



College of Intensive Care Medicine
of Australia and New Zealand
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INTENSIVE CARE SERVICES FOR AREAS OF NEED

PURPOSE

This document outlines the process developed by the College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand (CICM/the College) for an Area of Need (AON) assessment in Australia. AON is a term that applies to a medical position and not a geographical area. The position can be located within a public health service (e.g. a public hospital) or a private service deliverer where local, state and/or national advertising has failed to attract a locally registered medical practitioner. It must be demonstrated that the delivery of health services is adversely affected by the vacancy.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

CICM works with employers, health authorities and Medical Boards to establish whether a particular post should be designated as an AON. In addition, the College provides advice on the appropriateness of the post to provide intensive care services, assesses the suitability of applicants for the post, and facilitates the provision of intensive care services to the population served by the AON post. The AON process supports the principles presented by the Medical Board of Australia (MBA).

AON should not be seen as an alternative pathway to specialist recognition. If the AON appointee is a Specialist International Medical Graduate (SIMG), this document should be read in conjunction with T-27 Assessment of Specialist International Medical Graduates (T-27).

The College supports all measures to encourage intensive care specialists to seek to work in rural areas.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the AON process are:

- 1.2.1 To work with employers to maximise the attractiveness of the post to Australian intensive care specialists.
- 1.2.2 To confirm that an AON post meets minimum standards to deliver safe intensive care services.
- 1.2.3 To facilitate the provision of suitably trained intensive care specialists to work in identified AON positions.
- 1.2.4 To assess the standard and suitability of an applicant for the job description of the specific AON post.
- 1.2.5 To fast-track appointments in AON posts in intensive care medicine.
- 1.2.6 To follow through to assessment for specialist recognition those applicants who are SIMGs.

2. AREA OF NEED POST

2.1 Establishment of a post

The establishment of an AON post in intensive care medicine is a workforce issue and should be addressed by relevant health authorities, the MBA, the local communities and the College. An AON post is intended to meet identified intensive care service needs for which no Australian intensive care specialist can be appointed, and as such is generally intended as a limited-term provision.

Employers who have difficulty filling a post should review their management strategies to address:

- 2.1.1 Minimum standards for the delivery of safe intensive care services as defined in relevant CICM professional documents.
- 2.1.2 Salary packages that appropriately remunerate for the intensive care services required having regard to the location of the post.
- 2.1.3 Working hours and on-call arrangements that do not compromise patient safety because of fatigue.
- 2.1.4 Adequate leave and provision of locum services.
- 2.1.5 Opportunities for appointees to undertake continuing professional development.
- 2.1.6 Requirements for oversight and where appropriate, direct supervision.
- 2.1.7 Other human resource issues such as accommodation and work environment.

2.2 Employer responsibilities

The employer of a declared AON post is required to provide:

- 2.2.1 A detailed job description of the post together with key selection criteria.
- 2.2.2 A brief description of how it can provide oversight and direct supervision, and support for continuing education and maintenance of professional standards. The College is willing to assist in meeting these requirements.
- 2.2.3 A statement affirming it has addressed all the issues noted in 2.1.
- 2.2.4 Compliance with current MBA procedures and requirements.

2.3 Area of Need Criteria

CICM uses the following criteria to determine AON status:

- 2.3.1 Minimum standards for safe intensive care services as outlined in IC-1 Minimum Standards for Intensive Care Units are met.
- 2.3.2 The post has been impossible to fill despite nationwide advertising and attention to the conditions of service outlined in 2.1.
- 2.3.3 The expected patient load and anticipated outcomes are such that an intensive care facility is more appropriate than transferring critically ill patients to another centre.
- 2.3.4 Oversight, and where appropriate, direct supervision arrangements are available or can be organised.
- 2.3.5 The College will not recognise an AON post as being suitable to provide intensive care services if the criteria for support in 2.1 cannot be met.

3. ASSESSMENT OF AREA OF NEED APPLICANTS

Employers and local health authorities will seek registration from the relevant State Health Authority to have the position declared as an AON prior to the commencement of the assessment process. The purpose of the AON assessment is to assess a SIMG's qualifications and experience for suitability against the requirements of a specific position in a declared area of need. The assessment is specific to the position description and cannot be used for other positions. If the SIMG wishes to practise in another position, they are required to have another assessment.

The AON assessment does not assess a SIMG's comparability to an Australian trained intensive care specialist but rather their suitability for a specific position. In most cases, the College will conduct a combined assessment for specialist recognition (see T-27) and AON to determine the SIMG's suitability for the specific position.

Although an AON assessment does not lead to specialist registration, the MBA requires SIMGs with limited registration for an area of need who intend to renew registration three times (up to four years registration) or more, to demonstrate satisfactory progress towards meeting the requirements for general or specialist registration at each renewal of registration.

