

THE HONG KONG COLLEGE OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

Regulations on Specialist Training and Examination

Effective from 1 July 2024

(For Higher Orthopaedic Trainees admitted from 1 July 2024 onwards)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Hong Kong College of Orthopaedic Surgeons (HKCOS) is responsible for the training and accreditation of specialist orthopaedic surgeons in Hong Kong. This responsibility is granted by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (HKAM) which is the legitimate body to regulate the training and accreditation of specialists in Hong Kong.
- 1.2 The Fellowship of the HKCOS is a one of the pre-requisite for admission to the Fellowship of the HKAM, which will entitle the fellow to register with the Specialist Registry of the Medical Council of Hong Kong.
- 1.3. The training program consists of two parts: Basic Surgical Training and Higher Orthopaedic Training. A satisfactory completion of higher orthopaedic training and a pass in the Fellowship Examination will lead to the Fellowship of the HKCOS. Satisfactory completion of training consists of completion of required clinical rotations and other listed training requirements. The regulations are described below.

2. BASIC SURGICAL TRAINING

The Hong Kong Intercollegiate Board of Surgical Colleges (HKICBSC)

Basic Surgical Training in Hong Kong is administered by the Hong Kong Intercollegiate Board of Surgical Colleges which consists of the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong College of Otorhinolaryngologists, the Hong Kong College of Emergency Medicine, and the HKCOS. All Basic Surgical Trainees (BSTs) must register with the HKICBSC to be entitled him / her to receive accredited Basic Surgical Training.

- 2.1 Please refer to the “Rules and Regulations for Basic Surgical Trainee”, published by the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong.

2.2 HKCOS Training Points for Basic Surgical Trainees

- a. Training Points are allocated to participation in approved training activities by HKCOS. The Training Points are a quantification of the academic efforts of the BSTs and form an integral part of the assessment of Basic Surgical Training.
- b. The HKCOS requires Training Points from all Basic Surgical Trainees while they are undergoing training in Orthopaedics. Failure to obtain the required number of Training Points will render the academic assessment of the training period unsatisfactory.
- c. The current Training Point requirement for BSTs is 30 points for every 6 months training in Orthopaedics. The list of approved training activities and their Training Points can be obtained from the College Secretariat. These Training Points can be linked to Continued Medical Education (CME) points in the HKICBSC system in a ratio of 1 to 1, subject to the decision of the Education Committee of the HKCOS.

2.3 Orthopaedic Training Experience in Basic Surgical Training

- a. For the Basic Surgical Trainees who intend to continue their higher training in Orthopaedics, their Orthopaedic training experience in basic training would be counted

as part of the 60-month requirement for the eligibility of Fellowship Examination of the HKCOS (details in section 3.5).

- b. A maximum of the 12 months of orthopaedic training experience during basic training would be counted for the 60-month requirement. Even if a trainee has spent additional time in orthopaedics during the basic training, he or she would still be required to complete another 48 months of Higher Orthopaedic Training in order to fulfill the 60-month requirement.
- c. Only 2 subspecialty clinical rotations, "General Orthopaedics" and "Orthopaedic Traumatology", would be counted for the 60-month requirement. And for each of these 2 subspecialty clinical rotations, a maximum of 6 months would be counted into the 60-month requirement.
- d. For those trainees who have not spent 12 months of basic training in Orthopaedics, they would need to do a Foundation Higher Orthopaedic Training until they obtain a total of 12 months of Orthopaedic training experience in the Basic Surgical Training plus Foundation Higher Orthopaedic Training, which should comprise 6 months of "General Orthopaedics" and 6 months of "Orthopaedic Traumatology" (details in section 3.5).

3. HIGHER ORTHOPAEDIC TRAINING

3.1 Introduction

- a. The higher training in Orthopaedics and Traumatology (Higher Orthopaedic Training) is organized and accredited by the HKCOS. Satisfactory completion of the required clinical training rotations and other training requirements will entitle the trainee to participate in the Fellowship Examination.
- b. At present, the training program is also accredited by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd). The exit examination is therefore a conjoint examination, and the successful candidate may also be granted the Fellowship of the RCSEd in Orthopaedics.
- c. There is a selection procedure for qualified BSTs to be admitted as Higher Orthopaedic Trainees (HOTs). The number of accredited HOT training positions will be closely monitored by the College.

