of the 35-point weighting. Disclosure must be of sufficient detail so that an applicant can reasonably understand what attributes are being weighted and must adhere to the principles

of fairness and transparency. This information must be provided to the RANZCO Selection Manager by no later than 15 December prior to the following year's applications or as advised otherwise. In addition, networks need to provide their final grading sheet (including centralised 65 points + local 35 points) with their NOMP preference list.

Important: All Selection changes introduced in 2025, including but not limited to changes to selection attributes and scoring and the need for networks to be transparent and disclose their local selection weightings and processes have been endorsed by the RANZCO Board and will be in place for the next five years. Failure to follow these requirements constitutes a breach of this policy.

5.1.5 National Ophthalmic Matching Program (NOMP)

The Coordinator for the NOMP matches each Network's selections and rankings of applicants for employment in the network's RANZCO accredited training posts to applicants' employment preferences. Applicants are primarily matched in accordance with their preferences. If an applicant is shortlisted for employment by more than one Network, they are matched to the Network they ranked as their highest preference for employment. If an applicant ranked several networks as equal preference, they are matched to the Network that ranked them highest. Applicants who are matched by the NOMP are accepted by RANZCO as RANZCO trainees to undertake the VTP in RANZCO accredited training posts.

Successful applicants will receive an offer of employment in a RANZCO accredited training post from the network/employing authority they are matched with. Each network/employing authority will inform RANZCO which applicants accept employment offers.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed by RANZCO that they were not matched to an accredited training post and will receive feedback about their performance in the RANZCO centralised assessment to inform any future applications to enter the VTP.

Feedback is generalised in nature and no further feedback will be provided by RANZCO to either the applicant or Network Selection Committee. Networks may provide feedback regarding their local assessment process at their discretion. RANZCO does not review feedback provided to an applicant by a network.

5.1.6 Application Outcomes

Selection results are not subject to reconsideration, review, or appeal.

Applicants who have been found to be in breach of this Policy will be eliminated from the Application Process. A notation of this outcome remains on their file for all future applications and the Network Selection Committees will be informed.

5.2. Appointment

5.2.1 Appointment Eligibility Criteria

Network Selection Committees can only appoint to RANZCO accredited training posts, as either trainees or TTRs, those medical practitioners who have been through the current and full RANZCO Vocational Training Program application and selection process and short-listed to the Centralised Pool.

To the best of RANZCO's knowledge the New Zealand government will fund training posts only for New Zealand citizens or permanent residents, so other applicants will not be eligible

for employment in New Zealand training positions.

5.2.2 Employment Decisions

RANZCO is not an employer. The Network Selection Committee of each training network is solely responsible for selecting trainees or appointing TTRs from the confirmed Centralised Pool for employment in RANZCO accredited training posts.

