

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF ANAESTHETISTS

ABN 82 055 042 852

FORMAL PROJECT GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION

Every trainee registered with the College is required to complete a Formal Project before the Diploma of FANZCA can be awarded. This project is not a prerequisite for presenting for either the Primary or the Final examinations and may be undertaken at any time. To avoid delay in awarding the Diploma of FANZCA, the trainee must submit the project well before the completion of approved vocational training.

A trainee should prospectively register the project with his/her Regional/National Committee (or Training Committee in South East Asia) Formal Project Officer and seek advice **prior to commencing work on the project**. This Professional Document relates to all Formal Projects presented from the commencement of the 1999 training year.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Formal Project are:

- 2.1 To advance skills in self-directed continuing education and scientific enquiry.
- 2.2 To develop an understanding of evidence-based medicine.

The objectives are intended to advance skills in trainees by requiring them to gain experience, for example, in how to:

- Develop an idea or concept into a topic for evaluation.
- Derive a question or hypothesis on the topic for the project to answer.
- Perform a literature search on the topic using libraries, books, journals, the internet, *Index Medicus*, Medline, and other forms of information technology.
- Evaluate what information is useful and relevant to the question or hypothesis.
- Collect data from the literature search and relevant investigations.
- Analyse information and data collected, and apply relevant statistical analyses.
- Review past work and publications on the topic, especially with respect to the question or hypothesis.
- Determine one's results with reference, where applicable, to evidence-based reports.

- Decide how to best present one's findings – if publication is intended, decide on the most appropriate journal.
- Write up the project to demonstrate scholarship, i.e. clear, logical, critical and analytical thinking.

3. THE FORMAL PROJECT

The Formal Project is the submitted material of the trainee's work. With the exception of published papers and written dissertations for a qualification (see below 5.3.1 and 5.3.2), a project must include a written report of at least 1,500 words (excluding references) on the work undertaken. This will include a critical review and an evidence-based approach to the specific topic. The trainee should show that he/she has assessed background data relating to the project and objectively weighed up the validity of relevant information obtained from the scientific literature and other sources. The project must be conducted in major part by the trainee (except if the trainee participates in multi-centre research (see below 3.4)).

Examples of Formal Projects are:

- 3.1 A case report of interest or clinical significance.
- 3.2 A review of a topic relevant to anaesthesia, intensive care or pain medicine.
- 3.3 A metanalysis of published work on a topic relevant to anaesthesia, intensive care or pain medicine.
- 3.4 A research project. This may be conducted mainly by the trainee or be a multi-centre trial. When the trainee participates in multi-centre research, a log book of involvement should be presented which has been signed off by the trainee's supervisor.
- 3.5 Documentation of activity resulting from a period of research prospectively approved by the Assistant Assessor. In general, this will require a period equivalent to three months full-time research. The trainee must have an appropriate supervisor. A statement from the supervisor to validate the trainee's work must be submitted with the trainee's written report.
- 3.6 Any other project which has value from a clinical, scientific or educational perspective, such as a quality assurance project, a project submitted for a higher qualification relevant to anaesthesia, or an instructional video or computer program.

4. GUIDELINES ON COMPLETING A FORMAL PROJECT

The usual steps undertaken to complete a Formal Project are:

- 4.1 Decide on a topic and propose a question, problem or hypothesis to analyse.
- 4.2 Define terms used in discussions on the topic.

- 4.3 Search for published and other relevant literature on the topic.
- 4.4 Collect other information or data if the project is a research study.
- 4.5 Analyse the scientific evidence in published and/or collected data that is relevant to the question, problem or hypothesis.
- 4.6 Derive conclusions from the analysis of one's information and data. When the trainee has participated in multi-centre research, analysis of the results may not be possible. The trainee should describe the proposed analyses in depth.
- 4.7 Propose solutions and answers to one's question, problem and hypothesis.
- 4.8 Complete the project, e.g. record videos, finish posters, prepare graphics etc.
- 4.9 Write up work undertaken.