3.2 Admission Procedure of Higher Orthopaedic Trainees

- 3.2.1 The number of Higher Orthopaedic Trainees will be closely monitored and may be limited, and the admission will be selective and competitive. Candidates are selected on the basis of their clinical and academic performance and their professionalism through a structured selection procedure [see section 3.3].
- 3.2.2 The College does not guarantee that all BSTs who intend to take up training in Orthopaedics & Traumatology will be offered HOT positions. Potential applicants should contact the College Secretariat for the most updated information on the regulations and requirements of the selection procedure.
- 3.2.3 Potential applicants who have received their Basic Surgical Training abroad may be considered for admission as HOTs. They are subjected to the same requirements as local applicants. They should enquire the College secretariat for the procedures and the documents required. Basic Surgical Trainees, both local and overseas, who are registered after July 2009, must obtain the membership of the HKICBSC (MHKICBSC) before they will be considered for entering the Higher Orthopaedic Training by the HKCOS.

3.3 Admission Criteria and Selection Procedure of Higher Orthopaedic Trainees (HOT)

- 3.3.1 The following criteria must be met:

- a. A Hong Kong resident who has registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong and in good standing.
- b. Completion of an accredited Basic Surgical Training programme as described in the “Rules and Regulations for Basic Surgical Trainee”, published by the Hong Kong Intercollegiate Board of Surgical Colleges.
- c. Possession of the MHKICBSC qualification
- d. Satisfactory performance in a selection board accredited by HKCOS.

3.3.2 The selection procedure consists of a structured interview and requires the following documents from the applicant:

- a. An application form and the prescribed fees.
- b. A structured curriculum vitae using a specific form, including information on basic medical qualification, postgraduate qualification(s), number of attempts of examination, training and research experience.
- c. Documentation of a successful pass in the recognized intermediate examination (MHKICBSC).
- d. 6-monthly Assessment Reports of an accredited BST training programme, including documentation of training points and CME points, unless otherwise exempted by the College.

3.3.3 a. Information supplied by the applicant and the interview performance will be rated. The selection criteria may be changed from time to time. Potential applicants may obtain the most updated information from the College Secretariat.

- b. Satisfactory performance in a selection board accredited by HKCOS.

3.4 **Registration with the College and Hospital Positions**

3.4.1 Potential HOTs selected by the College are required to obtain their own hospital positions in one of the accredited training centres. The HKCOS is not responsible for arranging the positions.

3.4.2 Potential HOTs are required to register with the College as Higher Orthopaedic Trainees and to pay an annual training fee. The trainee status will only start when the registration procedure is completed. The registration form is available through the College Secretariat. Failure to pay the annual training fee within the recommended time may lead to suspension or discontinuation of the training status.

3.4.3 Registered HOTs can have access to the information of training activities of the College, as well as training materials. Their submitted training points and CME points will be documented after endorsement by the College.

3.4.4 The College may suspend or terminate a trainee’s registration and his/her training status. This is outlined in section 3.7.

3.5 **Requirements of Higher Orthopaedic Training**

3.5.1 The Higher Orthopaedic Training may be completed in a minimum of 4 years (48 months) and up to 6 years. A total of 60 months of orthopaedic training experience is required before eligibility for the Fellowship Examination. These 60 months include both basic and higher trainings. However, basic training can only contribute a maximum of 12 months of orthopaedic training experience. If a HOT does not have 12 months of basic training in orthopaedic, the early months in the Higher Orthopaedic Training will be counted as Foundation Higher Orthopaedic

Training (FHOT), until a total of 12 months of orthopaedic training experience in basic training plus FHOT is achieved.

- a. The first 12 months of the 60-month orthopaedic training experience (either in BST or FHOT or both) should comprise 6 months in General Orthopaedic and 6 months in Orthopaedic Traumatology.
- b. A trainee who has spent more than 12 months of Basic Surgical Training in orthopaedics is still required to complete 48 months of Higher Orthopaedic Training (which would be the Specialty Higher Orthopaedic Training, as described in section 3.5.2) in order to fulfill the 60-month requirement for the eligibility for the Fellowship Examination.
- c. Any subspecialty clinical rotations other than the 6 months of General Orthopaedic and the 6 months of Orthopaedic Traumatology will not be counted as eligible orthopaedic training experience in the BST or FHOT and cannot be used to substitute the subspecialty clinical rotation requirement in the 48-month Specialty Higher Orthopaedic Training programme.

3.5.2 The Specialty Higher Orthopaedic Training (SHOT) programme includes the following clinical rotations in approved centres:

- a. Compulsory subspecialty clinical rotations made up of the following combinations (total 33 months):
 - i. 9 months in Traumatology, including 3 months in Geri-Ortho Trauma
 - ii. 3 months in Hand Surgery
 - iii. 3 months in Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgery
 - iv. 3 months in Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation
 - v. 3 months in Sports Medicine
 - vi. 3 months in Adult Joint Reconstruction
 - vii. 3 months in Foot and Ankle Surgery
 - viii. 6 months in Spine Surgery
- b. The remaining 15 months may be spent in any orthopaedic subspecialty clinical rotations as agreed by trainees and the training centres, including Orthopaedic Oncology, General Orthopedics and any of those described above. The total time spent in each of these subspecialties, including compulsory and elective clinical rotations during SHOT should not be more than 6 months, except for Traumatology and Spine Surgery. Traumatology should not be counted for more than 18 months in SHOT, while Spine Surgery cannot be counted for more than 9 months in SHOT.
- c. Of all the clinical rotations, 2 rotations of 3 months each should be carried out in other training centres in Hong Kong, out of the cluster of trainee's parent hospital. These out-of-cluster rotation are arranged by the College.
- d. Non-local training may, under exceptional circumstances, be accredited as fulfilling the training requirements for up to a maximum of 3 months.
- e. Special clinical attachment may be arranged by the Education Committee for Orthopaedic Oncology Centres or Paediatric Orthopaedics Centres with trainees' own study leave. These attachments may last for one to two weeks. The attachment is primarily for training purpose and must be mutually agreed by the receiving and releasing hospitals.

3.5.3 Each trainee should undergo an Annual Competency Review (ACR) hosted by the individual hospital/ cluster at the end of the first, second and third year of Specialty Higher Orthopaedic Training (SHOT) and at the end of foundation Higher Orthopaedic training (FHOT) respectively.

- a. The Annual Competency Review shall be conducted by the training director

- or designated person endorsed by Education Committee (EC) and two trainers from the individual trainee's hospital/ cluster in attendance of the trainee.
- b. The review criteria of the ACR will be determined by Education Committee (EC). Trainees can find the relevant updated information from the College Secretariat.
 - c. Feedback on the trainee's overall performance shall be provided.
 - d. His/her suitability for progression to next year of training shall also be decided in the ACR.
 - e. On circumstances when the trainee is not recommended to progress, a written report shall be submitted by the ACR committee to the Education Committee of the HKCOS.
 - f. The trainee may appeal to the Chief Censor in case he/ she thinks the decision is not reasonable. The Censor shall investigate the appeal with an appeal committee with two more members from the EC. The decision of this appeal committee will be the final decision.
- 3.5.4 The level of expertise required in terms of knowledge and skills and the assessment methods for each subspecialty training are described in the Core Curriculum Book of the HKCOS.
- 3.5.5 The following items are also required as measures of satisfactory completion of training. All of the items need to be fulfilled:
- a. Training points: more than 22.5 (with a minimal of 10 core Training Points) are required for every 3 months of HOT training, as long as the trainee is a HOT or Examination Eligible Candidate.
 - b. Operation record logbook: a satisfactory number of index operations performed independently or under supervision is required. The Index Operations Requirements (IOR) list is an internal guideline of the HKCOS, with the objective to standardize the operative experiences of the Higher Orthopaedic Trainees. The IOR list is not intended to be comprehensive. It represents the minimal requirements in selected types of operations, before the College will consider conferring fellowship to an orthopaedic trainee. The number of operations is certified every 3 months by the Training Director of the respective rotation. .
 - c. Satisfactory 3 monthly assessments (for every 3-month rotation to be considered as qualified). .
 - d. To complete one research project under supervision, trainee should have satisfactory completion of interim reports on the research project within the stipulated deadlines decided by the Education Committee.
 - e. To make at least one oral presentation at an orthopaedic related local or overseas conference.
 - f. To publish* at least one orthopaedic related scientific paper in a HKCOS accredited peer-reviewed journal as the first author in the form of either scientific article, case report or review article. (*The publication would only be accepted on the condition that the trainee has already registered his/her training under HKCOS, either as Basic Surgical Trainee or Higher Orthopaedic trainee, at the time of the publication of the scientific paper.)
 - g. Regular workplace-based assessment: Trainees are required to be assessed with formative assessments in order to monitor their progress and receive feedback from trainers. The minimum number of workplace-based assessment will be determined by the Education Committee. The format of workplace-based assessments includes Mini-Clinical Evaluation Exercise

(mini-CEX), Case Based Discussions (CBD), Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS), Procedural Based Assessment (PBA), Multiple Source Feedback (MSF). To assist both the trainer and trainee, EC might recommend lists of WBA bundled according to subspecialty in the format of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPA) for them to choose.

- h. HOTs are required to complete the following workshops/ courses or equivalent course accredited by HKCOS: Basic Orthopaedic Bioskill Workshop, a basic microsurgery course, a fracture fixation course (e.g. the AO or AADO fracture course), the ATLS course, and the Acute and Definitive Management of Unstable Pelvic Injuries Course.
- i. Upon completion of training, HOTs are deemed eligible to sit for the Fellowship Examination.

3.5.6 Other requirements:

- a. The HOTs are required to pay an annual training fee which is non-refundable. Failure to pay the annual training fee within the recommended time may lead to suspension or termination of training status.
- b. Failure to pay the annual training fee within 1 month will need to double-up the college training fee.
- c. Failure to pay the annual training fee within 3 months may lead to suspension or termination of the training status.