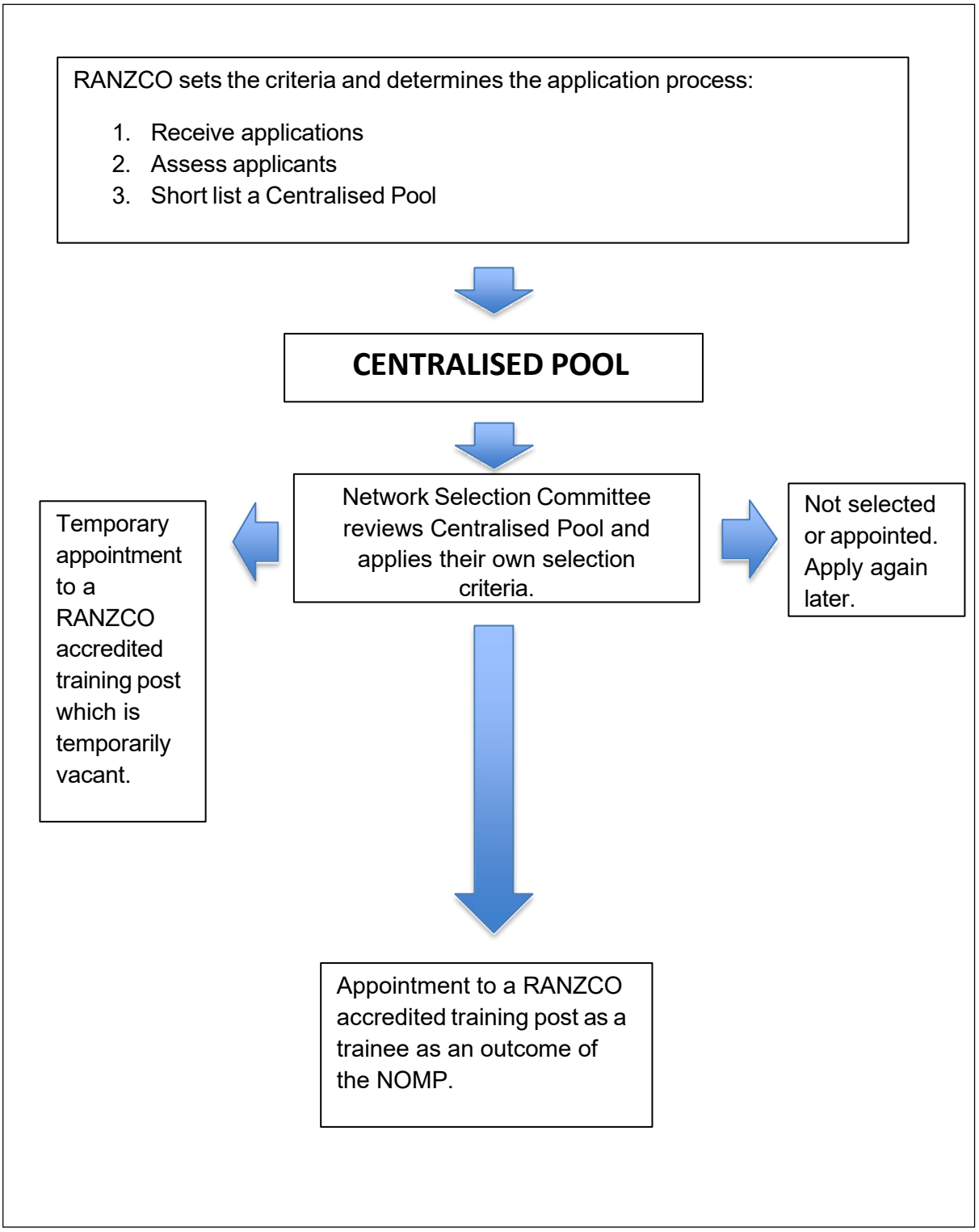
State health departments, district health boards, and teaching hospitals/organisations with RANZCO accredited training posts are solely responsible for employment of trainees and TTRs from the current Centralised Pool to employ in these posts, including but not limited to offering employment to applicants and for employment arrangements with applicants who accept employment offers.

5.2.3 Appointment Process

Applicants from the appropriately confirmed Centralised Pool that have been short-listed by the Network Selection Committees can be appointed to trainee or TTR positions.

Applicants matched at NOMP are appointed as trainees to the Vocational Training Program.

TTRs should be appointed according to their Network Selection Committees rankings. If no more short-listed applicants are available the TTR can be appointed from the wider centralised pool according to their centralised rankings.


RANZCO sets the criteria and determines the application process:
1. Receive applications
2. Assess applicants
3. Short list a Centralised Pool
CENTRALISED POOL
Network Selection Committee reviews Centralised Pool and applies their own selection criteria.
Temporary appointment to a RANZCO accredited training post which is temporarily vacant.
Not selected or appointed. Apply again later.
Appointment to a RANZCO accredited training post as a trainee as an outcome of the NOMP.

5.2.4 Appointments Outside the Annual Selection Process (NOMP)

In circumstances where an accredited training post becomes available unexpectedly, the network must inform RANZCO staff on selection@ranzco.edu immediately to determine whether the appointment will be a trainee or TTR appointment.

