

FITNESS TO CONTINUE/REMOVAL

Purpose

To define the processes and decision-making framework for assessing a trainee's fitness to continue in the New Zealand College of Sexual and Reproductive Health (NZCSRH) Fellowship Training Programme, including circumstances that may lead to conditions, suspension, or removal from training.

Scope

This policy applies to all Fellowship trainees, training supervisors, the Educational Advisory Committee (EAC), New Zealand Sexual and Reproductive Health Educational Charitable Trust (NZSRHECT) Board, hereafter referred to as the 'Board', and administrative staff.

Definitions

Fitness to Continue: A trainee's ability to safely, competently, and professionally continue in the training programme.

Removal: Termination of a trainee's participation in the programme.

Conditions: Requirements placed on a trainee to allow continuation in training.

Details

Patient safety and professional standards are paramount for all trainees in the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme. All decisions made regarding training and fitness to continue must be fair, transparent, and evidence based. Trainees must be given the opportunity to respond, and early intervention and support should occur where possible. Removal from the programme is a last resort but must be applied where required.

Grounds for Review of Fitness to Continue

A trainee must be referred to the Board for consideration for removal from the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme where there are concerns regarding any of the following:

- Academic and Training Performance
 - A trainee has two (2) Six-monthly Summative Assessments assessed as "Not Satisfactory"
 - Failure to complete required training components: The Six-monthly Summative Assessment Report is the mechanism that deals with a failure to meet any training/assessment requirements by the required due date. Such requirements include, but are not limited to the courses, workshops, activities and self-directed learning outlined in the Curriculum.



- Irrespective of any other aspects of the trainee's performance, subsequent Six-monthly Summative Assessments of the trainee will be graded 'Not Satisfactory' until such time as the training/ assessment requirement(s) is completed.
- Professional Conduct
 - NZCSRH Trainees must comply with the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) Standards and codes of ethical practice ("Standards of Good Medical Practice") and must conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the standard of professional and ethical behaviour expected by the MCNZ and NZCSRH
 - Where the NZCSRH or the training site provider, supervisors or others become aware of a particular matter or conduct by a trainee that is a breach of the MCNZ Standards of Good Medical Practice, the matter or conduct may be referred to the EAC for formal review.
- Clinical competence
 - Unsafe clinical practice
 - Failure to demonstrate required competencies
 - Risk to patient safety
- Compliance with Programme Requirements
 - Failure to submit required documentation on time, including not submitting the prospective approval of training form by the required deadline, or not lodging an application for prospective approval of extended leave.
 - Non-compliance with policies
 - Failure to engage with training
- Time Limits
 - The training requirements are not completed within the specified timeframe
 - A trainee fails on the second occasion to make a Three-monthly Formative Appraisal and/or a Six-monthly Summative Assessment report available to the EAC for review
 - A trainee has exceeded the permitted maximum of 138 weeks cumulative leave from the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme or has taken more than two (2) years (104 weeks) of extended leave without prior written authorisation from the EAC Chair.
- Health or Personal Circumstances
 - Health or personal conditions affecting the ability to practise safely
 - Situations where performance is significantly impacted

Threshold for Formal Review

A formal fitness to continue review must occur where:

- A trainee has failed multiple training blocks/repeated failures occur despite support
- Support interventions (e.g. Learning Development Plans) have not resulted in improvement
- Required standards cannot be met
- Serious professional or clinical concerns are identified
- There is a pattern of ongoing non-compliance

If a trainee has failed to comply with the MCNZ Standards of "Good Medical Practice", it may result in immediate expulsion from the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme.



Interim Measures

Where immediate concerns exist, EAC may recommend any of the following actions be taken immediately, until such time as a formal review can take place:

- Temporary suspension from training (Note: Time spent on suspension does not count toward required clinical training time or progress milestones.)
- Restriction of clinical duties
- Additional supervision

Process for Formal Review

All recommendations by the EAC for a trainee to be removed from the NZCSRH Fellowship Training programme must be referred to the Board. Referrals must include full supporting documentation.

At least 30 days prior to a meeting of the EAC at which a trainee is to be considered for removal from the NZCSRH Training Programme, the trainee will be informed of this in writing by the Chair of the EAC and advised:

- Of the grounds on which they may be removed from the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme;
- That any information they wish to have considered by the EAC should be provided in writing to the Director of Training, or delegated EAC member, not less than 21 days prior to the meeting of the EAC at which their possible removal from the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme is to be considered. Any documentation submitted after that time will only be considered if the Chair of the EAC considers that the material is of significance to the matter being considered.
- That unless the EAC accepts that exceptional circumstances apply, the Trainee will be referred to the Board for consideration for removal from the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme;
- Once the EAC has conducted the review, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Board for consideration. The trainee will be notified of the date for the Board meeting.

Trainees will be notified of the decision made by the Board in writing, and a record of this will be kept in the trainee's record of learning.

Outcomes of Review

Following a thorough review, EAC may recommend any of the following outcomes:

- Continued training with no conditions
- Continued training with conditions
- Requirement for additional training
- Extension of training timeframe
- Temporary suspension
- Removal from programme

When a trainee is removed from the programme, they cease to be a trainee member of NZCSRH.

Where required, NZCSRH will notify MCNZ, the training site provider and the trainee's employer. Disclosure must comply with legal and professional obligations.



Deemed Resignation

Trainees who resign from a training post prior to the completion of a prospectively approved period of training and completion of relevant assessments will be regarded as having resigned from the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme, unless they have done so with the prior approval of the Chair of the EAC.

When a trainee has resigned from the programme, they cease to be a trainee member of NZCSRH.

Where required, NZCSRH will notify MCNZ, the training site provider and the trainee's employer. Disclosure must comply with legal and professional obligations.

Review/Change of Status

Trainees are required to notify the Director of Training or Chair of the EAC within one (1) week (7 calendar days) of the date of notification if:

- Their medical registration is withdrawn or suspended, or conditions are placed on their medical registration, or if they receive notice of any complaint to any medical registration authority;
- Their employment is suspended, or they are stood down by an employing authority, or if conditions or restrictions on their practice are implemented by an employing authority;
- They resign from any employment during the course of the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme.

Where requested to do so by the Director of Training, or delegated EAC member, trainees are required to provide reasons for the change in their registration or employment status. When the Director of Training, or delegated EAC member, is notified of changes to the registration or employment status of a trainee within the appropriate timeframe, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the EAC for review of the trainee's status in relation to the training programme, including training record and previous leave taken and, if applicable, referral to the Board for consideration of removal from the training programme.

Disputes/Right to Appeal

Trainees in the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme who wish to appeal any decisions regarding their continuation in the training programme, including the decision to remove them from training, may do so according to the Appeals Policy. Any disputes that fall outside the scope of this policy will be referred to the NZSRHECT Board according to the Complaints Policy.

Policy Owner	NZCSRH Educational Advisory Committee
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