3.6 Record of Training and the Operation Log Book

The HOT is required to keep a good record of his/her training, together with all relevant documents, and a record of operation experience. The record is presented for assessment for consideration of admission to the exit examination. The format of this Log Book is available from the College Secretariat and should contain the following items:

- a. A record of undergraduate medical education and degree, medical registration, and if relevant, any post-graduate degree or professional qualifications, and courses attended. Copies of these documents and the annual practice certificate issued by the Medical Council of Hong Kong should be provided.
- b. A copy of the intermediate qualification.
- c. A record of all training rotations, including basic surgical training.
- d. Record of Training Points for each 3-month period.
- e. Record of leaves that are over 28 calendar days, indicating their nature and duration.
- f. Summary of a research project which is certified by the supervisor or the Training Director.
- g. Copy of the abstract of a presentation in an orthopaedic related meeting.
- h. Copy of one published scientific paper(s) as first author.
- i. Copies of attendance certificates of courses or workshops attended.

3.7 Assessment of Higher Orthopaedic Training

3.7.1 Monitoring of satisfactory progress of Higher Orthopaedic Training

- a. There is a 3-monthly assessment by means of a structured assessment form, to be completed by the Supervisor / Training Director.
- b. The assessment form includes assessment of the trainee's clinical and academic performance, documentation of training points and CME points, types and number of operations performed, and courses / conferences attended.

- c. Satisfactory completion of each 3-month period of training is required for progression to the next term of training.
- d. There is an Annual Competency Review conducted by a hospital-based Annual Competency Review Committee. It should be a meeting comprised of the training director or designated person endorsed by Education Committee and, two trainers with, and the trainee, to give trainee feedback on his/her overall performance.

3.7.2 Unsatisfactory progress

- a. In case the performance of the trainee is found to be unsatisfactory, his/her case will be reported by the Annual Competency Review Committee of the individual hospital/ cluster to the Education Committee as in 3.5.3a.
- b. Management of unsatisfactory progress may consist of one of the following procedures:
 - i. Remedial programme
 - ii. Disqualification of that period of training
 - iii. Suspension or termination of training

3.7.3 Remedial programme

The remedial programme is drawn up by the Education Committee together with the supervisor/ Training Director of the trainee. It may involve transferal to another training programme if necessary. It may require an extension of training. Failure to meet the requirements laid down in the remedial programme may lead to disqualification of that training period.

3.7.4 Disqualification of the period of training

When a period of training is disqualified that period will not be counted into training. The trainee will need to repeat that period and therefore will need to extend the total length of training. The trainee will be bound by the regulation on the maximum duration of training [see section 3.10]. However the training points and IOR gained during this disqualified period will still be valid.

3.7.5 Regulations on disqualification of a training period

Disqualification of training may be considered on any one of the following grounds:

- a. Unsatisfactory performance, including insufficient training points;
- b. Extended period of leave without approval (except sick leave, maternity leave and paternity leave);
- c. Failure to pay the annual training fees of the HKCOS.

3.7.6 Suspension or termination of training

The Education Committee may recommend to the Council of the HKCOS to suspend or terminate the trainee status of a trainee. The trainee will cease to be a HOTA of the College. The College is not responsible for any financial loss that may arise from any decision of disqualification, suspension or termination of the training of a trainee or any other disciplinary actions.

Suspension or termination of training may be considered on any one of the following grounds:

- a. Unethical practice
- b. Any disciplinary suspension of the practicing license by the Medical Council of Hong Kong (HKMC).

3.7.7 Regulations on Suspension or Termination of Training

- a. The training may be suspended or terminated under any one of the following circumstances:
 - i. If in the opinion of the Education Committee / Council that a trainee ceases to hold any of the qualifications rendering him / her eligible as a trainee of the College;
 - ii. If in the opinion of the Education Committee / Council that the performance of the trainee has been very unsatisfactory, or that he/she has taken extended period of leave of absence without approval, or that he/she has accumulated disqualification of periods of training for 12 months or more;
 - iii. In the ground of poor health of a trainee that renders him/her unable to fulfill job and training requirement even with adequate reasonable support from the training centre/ College;
 - iv. If a trainee fails to pay the annual training fees before the designated deadline;
 - v. If by a resolution of the Education Committee / Council passed by a majority of at least two-thirds of the members for that time being it is declared that a trainee's conduct has been prejudicial to the interests and the good name of the College, and it be resolved that his/her trainee status shall therefore be suspended or terminated. A written notice shall have been sent to the trainee at least 28 days before the Education Committee / Council meeting, at which such a resolution may be passed, to inform him/her such meeting, of what is alleged against him/her, of the intended resolution, and that he/she shall at such meeting be allowed an opportunity to give any explanation or defense that he/she may think fit. This includes matters that lead to disciplinary actions taken by the Medical Council of Hong Kong against the trainee.
 - vi. If he/she resigns by written notice to the Education Committee or Council, and such written notice shall reach the College no later than 30 days before the effective date;
- b. The involved individual may appeal against the decision of suspension or termination.
- c. The duration of suspension will be specified by the Council and shall normally be not more than 12 months from the date of resolution by the Council.
- d. Termination will take immediate effect from the date of resolution by the Council.
- e. For termination, the individual cannot apply for re-admission as a HOT, and also cannot apply to sit for any future exit Fellowship Examination. Training fees paid will not be refunded.
- f. For suspension, the trainee status may be reactivated after having satisfied the requirements of the Council which were laid down at the time the resolution was made. Time lapsed during suspension will not be counted as towards meeting training requirements. No training points or CME points will be granted during suspension. Training fees paid will not be refunded. After reactivation of training any lapsed training fees during the suspension will need to be repaid in full.