5 ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS

- 5.1 Each Regional/National Committee and Training Committee in South East Asia will appoint a Formal Project Officer, who will certify to the Assessor that each trainee has completed a Formal Project. Except for projects deemed to have met the requirements of the Formal Project (see below 5.3), all projects must be assessed by at least two people nominated by the Formal Project Officer, one of whom may be himself/herself.
- 5.2 For projects which need to be assessed, the Formal Project Officer may accept a project, may require it to be revised or may reject it. The Formal Project Officer will refer rejected projects to the Assistant Assessor. The Assistant Assessor will chair a Formal Projects Panel appointed by Council to reassess these projects.
- 5.3 Completion of the following projects will be deemed to have met the requirements of the Formal Project without requiring further assessment:
 - 5.3.1 A paper published in a refereed journal listed with *Index Medicus*. Letters to Editors are excluded.
 - 5.3.2 A qualification relevant to anaesthesia conferred by an educational or professional institution, which requires examination of a written dissertation. Diplomas of FFICANZCA and FFPMANZCA are considered as approved Formal Projects. A qualification relevant to anaesthesia awarded before the trainee commences vocational training may also be accepted as a Formal Project. Acceptance of pre-vocational training and other qualifications requires approval by the Assistant Assessor.
- 5.4 An oral or a poster presentation at an ANZCA ASM, ASA NSC, Regional ANZCA/ASA CME Meeting, CECANZ Meeting, ANZCA Registrars Meeting, or a meeting approved by the Assistant Assessor, may be accepted as a Formal Project without further assessment. However, a written report must be submitted as stated in 3 for any oral or poster presentation submitted as a Formal Project.

- 5.5 Formal Project assessors should consider the following aspects when reviewing a Formal Project:
- 5.5.1 The project's topic is relevant to anaesthesia, intensive care or pain medicine.
 - 5.5.2 The report has a minimum of 1,500 words.
 - 5.5.3 The trainee conducted a major part of the project or that adequate involvement in multi-centre research has been documented.
 - 5.5.4 The trainee achieved the Formal Project objectives or demonstrated an awareness of the objectives.
 - 5.5.5 The trainee derived a question, problem, or hypothesis for the project to resolve.
 - 5.5.6 The trainee conducted an up-to-date critical review of the project's topic from published and other relevant literature, using an evidence-based approach.
 - 5.5.7 The trainee used (or described) a valid approach or relevant methodology.
 - 5.5.8 The trainee objectively analysed information derived from the project with reference to evidence contained in the literature.
 - 5.5.9 The trainee, where relevant, followed conventional standards applicable to scientific work (e.g. research ethics, honesty of reporting and authorship)
- 5.6 Formal Project Officers should consult the Assistant Assessor on problems with any project. A trainee whose Formal Project is rejected by a Formal Project Officer and the Assistant Assessor may lodge a formal appeal to the College.

6 CERTIFICATION

Upon compliance with the above, the Formal Project Officer will certify to the Assessor that the trainee has completed an appropriate Formal Project. The College will notify the trainee of its acceptance.

COLLEGE PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTS

College Professional Documents are progressively being coded as follows:

*TE Training and Educational
EX Examinations
PS Professional Standards
T Technical*

POLICY – defined as ‘a course of action adopted and pursued by the College’.
These are matters coming within the authority and control of the College.

RECOMMENDATIONS – defined as ‘advisable courses of action’.

GUIDELINES – defined as ‘a document offering advice’. These may be clinical (in which case they will eventually be evidence-based), or non-clinical.

STATEMENTS – defined as ‘a communication setting out information’.

This document has been prepared having regard to general circumstances, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to have express regard to the particular circumstances of each case, and the application of this document in each case.

Professional documents are reviewed from time to time, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure that the practitioner has obtained the current version. Professional documents have been prepared having regard to the information available at the time of their preparation, 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 that 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.

*Promulgated: 1987
Reviewed: 1992, 1997, 1999
Date of current document: Oct 2003*

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College Website: <http://www.anzca.edu.au/>

ADDENDUM

Trainees must submit with their Formal Project, a signed statement that this is original work and that sources of assistance and documented works or ideas of others have been appropriately acknowledged.

July 2005