A TTR may be appointed to a temporary vacancy in an accredited training post which becomes available because the incumbent has taken a period of Interrupted Training (please refer to the Flexible Training Policy)

- A vacancy due to parental leave can only be filled by a TTR to allow the incumbent to return to the post at any time. (refer 5.2.5)

Appointments outside the NOMP (including mid-year appointments):

- must use the results of the most recently completed Centralised Pool. The date a Network Selection Committee is aware of a position becoming available will determine which results are to be used.
- must be notified to the college before an offer of employment is made and must include details of the type of appointment as per below:

1. The name and background details of the proposed appointee being offered the position.
2. Confirmation that the proposed appointee has been clearly advised whether their appointment is as a trainee or TTR.
    i. TTR appointments are temporary appointments.
    ii. Recognition of prior training and experience of TTRs who are subsequently accepted by RANZCO as trainees to undertake the VTP in RANZCO accredited training posts is governed by the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Temporary Training Registrars (TTRs) Policy.

All appointees must meet the eligibility criteria under 5.2.1.

5.2.5 Conditions for Appointments to TTR Positions

- A medical practitioner appointed to a TTR position is required to abide by the Policies governing the VTP.
- A medical practitioner appointed to a TTR position understands that:
    - This position is not an appointment as a trainee on the RANZCO Vocational Training Program (VTP)
    - Appointment to this position carries no endorsement for further advancement, traineeship, selection or other benefit.
    - The training post must continue to meet RANZCO's Standards for Ophthalmology Training Posts.
    - All applicable RANZCO fees must be paid.
- In the case of a vacancy related to parental leave, a medical practitioner appointed to a TTR position understands that:
    - The trainee may return to their post at any time and should this occur, the TTR must vacate the training post immediately.

Differences between a RANZCO trainee and a TTR

Trainee Appointment	TTR Appointment
Is for a training position in the Vocational Training Program in a RANZCO accredited training post.	Is for a vacancy due to interrupted training of a RANZCO trainee, including parental leave.
Is for the duration of the Vocational Training Program, subject to satisfactory progress.	Is for a specified duration, as advised at the time of appointment and equal to the period of time the trainee (for whom the TTR is relieving) has interrupted their training. Training undertaken whilst a TTR may be recognised as prior learning if the appointee is successful in gaining a trainee position on the VTP within 3 years from the TTR position (refer TTR Policy).
Is not a Temporary Training Registrar position.	Is not a trainee position and carries no guarantee of continuing employment in an accredited training post. The TTR must vacant the post when the trainee returns from leave.
A trainee is employed by the network, not RANZCO.	A TTR is employed by the network, not RANZCO.

5.3. Exceptions

At times, networks may fail to secure interest from applicants in the Centralised Pool to fill their employment vacancies as there may be more accredited training posts temporarily vacant than the number of medical practitioners available to relieve in these posts who meet the eligibility criteria in 5.2.1 In such circumstances a network must ask the CiC and Selection Committee Chair to approve the temporary appointment of a medical practitioner who is not in the Centralised Pool to relieve in a RANZCO accredited training post.

This request must be made with evidence accompanying why they need to temporarily appoint a medical practitioner who is not in the Centralised Pool and must be made before a contract of employment is offered.

The CiC and Selection Committee Chair will consider each application individually and separately, without reference to arrangements or approvals that have been made previously. Their decision is not subject to appeal.

Appointments made under 5.3:

- Are not Temporary Training Registrars
- Are not trainees
- Are not eligible for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The medical practitioners who are not part of the final Centralised Pool prior to being appointed

to relieve in an accredited training post, cannot enter the VTP without going through the full application, selection, interview and/or ranking process in the year prior to their appointment to the VTP (refer section 5)

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

RANZCO seeks to work in a partnership of consultation and co-operation with all networks, hospitals and health systems, government agencies, RANZCO Fellows and others involved in the selection, appointment and education of ophthalmology specialists in Australia and New Zealand. Compliance with this Policy will be monitored through the process for accreditation of RANZCO training posts.

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Selection Committee Chair.

Feedback on the Policy is sought from the Selection Committee annually.

RANZCO's Risk Register and complaints from VTP applicants will be used to assess the Policy.

The Education Monitoring and Evaluation Framework 2021-2024 sets out the evaluation questions, methods, timeframe and reporting for monitoring and evaluating selection processes.