3.8 **Training points for Higher Orthopaedic Trainees**

3.8.1 Definition of training points

- a. Training points are allocated to accredited training activities of the HKCOS or other recognizable educational activities. They are a record of participation in training activities and a documentation of academic pursuit of the trainee.
- b. There are two types of training points (core training points and regular training points).
 - i. Core training points are allocated to structured training activity organized by Hong Kong College of Orthopaedic Surgeons. The current structured training activities of Hong Kong College of Orthopaedic Surgeons include Saturday interhospital meeting, HKCOS clinical tutorial and HKCOS Specialty Day.
 - ii. Regular training points are allocated to all other training activities described in 3.8.1.c, 3.8.1.d and 3.8.1.e.
- c. Training points are granted for pre-approved training activities and the current list can be obtained from the College secretariat.
- d. Ad hoc activities may be accredited for training points if they fulfill all of the following criteria:
 - i. With a minimal of 5 Fellows participating;
 - ii. Open to all trainees with proper announcement.
 - iii. The application of accreditation of training points for ad hoc training activity can only be initiated by the organizer of the event, who should be a registered trainer of the Hong Kong College of Orthopaedic Surgeons.
- e. Passive Category A CME points accredited by Hong Kong College of Orthopaedic Surgeons for both local and overseas training activities are considered equivalent to the Regular Training point in a 1 to 1 ratio, provided that they satisfy the criteria listed in 3.8.1.c and 3.8.1.d and subject to the decision of Education Committee of HKCOS.

3.8.2 Requirement of training points

- a. At present, HOTs are required more than 22.5 training points (with a minimum of 10 points in the form of Core Training Points) for every 3 months of training contributing to a minimum of 90 training points per year (with a minimum of 40 points in the form of Core Training Points). The Education Committee may adjust the number of training point requirement from time to time.
- b. The training points are documented in each 3-monthly training assessment report.
- c. A trainee who has obtained less than the required number of training points may be required to carry out one of the followings: -
 - i. Additional training points to be obtained over the next 3 months or any period to be specified by the Education Committee, on top of the regular requirements.
 - ii. Disqualification of the training period under consideration.

3.9 Leave of Absence

- 3.9.1 A Higher Orthopaedic Trainee may take up to a maximum of 28 calendar days of leave in every 6 months of training. This includes annual leave, sick leave, vacation leave or leaves for other purposes unrelated to training. Training leaves, study leaves, conference leaves, compensation leave and compassionate leave are exempted from this calculation. Maternity leave is considered separately below. Only after discussion with the candidate's Chief of Service, and with the agreement of the candidate's Training Director, may a subspecialty training rotation be done

in non-consecutive months to accommodate Maternity Leave. The College must be informed of this arrangement as early as possible.

- 3.9.2 Maternity leaves may be taken according to the current labour law requirements and provisions. However if the maternity leave falls within the term of a subspecialty training rotation rendering the remaining time of that term insufficient for training, the Education Committee may require the candidate to take remedial training programmes or to repeat the subspecialty training rotation after the maternity leave.
- 3.9.3 Leaves extended over the maximum period may render that 6 months term of training disqualified, unless special approval is given by the Education Committee.
- 3.9.4 For any 3 months term of a subspecialty rotation, the maximum period of leave is 14 calendar days. Otherwise that 3 months term of subspecialty rotation may be disqualified.
- 3.9.5 For extended study leave locally or overseas, for professional training, clinical attachment, the trainee should apply and seek prior approval from the Education Committee. A maximum of 12 calendar months of leave for the whole training period may be granted for these purposes. Such study leave is normally not considered as part of Higher Orthopaedic Training unless approval is granted by the Education Committee, but only up to a maximum of 3 months [see section 3.5.2d]. If endorsed, the trainee is still required to obtain training points during the study leave period. The trainee is also bound by the regulations on Maximum Duration of Training [see section 3.10].

