

Education Training Policy and Procedure

Recognition of Prior Learning



Authorising Committee/ Department:	RANZCP Board
Responsible Committee/ Department:	Education Committee
Document Code:	POL EDT-TRN Recognition of prior learning policy and procedure (14.1)

The RANZCP Fellowship Program will follow a staggered implementation process according to the following schedule:

- Stage 1 to commence December 2012.
- Stage 2 to commence December 2013.
- Stage 3 to commence December 2015.

Should the Committee for Training (CFT) determine that RPL would place a trainee ahead of the implementation schedule, the CFT will grant the corresponding 2003 Training Program credits to the trainee. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

1. Definition of recognition of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the process by which learning, skills, competence and work experiences acquired outside the RANZCP Fellowship Program are evaluated for the purpose of accrediting them in lieu of elements of training required under the RANZCP Fellowship Regulations 2012.

A successful RPL application therefore results in a trainee being granted exemption from training time requirements and/or various RANZCP Fellowship Program assessments. These assessments may include mandatory competency requirements, such as Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) and formative Observed Clinical Activities (OCAs), as well as certain centrally administered summative assessments (i.e. Scholarly Project, Psychotherapy Written Case).

2. Policy statement

This policy and procedure document describes how trainees may apply for and be granted RPL for relevant training or work experiences gained prior to their commencement of training under the RANZCP Fellowship Regulations 2012. It also describes the process for RPL for trainees planning a period of extended leave overseas.

3. Purpose

This policy and procedure sets out the mechanism for RPL under the RANZCP Fellowship Regulations 2012, ensuring that trainees are treated fairly, consistently and impartially in the review of their RPL applications and that there is fairness and transparency in all RPL decisions.

4. Policy details

In order to be eligible for RPL, training must have been completed in a formal training context with appropriate validation, supervision, feedback and assessment.

Each RPL application will be assessed by the Committee for Training (CFT) on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the evidence of training, assessment and/or work experience submitted is considered substantially equivalent to the nominated elements of the RANZCP Fellowship Program (i.e. equivalent in its structure, content, supervision requirements and environment). For example, if a trainee has completed a comparable 6-month term in child and adolescent psychiatry, RPL may be approved and exemption may be granted for time in the child and adolescent rotation and the OCA and mandatory EPAs corresponding to that rotation.

4.1 Prior learning time limitation

The CFT will consider, among other factors, the time passed since any substantially equivalent training was undertaken and whether the applicant has engaged in relevant practice to maintain their competence since that time.

- In order to be eligible for RPL, training, assessment (other than the Scholarly Project) and/or work experience must have been **completed within the past 8 years**.
- With regard to the Scholarly Project, RPL applications must be based on projects undertaken in a field relevant to psychiatry or mental health, which have been completed or accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal **within the past 10 years**.

5.0 RPL categories

Two types of RPL may be granted to trainees:

- RPL after enrolment in the RANZCP Fellowship Program and/or Certificate Programs (points 5.1)
- RPL for overseas training during a break-in-training (point 5.2)

5.1 RPL upon entering the RANZCP Fellowship Program

Applicants who have undertaken training that is substantially equivalent to Stage 1 and Stage 2 RANZCP Fellowship Program training may be granted exemption from up to 36 months full-time equivalent (FTE) of Stage 1 and Stage 2 training time and all or a number of the requested Stage 1 and 2 EPAs. Applicants who have undertaken training that is substantially equivalent to Stage 3 RANZCP Fellowship Program training may be granted exemption from up to 12 months FTE of Stage 3 training time and particular Stage 3 EPAs on a case-by-case basis. (Where an application is also related to a subspecialty Certificate of Advanced Training, the relevant Subcommittee for Advanced Training [SAT] will review and consider the application in addition to CFT as per point 6.5).

5.1.1 Caveat for training undertaken within Australia or New Zealand:

Doctors pursuing psychiatry training in Australia or New Zealand should be enrolled in the RANZCP Fellowship Program. Therefore, training completed within Australia or New Zealand that occurred prior to the individual being formally selected into and enrolled in RANZCP training will not be considered eligible for RPL unless it aligns with one of the following two exceptions.