7. Related Documents

Flexible Training Policy

RANZCO Progression Policy

Selection Committee Terms of Reference

Selection Panel Terms of Reference

Conflict of Interest Policy

8. Record of Amendments to this Document

Page	Details of amendment	Date approved
Throughout documents	Small wording updated for better comprehension and consistency	
2	Added AMC and MCNZ under 1.4 Definitions	
4 and 7	Added that "The Network Selection Committees have autonomy, **within the bounds of the conditions set by the AMC and MCNZ and criteria approved by the RANZCO Board under** 3. Background and issues and 5.1.4 Network-based Shortlisting. Also added to 5.1.4 that all changes need to stay in place and adhered to.	
5-6	5% audit of all applications added under 5.1. Applications. Changed the terms to defer the start of the VTP	
6 ff	5.1.2 Application Process updated to include costs for individual assessment changes, points awarded for indigeneity/ethnicity and ANZEF scholarships	
	5.2.4 5.2.4 Appointments Outside the Annual Selection Process (NOMP) updated	
Throughout document	Training Network changed to Network	6 December 2023
Throughout document	Training Network Selection Committee changed to Network Selection Committee	6 December 2023
4	Added "Influence workforce composition in favour of developing a larger rural and regional workforce and increasing the numbers of First Nations ophthalmologists, to 4. Objectives	6 December 2023
5	5.1.1 clarified 2-year FTE requirement = min 47 weeks FTE per year	6 December 2023
5	5.1.1 added 'RANZCO's process for investigating claims about an applicant is detailed at Appendix 1." And appendix 1 added.	6 December 2023
6	5.1.4 changed % to points and added disclosure of network points	6 December 2023
9	5.2.4 updated to include that appointments need to be discussed with CIC and Selection Committee Chair first	6 December 2023

Appendix 1

Any Fellow of RANZCO can raise concerns about an applicant at any stage during the Selection Process. In all cases a minimum requirement for investigating a concern should include that a first-hand detailed, written and signed account, is provided by the Fellow who raises the concern.

During the Selection Process, the Chair may also become aware that information contained in an application is false or misleading.

The Chair can involve the Censor-in-Chief and CEO to inform their decision-making.

Step 1 – Decide whether to investigate the concern
Is the concern raised or possible falsehood, if proven, likely to have a material outcome on the application?
If no, take no further action.
If yes, does the concern raised meet a certain threshold to avoid rumour/gossip affecting an applicant's application?
If no, take no further action.
If yes, proceed to Step 2.

Step 2 – Decide on the investigation process
Consider what enquiries could potentially be made to ascertain the truthfulness or otherwise of the relevant material or concern raised.
Consider the probative value of any potential evidence that may be obtained.
Where possible, preference should be given to seeking objective evidence rather than subjective evidence. That is, rely on written official documentation and first-hand accounts.
Map out the intended investigation steps, but do not commence investigating.

Step 3 – Inform the applicant of the concern and investigation
Write to the applicant to let them know:
(a) the Chair has a concern about specific identified material in their application or a claim made by a Fellow;
(b) the concern is being confidentially investigated;
(c) the presumption of innocence applies;
(d) an opportunity to respond will be provided before any determination is made, and the Chair will be in touch within a specified timeframe; and
(e) provide details of any support available to the applicant.
The applicant is not requested to respond at this stage.

Step 4 – Investigate the concern
While maintaining confidentiality, the Chair can undertake enquiries (which may include asking questions of other doctors) to obtain relevant evidence, ensuring the only evidence sought and obtained relates directly to the specific concern and no other matters pertaining to the applicant's suitability for selection.
Provide the applicant with sufficient written details of the concern to enable them to understand and respond, and an opportunity to respond in writing/interview.

Step 5 – Make a determination
Assess the applicant's response.
Decide whether any further interviews/material is required and proceed accordingly.
Determine whether the applicant has made a misrepresentation in contravention of their obligations in the RANZCO Vocational Training Program Selection and Appointment Policy or if the evidence presented would reasonably be considered to present concerns over the applicant's suitability for selection.

Step 6 – Inform the applicant of the determination and proposed outcome
Write to the Applicant to inform them of the determination.
If an adverse finding is made, inform the applicant of the proposed outcome and provide a short time to respond before a decision is made on whether to implement the sanction.

Step 7 – Consider the applicant's response and implement the outcome
The final step is to consider the applicant's response (if provided), decide upon the sanction and implement it by writing to the applicant. If requested by a Network Selection Committee, the outcome can be shared with them.