

# Standard in Focus

## Standard 5.2.7: Assessment Review Groups

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**Standard 5.2.7 – Assessment Review Groups: The intern training program establishes assessment review groups, as required, to assist with more complex remediation decisions for interns who do not achieve satisfactory supervisor assessments**

This standard requires the provider to set up and manage the functions of an Assessment Review Group (ARG). It is important that this standard is not confused or co-mingled with Standard 1.5.1 which requires the provider to establish reconsideration, review and appeals processes that provide for impartial review of decisions related to intern training. While these two standards address two distinct functions, they may work in conjunction with each other. This has led the AMC in their document titled *Intern training – Assessing and certifying completion* to state, ‘Given the close nexus between training and employment concerns in internship, the review group should include employer representatives and relevant educators.’

Whereas the HR functions of appeals and dispute resolution often reside within standard 1.5.1, the Assessment Review Group tends to function at the level of remediation prior to formal grievance processes with specific events commonly used to trigger each review process. This may include, for example, a junior doctor who has not successfully completed one or more terms, has needed to repeat a term, and/or needs further remediation outside the ability of a current term supervisor or the normal functions of the MEU.

The exact role of the Assessment Review Group is left up to each provider to determine within the context of their program, but should be clearly stated in the group’s Terms of Reference. Some ARGs choose to review all prevocational trainees, while others focus only on those at risk. Some ARGs choose to act as decision making entities while others choose to be a body that recommends an outcome or training pathway to a higher authority for decision making. Irrespective of the exact role and functions of the group, it is important that there is evidence that the group is functioning in accordance with the stated Terms of Reference.

The Terms of Reference for an ARG should clearly outline several things:

- The scope of responsibility of the ARG
- The escalation process for decision making such that it can be defensible if there is an appeal

- Membership of the group, ensuring that the members have both an understanding of junior doctor training as well as the positional ability to enact recommendations or decisions
- How conflicts of interest are to be managed effectively
- The mechanisms by which the provider can review and assess the effectiveness of the ARG

Often the Director of Clinical Training (DCT) or equivalent acts in several capacities within an Intern Training Program such as advocate, assessor, and/or decision-maker. As such, the DCT (or equivalent) is generally a member of this group, however it is recommended that the DCT (or equivalent) avoids being the chair of the committee. Further, all members need to be aware of the potential for bias. Good group processes with explicit decision-making guidelines can protect against poor outcomes, both for the ARG and for the trainee in question. Inviting and encouraging diverse opinions into the group process can also help mitigate such concerns.

Finally, it is incumbent on each training provider to ensure that their ARGs are functioning effectively as per the scope and responsibility stated in the Terms of Reference, that the Terms of Reference enable the group to fulfil the intended function and that the group's functions are considered in the context of the overall governance of the Intern Training Program.

There are several documents that can help providers establish and maintain effective ARGs. For further reference please see the notes under standard 5.2 in the *AMC's Intern training- National standards for programs* as well as *Intern training- Assessing and certifying completion*.