



MEDIA RELEASE

Physician training program changes win endorsement

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Following a comprehensive review, the Australian Medical Council (AMC) has endorsed the direction of changes to the education and training programs of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and extended the College's accreditation.

The College offers AMC-accredited education and training programs in Australia and New Zealand that lead to admission to fellowship of the College, FRACP, in more than 20 adult medicine and paediatric specialties. Through its faculties and chapters, it offers training programs in the recognised specialties of public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, rehabilitation medicine, intensive care medicine and palliative medicine. It also offers training in the developing areas of addiction medicine and sexual health medicine.

In 2004, the College presented plans for major change to how it was selecting trainees to RACP training, monitoring the training environment and training experience, setting and delivering the curriculum, assessing the performance of doctors completing its training programs, supporting physicians who supervise and mentor doctors completing training, and managing and delivering professional development programs for its fellows.

To assess the College's progress in implementing these plans, in 2008 the AMC established an expert team which received comprehensive College documentation, written submissions from key groups affected by the change, and conducted site visits and meetings in Australia and New Zealand.

The Executive Summary of the report (available on the AMC website at www.amc.org.au) identifies and commends the significant strengths of the College's training. The AMC found that the College has achieved much since it last assessed the College's programs in 2004 and that the changes being introduced are educationally sound. Particularly commended are: the creation of the Deanery and the recruitment of professional education staff;

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curriculum development; plans for new workplace-based assessment methods; and the way the College supports trainee participation in RACP decision-making. Also commended are changes in the College's continuing professional development programs including the new online *MyCPD*, and College strategies to improve participation, encourage reflection on performance, and increase the educational relevance of activities.

The report makes recommendations to improve the RACP programs and plans, and to monitor the implementation of the changes. The report recognises the primary strength of RACP training to be the extent to which College fellows engage in supervising and supporting doctors in training but recommends that the College enhance the support and training available to these fellows. The report also recommends the College improve its communications about the major changes it is making. The AMC found that the health care services, physicians in training and the doctors who supervise them wanted more and targeted information on the implications of the changes.

The AMC will require detailed annual reports on developments.

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