There are two exceptions where an application may be considered for training completed in Australia or New Zealand prior to the individual being formally selected into and enrolling in the RANZCP Fellowship Program. In both exceptions, the training must have been completed in an accredited training post with an accredited supervisor and the trainee must have been undertaking a College-accredited Formal Education Course. The two exceptions are the following:

- i. Applications will be considered in situations where training occurred in a RANZCP-accredited psychiatry training post while fulfilling Medical Board of Australia (MBA) and Australian Medical Council (AMC) or Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) registration requirements that are necessary for entry into the RANZCP Fellowship

Program. Generally, a trainee may be granted exemption from up to a **maximum of 12 months FTE** of training time undertaken in Australia or New Zealand as a result of an RPL application in this case. In exceptional circumstances, where an applicant experienced further delays in relation to gaining general registration that were outside of their control, exemption from a further 6 months FTE may be considered by the CFT on a case-by-case basis (i.e. 18 months FTE maximum). An inability to pass the AMC examination is not considered a delay outside of the applicant's control.

All training time accrued after the date of general registration is **not eligible** for consideration. This rule also applies to all training experiences signed off and EPAs entrusted after this date. A trainee is eligible to accrue training time again after the trainee has applied for, been interviewed, advised of a successful outcome and has commenced training as an RANZCP trainee.

- ii. Applications may also be considered where the trainee undertook training in an RANZCP-accredited psychiatry training post while undertaking another specialist training program (for example, General Practice training) and has since applied and enrolled in the RANZCP Fellowship Program. Generally, a trainee may be granted up to a **maximum of 12 months FTE** of training time undertaken in Australia or New Zealand as a result of an RPL application in this case.

5.2 RPL for overseas training during a break-in-training

Periods of overseas training can be a valuable experience. Where RPL is sought by a registered College trainee for training to be undertaken during a break-in-training, such training must be pre-approved in principle by the CFT.

Although some experiences undertaken during a break-in-training may be suitable for RPL, trainees may not necessarily be eligible for RPL for the entire duration of their break-in-training. Supervision requirements aligning to the related element(s) of the College training program should be met to increase the likelihood of receiving RPL for experiences undertaken during a break-in-training.

A trainee undertaking overseas training while on a break-in-training must liaise with their DOT regularly.

RPL will not be granted for experience gained in short-term locum posts (i.e. generally less than 3 months FTE in duration).

In general, the majority of a trainee's Fellowship training should be undertaken in Australia or New Zealand; therefore, the maximum time for which exemption may be granted for overseas training is generally 50 per cent of the minimum RANZCP Fellowship Program time requirements, as follows:

- **Stages 1 and 2:** a trainee may be exempted from a maximum of 18 months FTE as the result of an RPL application for prospectively approved training completed in an overseas post during a substantial break-in-training.
- **Stage 3 or Certificate Programs:** in general a trainee may be exempted from a maximum of 12 months FTE as the result of an RPL application for prospectively approved training completed in an overseas post during a substantial break-in-training.

5.3 RPL for training while completing provisional registration requirements

Trainees who elect to move zones between New Zealand and Australia while training may be subject to restrictions in practice due to requirements to obtain medical registration in the new country. Trainees may be required to undergo supervised placement as part of their requirements to attain medical registration with either the MBA or MCNZ.

Trainees moving between New Zealand and Australia once their training has begun must apply to the CFT for recognition of training time while in supervised psychiatry practice in a College accredited post as part of the medical registration requirements. Only supervised psychiatry practice in a College accredited post will be recognised as part of this process. This only applies to trainees who have been granted general registration with either AHPRA or MCNZ and are applying for general registration in the opposite jurisdiction.

As per section 5.1.1, a trainee may be granted an exemption of up to a maximum of 12 months FTE while completing supervised practice requirements for medical registration with the MBA or MCNZ.

Applications for RPL will only be applied retrospectively.

