



Committee on Advanced Subspecialty Training (CAST) Society of Neurological Surgeons

CHARTER

Approved by SNS Executive Council December 6, 2014

The following document represents the Charter for the SNS Committee on Advanced Subspecialty Training (CAST) based on Article III (Committees of the Society), Section A (Standing Committees), Sub-section 4 (Committee on Advanced Subspecialty Training (CAST)) of the SNS Bylaws:

The Committee on Advanced Subspecialty Training (CAST) will be comprised of a Chair, a Secretary/Treasurer, and five additional members. The membership of CAST will be appointed by the Council from the Active SNS membership. Representation on CAST by current or past members of the RRC for Neurological Surgery and the American Board of Neurological Surgery (ABNS) is desirable so as to maintain familiarity with training programs and principles of the accreditation and certification process. Terms of service on CAST will be staggered among the members and will be for three years with one renewal option for a maximum term of six years. The Chair of CAST will attend the SNS Council meetings for the purpose of communicating CAST deliberations and facilitating Council oversight of CAST activities.

The Committee will be responsible for the development and updating of subspecialty training requirements **for both subspecialty fellowships (accreditation) and individual trainees (certification)**. The Committee will work with the ABNS **so as** to establish the criteria and mechanisms by which **neurosurgeons** completing **CAST-approved** fellowship program will become certified in that subspecialty area and maintain their certification via the MOC process. Additionally, this Committee will promulgate study and analysis of outcomes relative to neurosurgical subspecialty training and when necessary develop and monitor programs for a neurosurgery fellowship match.

I. Principles Pertaining to Neurosurgical Sub-Specialty Training

Fellowship accreditation will be based on the following principles:

- A. Completion of ACGME approved residency training is sufficient to allow practice of neurosurgery. Post-residency fellowship is not needed for either competent practice of or reimbursement for delivery of neurosurgical patient care within the definition of neurosurgery promulgated by the ABNS and RRC.
- B. The development and management of accreditation of neurosurgical fellowships by the Society of Neurological Surgery through the CAST structure is in the best interest of neurosurgery and the public by helping to ensure the quality of the education experience.

- C. "Fellowships" may either be enfolded or a post-graduate subspecialty training experience. Fellowships are usually one year in duration, but in certain instances may be shorter or longer as determined by the qualifications of the trainee, the body of knowledge, and the skills to be learned. Both types of fellowships are of equivalent and sufficient depth and breadth to provide a higher level of subspecialty expertise than that achieved during the usual core residency training.
- D. Training requirements for the aforementioned fellowships and fellows are established by CAST in consultation with its neurosurgical subspecialty sections, and will specify duration and components of training, requirements for facilities, faculty, affiliated services and minimum case material at the fellowship site. Fellowship requirements must include a curriculum for knowledge and procedural objectives to be attained in the fellowship, and should be based on the Level 5 Milestones approved by the ACGME for that subspecialty. Requirements can stipulate minimum case requirements for each fellow and program.
- E. Fellowships should include a significant emphasis on scholarly activity, and fellowship directors should provide specific expectations to fellows entering the fellowship with respect to academic performance.

II. Committee Structure & Responsibilities

The Committee on Advanced Subspecialty Training (CAST) will function under and be responsible to the Executive Council of the Society of Neurological Surgeons. The Committee will be comprised of a Chair, a Secretary/Treasurer, and five additional members. The membership of CAST will be appointed by the Executive Council from the Active SNS membership. Representation on CAST by current or past members of the RRC for Neurological Surgery and the American Board of Neurological Surgery (ABNS) is desirable so as to maintain familiarity with training programs and principles of the accreditation process. Terms of service on CAST will be staggered among the members and will be for three years with one renewal option for a maximum term of six years.

The Chair of CAST will have responsibility for directing the Committee's activities and convening meetings as necessary to meet its responsibilities. The Chair of CAST will attend the SNS Council meetings for the purpose of communicating CAST deliberations and facilitating Council oversight of CAST activities.

The Secretary/Treasurer of CAST will maintain records of CAST deliberations and actions as well as accreditation status and review cycles of accredited fellowships and the certification and certificate status of fellows. The Secretary/Treasurer will be responsible for pertinent and timely notifications of each fellowship involved in and related to the accreditation process. The Secretary/Treasurer will collect application fees and maintain financial books relative to income and disbursements.

The members of CAST will have responsibility for the following:

A. Applications and Training Requirements

CAST will assure that subspecialty training requirements are reviewed and updated every five years, seeking input from the SNS membership, the subspecialty sections and fellowship training directors. It will be the responsibility of CAST members to collate and establish a consensus for final approval of revised requirements by CAST.

B. Appeals

The CAST Secretary will be responsible for managing all accreditation appeals according to the prescribed procedures.