3.10 **Maximum Duration of Training**

- 3.10.1 The maximum duration of Higher Orthopaedic Training is 72 months, counting from the date of admission into Higher Orthopaedic Training. The trainee has to meet all clinical rotation requirements and other requirements during this period of time.
- 3.10.2 Normally at the end of 72 months the trainee status will be automatically terminated.
- 3.10.3 Under exceptional circumstances the Council may consider extension of the training period beyond 72 months. However this additional extension is usually not more than 12 months unless otherwise approved by the Council.
- 3.10.4 Trainees who fail to fulfill their training requirements within this maximum duration of training, including any approved extension thereafter, are not eligible to sit the Fellowship Examination.
- 3.10.5 A trainee who has failed the exit Fellowship Examination but has already completed all training rotations and other requirements within the maximal 72-month duration of Higher Orthopaedic Training is considered separately [see section 4.3 and 4.11].

3.11 **Completion of Training**

- 3.11.1 Training is only considered complete after the HOT has satisfied all training requirements, and is approved by the Education Committee.
- 3.11.2 Trainees who have completed all the required training rotations and other training requirements but who have not passed the exit Fellowship Examination are required to register with the College as the Examination Eligible Candidate [see section 4.11].

3.12 Training Fee

- 3.12.1 All trainees of the HKCOS are required to pay annual training fees within the first month of training after admission as a trainee of the College. The amount of these fees will be recommended by the Council from time to time. The College will send at least one but not more than 2 reminders to the trainees before the payment deadline. It is the responsibility of trainees to settle all outstanding fees. In addition the Council may impose fees for a particular service or event if and when it seems to be necessary.
- 3.12.2
- a. Failure to pay the annual training fee within 1 month will need to double-up the college training fee.
 - b. Failure to pay the annual training fee within 3 months may lead to suspension or termination of the training status.

4. THE FELLOWSHIP EXAMINATION

4.1 The role of Fellowship Examination and the status of a Fellow

- 4.1.1 The Fellowship Examination is a “summative” examination. It is an assessment of whether or not a Higher Orthopaedic Trainee (HOT) has acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to enable him / her to practice safely and independently in orthopaedic surgery in the community.
- 4.1.2 The Fellowship Examination forms part of the requirements for a HOT to be qualified as a specialist in Orthopaedic Surgery. He/she has to pass the examination besides completion of all the training requirements. Training is incomplete if a HOT cannot pass the examination within allowable time [see section 4.3.2] and will not be eligible to be admitted as a Fellow of the HKCOS.
- 4.1.3 Having passed the Fellowship Examination, and on satisfactory completion of all training requirements, including the training point [see section 3.5.5a], IOR [see section 3.5.5b], research project [see section 3.5.5d], oral presentation [see section 3.5.5e], publication [see section 3.5.5f], Basic Orthopaedic Bioskill Workshop, a basic microsurgery course, a fracture fixation course, ATLS course and the Acute and Definite Management of Unstable Pelvic Injuries Course or equivalent course accredited by HKCOS [see section 3.5.5h], the HOT can apply to be admitted as a Fellow of the HKCOS.
- 4.1.4 The HKCOS will nominate Fellows to be admitted as Fellows of the HKAM in Orthopaedic Surgery (FHKAM Orthopaedic Surgery).

4.2 The Conduct of the Fellowship Examination

- 4.2.1 The HKCOS holds the Fellowship Examination from time to time. At present, the Fellowship Examination is conducted once a year.
- 4.2.2 The present Fellowship Examination consists of 3 parts, but the Council may change the format and content as necessary according to the prevailing circumstances, requirements and standards. The 3 parts are:
- a. A written examination
 - b. A clinical examination that consists of long cases and short cases
 - c. Viva examinations
- 4.2.3 At present the Fellowship Examination is held conjointly with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. Some of the examiners are sent by the RCSEd. A pass in the examination will entitle the candidate to both the Fellowship of HKCOS and the Fellowship in Orthopaedic Surgery of the RCSEd [FRCSEd (Orth)].
- 4.2.4 A candidate may either pass or fail the examination. There is no pull-up viva or supplementary examination for failed candidates. The failed candidates may re-sit

the examination at future sittings of the examination. The number of re-sits is limited [see section 4.3.2]

4.3 Eligibility for the Fellowship Examination

4.3.1 Regulations that apply to trainees who are taking the examination for the first time:

- a. The applicant must be a currently registered HOT in trainee list and in good standing, and has completed or at the time of the examination, would have completed the required clinical training rotations [see section 3.5.1, 3.5.2 and 3.5.3] or with the exemption stated in section 4.3.3 and 4.3.4, and has also satisfied the training requirements including training points, research project, conference presentation, publication, operation log book and other requirements [see section 3.5.5 and 3.5.6]; and
- b. Submit the required documents and pay the required examination fees.