6.0 Requests for RPL

RPL can only be considered and granted once the applicant has submitted a signed Training Agreement and paid all fees (including training, initial registration, RPL application and, where relevant, break-in-training fees) and the trainee's registration and enrolment have been confirmed by the College.

6.1 Deadline for submission

RPL applications must be submitted to the relevant BTC or relevant training committees under delegated responsibility from a Branch Training Committee or the New Zealand Training Committee (delegated body) no more than 6 months after the date on which a trainee commences training in the RANZCP Fellowship Program, i.e. the day they start accruing accredited training time or start a break-in-training (except for applications related to prospectively approved overseas training during a break-in-training). Any extension to this deadline must be approved by the CFT.

6.2 Submission process

An applicant must first communicate with their DOT about their anticipated RPL application and request a letter in relation to it, which must be submitted with their application. This letter should indicate the DOT's support where applicable.

Applications for RPL must be made in writing and submitted to the BTC (or delegated body). The BTC (or delegated body) will then make a recommendation on the RPL request and submit the application with their recommendation to the CFT via the College Head Office for approval. The BTC (or delegated body) will keep trainees informed about the progress of their applications.

6.2.1 Trainees who were previously assessed by CSIMGE

All applicants for RPL must follow the process set out in this policy and procedure. Therefore, RPL applicants who have applied for and enrolled in training as part of the RANZCP Fellowship Program after assessment by the Committee for Specialist International Medical Graduate Education (CSIMGE) must complete each step and supply all required documentation with their application.

6.3 The application

An applicant is required to demonstrate how the training time and work experiences previously undertaken map to the relevant time and competencies (i.e. EPAs and centrally administered summative assessments) under the RANZCP Fellowship Regulations 2012.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to lodge the application on the appropriate form and to provide all relevant supporting documentation for their RPL assessment. Applications sent to the BTC (or delegated body) and then on to the College Head Office without the necessary supporting documentation may be returned to the applicant as incomplete and may not be submitted to the CFT for consideration.

Applications for RPL must include the following supporting documentation:

- the RPL application form
- a cover letter summarising the application and describing how the trainee has achieved the equivalent to the time, learning outcomes, competencies (for example EPAs) or any centrally administered summative assessment requirements of the RANZCP Fellowship Program for which the trainee is requesting RPL
- a letter from the trainee's Director of Training indicating whether they support the application
- all certificates of completion or transcripts showing the dates of each training component and the supervisor verification of each experience where relevant
- verification of hours of supervision during any training time for which RPL is requested (e.g. supervisor(s) reports)
- verification of participation in the locally approved formal educational program where relevant
- verification of employment during the training time for which RPL is requested
- a copy of the abstract of any doctoral thesis, research Masters or Honours thesis in a field relevant to psychiatry or mental health or published article relevant to psychiatry or mental health where relevant
- evidence supporting the reason for delayed enrolment in the RANZCP Fellowship Program while training in Australia or New Zealand where relevant.

6.4 Fee

Once the RPL application has been forwarded to the College Head Office, the Training Department will contact the applicant regarding payment of the RPL application fee. An applicant should then submit their completed Fee Payment Form to the Training Department.

The payable RPL application fee will be as per the current Training Administration Fee Schedule at the time of the request for RPL.

As stated in point 6.0, an application for RPL will not be considered or granted by the CFT until all fees have been paid.

6.5 RPL applications for Certificates of Advanced Training

Applicants who have undertaken training that is substantially equivalent to Certificate training may generally be granted exemption from a maximum of 12 months FTE of Certificate training time and particular EPAs or other elements of the Certificate of Advanced Training on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of a RANZCP Fellowship Program trainee applying for RPL for Certificate training, this application must be made in writing and submitted to the BTC (or delegated body) as part of their RANZCP Fellowship Program RPL application, (no more than 6 months after the date on which they commence training in the RANZCP Fellowship Program, i.e. the day they start accruing accredited training time or start a break-in-training) as per point 6.1. Any extension to this deadline must be approved by the CFT.