The College will conduct an AON assessment without a SIMG assessment only when:

- The SIMG intends to work in Australia for a short term (no more than four years); and
- The SIMG confirms that they do not wish to progress to specialist registration; and
- There is appropriate supervision and support available to support practice in the position.

3.1 Assessment process

The assessment process is a fast-track paper-based assessment that applies to overseas-trained doctors with temporary or permanent resident visas. An early decision will be made following receipt of all relevant documentation. The AON assessment will match the applicant's qualifications and experience with the requirements of the post as given by the job description and key selection criteria. Consideration will be given to the expected complexity of intensive care problems and the probability of having to work independently. The documentation required by the College to conduct the assessment is listed in Appendix 1.

The AON assessment will be conducted by the Censor, the Deputy Censor and the relevant Regional Committee Chair using the following information derived from the applicant's curriculum vitae:

- 3.1.1 A specialist degree and practice as a specialist in intensive care medicine in another country. Documentation must satisfy the requirements of the MBA and must have [Primary Source Verification \(PSV\)](#).
- 3.1.2 Training in intensive care medicine including its duration, structure, content, assessments and supervision.
- 3.1.3 Experience in terms of management of patients with adequate case mix and severity of illness, use of equipment and procedures, and compliance with standards of good intensive care practice as promoted in CICM professional documents.
- 3.1.4 Participation in continuing education and quality assurance activities.

4. OUTCOME OF THE ASSESSMENT

The College will recommend to the relevant health authority one of the following outcomes:

- 4.1 The applicant is suitable for the appointment to practise intensive care medicine without direct supervision. The applicant may be appointed if the post is able to provide for the following conditions:
- a) Oversight must be provided by an intensive care specialist appointed as an advisor by the College for the first six months in the post. The advisor and the appointee are required to maintain regular contact. If the applicant is pursuing Fellowship of the College via the SIMG pathway, this time may be accredited. The aim of oversight is to provide advice and support and these will be made available to the College and the relevant Medical Board.
 - b) An on-site visit of the appointee's practice by an intensive care specialist nominated by the College after two months in the post is required (this may be done by the specialist providing oversight if appropriate). The aims of the visit are to review the appointee's performance in the post and to provide advice and support. If applicable, the employer will be responsible for all costs associated with the visit, refer to Fees on the College website. The College may forward the report of the visit to the employer or relevant health authority if requested.
 - c) The appointee must proceed to SIMG assessment after six months in the post.
- 4.2 The applicant is suitable for appointment to practise in intensive care medicine but only under supervision. He/she is ineligible to proceed to SIMG assessment. The applicant may be appointed if the post is able to provide on-going oversight by an intensive care specialist who is available within the hospital or within 30 minutes travelling time. The purpose of oversight is to provide advice, support and direct supervision. The supervisor will submit reports to the College if requested.
- 4.3 The applicant is not suitable for appointment to practise in intensive care medicine. The College will recommend to the employer and the relevant health authority that the applicant is unsuitable for appointment because of inadequate training and experience for that specific post.

References and sources

Not applicable

Acknowledgments

Specialist International Medical Graduate Committee.

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| 2021 | Minor edits, expanded on section 3 Assessment of Area of Need applicants |

Further Reading

- IC-1 Minimum Standards for Intensive Care Units
 - T-27 Assessment of Specialist International Medical Graduates
 - Medical Board: Area of Need,
<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/Types/Limited-Registration/Area-of-Need.aspx>
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Publishing Statement

Published by CICM: March 2021. This Professional Document has been prepared with regard to general circumstances, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to have regard to the particular circumstances of each case, and the application of this document in each case. The college's Professional Documents are reviewed from time to time, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure the current version has been obtained. Professional Documents have been prepared according to the information available at the time of their publication, and the practitioner should therefore have regard to any information, research or material which may have been published or become available subsequently. Whilst the college endeavours to ensure its Professional Documents are as current as possible at the time of their preparation, it takes no responsibility for matters arising from changed circumstances or information or material which may have become available subsequently.

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Appendix 1

The following documentation is required by the College to conduct an Area of Need Assessment:

1. CICM Area of Need Application Form.
2. Completed CICM Standardised SIMG Curriculum Vitae.
3. Primary source verification of medical qualifications (primary medical degree and specialist qualifications),
4. A medical internship or comparable,
5. The position description including the type of information required,
6. The evidence required to confirm the position is a declared Area of Need.
7. English language proficiency at the level expected by the Medical Board of Australia's 'Registration standard for English language skills'.
8. Participation in continuing professional development.
9. Recency of practice.