

Symposium - "Training of Surgeons"  
**Certification of surgeons in Singapore**

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Specialist Certification for Surgeons in Singapore was formalised in 1991 with the formation of the Joint Committee for Advanced Specialty Training (JCAST). This Committee comprises of representatives from the School of Postgraduate Medical Studies National University of Singapore, the Academy of Medicine of Singapore, and the Ministry of Health, Singapore. This Committee oversees the training and accreditation of 37 medical specialties and sub-specialties among which are included the surgical specialties of General Surgery, Orthopaedic Surgery, Ophthalmology, Otorhinolaryngology, Urology, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Neurological Surgery, Paediatric Surgery and Cardiothoracic Surgery.

Entry into basic surgical training programmes is controlled by the Ministry of Health, and the numbers taken in annually are based on national needs and the overall health plan of the country. Once selected into basic surgical training, the candidates are trained in the major teaching hospitals of Singapore to sit for a qualifying professional examination e.g. M.Med. (Surgery), FRCS (Edinburgh), or equivalent. On successful completion of their basic training and on obtaining their postgraduate certification, candidates are eligible to apply for advanced specialist training in their chosen specialty/sub-specialty field. Advanced trainees are appointed in teaching hospitals as Surgical Registrars and they undergo a 3-4 year specialty/sub-specialty programme as outlined by the relevant Specialist Sub-committee. During this period of advanced training, candidates are closely monitored by their surgical supervisors and Log Books are maintained to document their clinical, academic and research experience. Sometime towards the end of the advanced specialty training period, the candidate will have the opportunity for posting to an advanced centre overseas to round off his advanced training programme. Upon completion of the advanced training programme, the candidate is called for an interview by a Board of Assessors convened by the relevant specialty sub-committee. During this interview, candidates present their Log Books for discussion. External overseas assessors are usually also included in this interview panel. Following a successful interview, JCAST Certification in the relevant surgical specialty is obtained. Candidates are then considered fully trained surgeons. They may then apply for Senior Registrar positions or leave the teaching hospitals for private practice in their chosen surgical specialties. They are also eligible to be included in the specialist roll of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore.

Currently, in Singapore there is no further assessment of professional skills after JCAST Certification. However, there are moves to consider formalising a national system of re-accreditation in the near future. There are also moves by the Singapore Medical Council, to have a National Register of Specialists in Singapore.