4.3.2 Regulations for candidates who have failed the examination previously and are applying to re-sit the examination:

- a. The applicant should be a currently registered Examination Eligible Candidate (EEC) [section 4.11] of the College in good standing, and provides proofs of continuous “training capacity” in orthopaedic surgery [see section 4.11.3].
- b. Submit the required documents and pay the required examination fees.
- c. **Limit to the number of re-sits at the Fellowship Examination** – For any candidate who has failed the first attempt at the exit examination, he/she may re-sit the examination again for not more than 3 times within the next 4 years, counting from the date of the first attempt at the examination, whichever criterion comes first.

4.3.3 HOT may sit the examination if by the date of the examination they have already completed 48 months of accredited SHOT clinical training rotations, including all the compulsory subspecialty training rotations.

4.3.4 For HOT intake after July 2021, they may sit the examination if by the date of the examination they have already completed 45 months of accredited SHOT clinical training rotations as a grace period measure. These shall include, all the compulsory subspecialty training rotations (the core rotations), and provided that all required training requirements are met. However they will only be admitted as Fellow of the HKCOS after completion of a full 48 months of accredited SHOT training rotations.

4.4 Application procedures for the Fellowship Examination

4.4.1 The date of the Fellowship Examination will be announced not less than 6 months before the examination unless otherwise approved by the Council.

4.4.2 The deadline for application will be not less than 1 month after announcement of the examination date.

4.4.3 The application must be completed with all the required documents and examination fees.

4.5 Acceptance of Examination Candidates

4.5.1 All applications for the Fellowship Examination are assessed by the Examination Committee of the College which will decide whether or not to accept the applicant

for the examination. The Committee may request clarification or additional information from the applicant.

4.5.2 Successful applicants will be notified within 2 months after the closure of application.

4.5.3 For unsuccessful applicant(s), an explanation will be made. Suggestions on additional documents or remedial training may be given to the applicant(s) to enable him/her to fulfill the examination requirements in the future.

4.6 **Withdrawal from the Fellowship Examination**

4.6.1 Any candidate who submits an application form but is subsequently found to be not eligible to sit for the examination will have the examination fee refunded but 20% will be deducted for administrative charge

4.6.2 An accepted examination candidate who wishes to withdraw from the examination must do so in writing to the College Secretariat.

a. The examination fee may be returned less 20% for administration charges, when written notice is received by the College prior to the closing date of applications.

b. Half of the examination fee may be refunded, when written notice is received not less than 21 calendar days before the commencement of the examination.

c. No refund will be made to candidates who fail to attend the examination for any reason whatsoever, or whose withdrawal notice is received less than 21 calendar days before the commencement of the examination. No allowance will be made for postal or other delays.

4.7 **Cancellation and Change of Date of the Fellowship Examination**

4.7.1. The Council may under special circumstances decide to cancel or change the date of the Fellowship Examination. There is no obligation for the College to hold a Fellowship Examination every year or at a fixed date, or after the announcement has been made.

4.7.2 The College does not hold responsibility for any consequences that may arise for its decision to cancel an examination or to alter the date of an examination.

4.7.3 The decision to cancel or alter the date of an examination will be made at a reasonable time before the date of the examination. The examination fees will be refunded in full.

4.8 **Successful Pass in the Fellowship Examination**

4.8.1 The successful candidate will be informed by the Panel of Examiners at the end of the examination. The result will be endorsed at the next Council Meeting.

4.8.2 For candidates who have completed 48 months of accredited SHOT clinical training rotations and on satisfactory completion of all training requirements, including the Index Operations Requirements [see sections 3.5.5, 3.5.6 and 3.11.1], they can apply to be admitted as Fellows of the HKCOS at the next Council Meeting. The Fellowship conferment ceremony will be held at the next Admission Ceremony of the College. The College will subsequently nominate these new Fellows to be admitted as Fellows of the HKAM.

4.8.3 For candidates who have not yet completed 48 months of accredited SHOT clinical training rotations, they are required to complete the remaining months of training in a satisfactory manner. They may then apply to be admitted as Fellows of the College after satisfactory completion of these remaining training rotations [see section 3.11.1].

4.8.4 For candidates who have not yet completed all other training requirements [see sections 3.5.5 and 3.5.6], including the Index Operation Requirements list, they are required to complete the remaining training requirements [see section 3.11.1] before they can apply to be admitted as Fellows of the College.

4.9 **Failure at the Fellowship Examination**

4.9.1 Candidates who fail the Fellowship Examination will be informed by the Panel of Examiners at the end of the examination. The result will be endorsed at the next Council meeting. There is no “pull-up” viva or supplementary examination.