C. Certification of Fellows

CAST members will assure that fellowship training requirements have been met by trainees applying for ABNS certification in a neurosurgery subspecialty.

D. Outcomes

CAST members shall have the responsibility to convene subcommittees for the study of outcomes related to fellowship training.

III. Fellowship Review Committee

There will be a Fellowship Review Committee (FRC) comprised of SNS members and other pertinent specialists as needed with acknowledged interest and active clinical practice in each of the subspecialty areas to assist CAST in the review of programs, appeals and development/maintenance of subspecialty training requirements. Members of the FRC will serve without defined terms of service. The Chair or Secretary/Treasurer of CAST will, with input from the Joint Section leadership, appoint FRC members to constitute a panel for assisting in review of applications for fellowship accreditation and making recommendations to CAST in this regard. Additionally members of this body may serve in the development and revision of fellowship training requirements as determined by the CAST member responsible for this activity.

IV. Accreditation and Certification Process

SNS accreditation is limited to those fellowships which exist within ACGME accredited neurosurgery training programs (or the Canadian equivalent) and have current Neurological Surgery RRC authorization for existence of the specific fellowship. An application fee will be paid by the sponsoring residency training program to a separate CAST account. Fees will be set by CAST to cover

application, review and administration costs. Application fees will be subject to review and approval by the SNS Executive Council.

Applications for fellowship accreditation and certification will be submitted to the CAST Secretary as per instructions posted on the SNS website. The Secretary/Treasurer of CAST will have the discretion to complete the review within CAST or utilize additional subspecialty reviewers from the FRC. At a minimum, two CAST members must review each application and prepare a critique with accreditation and certification recommendations for discussion and action at the next CAST meeting. An alternate review process may be carried out by one member of CAST and two or three appointed subspecialty reviewers from the FRC. Critique and recommendations from the FRC reviewers shall be collated and summarized by the designated CAST reviewer for presentation to CAST at its next working meeting.

Judgments regarding accreditation **and certification** will be made based on compliance with the established fellowship training requirements. All deliberations will be in accordance with established policies regarding conflict of interest. A minimum of four members of CAST must be present for accreditation decisions. Accreditation **and certification** decisions will be made by a majority vote of CAST members. CAST will work with the ABNS to assure ongoing ABNS certification as a requirement for issuing subspecialty certification.

CAST may at its discretion require a site visit by a CAST member to obtain information not adequately represented in the application. The expense of this visit will be predetermined to cover transportation, meal and lodging expenses as well as an honorarium for the reviewer and will be the responsibility of the sponsoring program's department/division. These arrangements will be made prior to the site visit.

After initial accreditation, re-review of a fellowship will occur at least every five years and must be accompanied by satisfactory RRC accreditation decisions for the associated residency training program.

For fellowship training programs in which there has been ACGME (or equivalent) re-accreditation without adverse actions and all aspects of the fellowship program are stable, fellowship re-accreditation may be decided by CAST exclusive of additional FRC review, which in such cases shall be at the discretion of CAST.

When a CAST accredited subspecialty fellowship makes a significant change in program structure or undergoes major changes in fellowship faculty, especially fellowship program director, the fellowship director or the residency program director shall inform the SNS or CAST Secretary within six months of the change. Likewise, the SNS or CAST Secretary must be informed within six months of major ACGME accreditation rulings regarding the sponsoring residency training program. Substantial changes, such as change in program director, in the

sponsoring residency training program or fellowship may, at the discretion of CAST, be cause for review of fellowship and its accreditation.

V. Appeals

Appeal of a decision by CAST will be submitted in letter form to the CAST Secretary. The letter must address specifics in detail. The CAST Secretary will convene an Ad Hoc Appeals Committee (FRC) to hear the appeal, which may be presented in writing or in person by the fellowship director and/or program chair of the fellowship in question. The Ad Hoc Appeals Committee will consist of three members with expertise in the subspecialty, who have not participated in the original review and have no other conflict of interest. The recommendation of the Ad Hoc Appeals Subcommittee will be presented to CAST a final decision.

VI. Outcomes

Outcome studies relative to fellowship training will be directed by CAST members so charged. Appropriate areas for review may include review of fellowship training experience, impact of fellowship on residents within the training program, proficiencies and special competencies gained from fellowship training, the role of fellowship training for future practicing and academic neurosurgeons, as well as other outcome issues. These studies and pertinent recommendations will be reported to CAST, the Executive Council and the SNS membership as appropriate.

VII. Fellowship Match

When deemed necessary by a coalition of fellowship program directors and the SNS membership, mechanisms and procedures may be developed or contracted under direction of CAST and the SNS Council for a subspecialty fellowship match. The cost for such a match will be borne equitably by the accredited fellowship programs and not by SNS or CAST.