4.9.2 A review meeting with the failed candidate will be held within the next few days by a representative of the Examiners (usually a representative of the team of External Examiners).

4.9.3 In the event that a candidate wishes to appeal his/her case, he/she should do so verbally to the Chairman of the Court of Examiners as soon as possible, followed by writing, and not more than 7 days after the examination.

4.9.4 The candidate’s appeal will be directed to the Chairman of the Appeal Committee [section 4.10].

4.9.5 The failed candidate may apply to re-sit the examination, subject to regulations [section 4.3.2].

4.10 **The Appeal Committee**

4.10.1 The Council will form an Appeal Committee for each Fellowship Examination. The Chairman of the Appeal Committee is appointed before the Fellowship examination.

4.10.2 The Appeal Committee will consider every case of appeal independently and will report to the Council.

4.10.3 The Council will base on the recommendation of the Appeal Committee to make a final decision on the status of each appeal case.

4.11 **Eligibility to re-sit the Fellowship Examination**

4.11.1 Any candidate who wishes to re-sit the Fellowship examination is required to register with the College as an Examination Eligible Candidate (EEC).

4.11.2 An EEC must fulfill all the following:

- a. Have already satisfactorily completed 48 months of clinical training rotations
- b. Have completed other training requirements
- c. Current registration with the Medical Council of Hong Kong and in good standing.
- d. In a “Training Capacity” [section 4.11.3].

4.11.3 “Training Capacity” is defined as consisting of all the following requirements:

- a. In active clinical practice;
- b. In a “supervised practice” under supervision by an accredited Trainer(s) approved by the College [see section 4.11.5 and 4.11.6];
- c. Maintains a record of operation experience - the operation log book;
- d. Satisfies the training points requirement of a HOT (A minimum of 22.5 points, including a minimum of 10 core training points, for every 3 months of training).

4.11.4 Regulations of “Examination Eligible Candidate (EEC)”

- a. Trainees who have failed the Fellowship examination, or trainees who are unable to sit the Fellowship Examination within 6 months after they have

- completed all training rotations are required to register with the College as Examination Eligible Candidates (EEC).
- b. The registration as an EEC should be done within 2 months from the date of the last Fellowship examination or within 2 months of the date of completion of the 48 months of required clinical training rotations.
 - c. The registration is to be renewed annually.
 - d. The EEC status may not be approved or renewed after 4 years, counting from the date of the first attempt of Fellowship examination or the date of completion of 48 months of required clinical training rotations, or after the candidate has re-sit the exit examination for 3 more times, whichever criterion comes first [refers section 4.3.2].
 - e. An annual registration fee is payable in advance and is non-refundable.
- 4.11.5 The EEC is required to submit an annual plan of “supervised practice” [see section 4.11.6] under a potential trainer at the time of registration and at each annual renewal, as a documentation of his/her “training capacity”. This plan will be submitted to the Education Committee for approval. The plan should include the following information:
- a. Name of potential trainer(s),
 - b. Name of hospital(s) of the supervised practice,
 - c. An outline of the supervised practice, including number of clinic sessions, operation sessions and on-call duties, if applicable.
- 4.11.6 A “supervised practice” is defined as an orthopaedic surgical practice in which the trainer is fully informed of the work of the candidate and the candidate does not perform orthopaedic operations that are beyond his/her capacity as a surgeon still under training, as is outlined in the curriculum for HOT training.
- 4.11.7 The EEC will be assessed by the Council every 3 months by means of an assessment form which is signed by the trainer(s).
- 4.11.8 The “training capacity” of the immediate past 3 months may be disqualified if its quality is deemed unsatisfactory by the College. A candidate may not have more than 12 months of “training capacity” disqualified by the College. Any candidate who has 12 months or more “training capacity” disqualified will not be renewed as an EEC and will not be allowed to sit or re-sit any future exit examination.
- 4.11.9 The candidate may change his/her trainer(s) or program of supervised practice. The change should not be made more frequently than every 6 months, and the new plan must be approved by the Education Committee in advance before its implementation.
- 4.11.10 Leave of Absence – The EEC may take leave of absence following the same regulations governing HOTS.
- 4.11.11 Under exceptional circumstances, a candidate may apply to the Council for approval to take extended leaves while registered as an EEC or before registering as an EEC. However the Council may still require the candidate to be bounded by the regulations on the limit of attempts at the Fellowship examination, described in [section 4.3.2], as well as the regulations on the limit of the duration of registration as an EEC [section 4.11.4].

5. INTERPRETATION OF THESE REGULATIONS

The College Council has the final authority in the interpretation of these regulations, and may make revisions from time to time. The most updated information and current resolutions of the Council may be obtained from the College Secretary.

Approved by EC on 15 January 2024.

Endorsed by Council on 19 February 2024 and by Academy EC at 286th meeting on 12 March 2024.