In the case of a Fellow applying for RPL for Certificate training, this application must be made in writing and submitted to the BTC (or delegated body) no more than 6 months after the date on which they commence training towards the Certificate of Advanced Training or start a break-in-training.

The BTC (or delegated body) will then make a recommendation on the RPL request and submit the application with their recommendation to the relevant SAT via the College Head Office for review.

The SAT will review the application and make a decision whether to approve the RPL request. RPL requests that are for more than 12 months FTE of Certificate training will be forwarded to the CFT for consideration and approval. Approval for more than 12 months FTE of Certificate training will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and on a case-by-case basis.

An application for RPL against a Certificate of Advanced Training must demonstrate the achievement of all relevant competencies and must be endorsed with a SAT recommendation in order to be approved.

6.6 Prospective applications for overseas training while on a break-in-training

Trainees planning to undertake training overseas during a substantial break-in-training must apply prospectively to the BTC (or delegated body) and then CFT (as in point 5.2) for in-principle approval to undertake experiences and learning outside the College training program. In order to be eligible for RPL, this application for in-principle approval must be submitted prior to undertaking the overseas training.

Prospective applications for RPL for training completed overseas during a break-in-training must include the following:

- a letter from the relevant College of Psychiatrists or comparable organisation confirming that the training post is approved as part of their overall training program
- a letter from the relevant employing authority certifying that the position has been offered
- full details of the intended length of stay, institution and type of training
- letters from overseas supervisors detailing the supervision arrangements.

Payment is not required with the prospective application; fees will be payable upon the trainee's return and subsequent application for RPL.

6.6.1 Subsequent application for RPL on return

An approved prospective application must be followed by subsequent application for RPL with the full RPL fee payable upon returning from the break-in-training (following the submission process outlined in points 6.2– 6.4).

Prospective, in-principle approval of a non-RANZCP training plan does not guarantee that RPL will be granted. Applicants will need to provide evidence that training undertaken overseas was substantially equivalent to the required elements of the RANZCP Fellowship Program.

6.7 Demonstration of competency and RPL

Where necessary, an applicant for RPL may be required to undertake a Workplace-based Assessment (WBA) to demonstrate the achievement and maintenance of the relevant competencies prior to their RPL being confirmed.

Should either the BTC (or delegated body) or the CFT determine that a WBA is required; the trainee is responsible for the organisation and demonstration of this competency assessment within the time period indicated by the BTC (or delegated body) or CFT.

6.8 RPL for summative assessments

RPL may be approved for centrally administered summative assessments where it is confirmed that there is substantial equivalency between the assessment to be recognised as part of RPL and the corresponding RANZCP Fellowship Program assessment. Where RPL is requested for summative assessments, the CFT will consult with the Committee for Examinations (CFE) prior to making a decision whether to grant exemption from the relevant assessments.

RPL will not be granted for the Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Examination, Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) Examination, Critical Essay Question (CEQ) Examination, Essay-style Examination (offered prior to August 2021) or Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

For the purposes of RPL for the Scholarly Project, a research project must fulfil the requirements detailed in the Scholarly Project Policy and Procedure (13.1) – Exemption section (Procedure point 15) in order to be considered substantially equivalent for the granting of RPL.

Comparability in the following assessment attributes may be required to demonstrate equivalency:

- Quality control: accuracy and validity of marking, external review of assessment standards, and comparability
- Standard: the level to which the assessment is set (i.e. the standard expected at the end of Stage 3)
- Content: the curriculum coverage
- Duration and number of assessments
- Type of assessment undergone: for example, a case study submission, a research project.

7.0 The RPL decision-making process

The CFT shall approve RPL applications on a case-by-case basis and after engagement with the CFE where relevant.

The following shall be determined:

- whether or not to allow RPL for specific components of training or assessment
- whether or not to request a WBA be undertaken to confirm competency
- whether to offer in-principle approval of overseas training to be undertaken while on a break-in-training

Trainees will be notified in writing of the outcome of their RPL application once the determination has been made by the CFT.

A summary of the CFT RPL decisions shall be noted by the Education Committee (EC).

7.1 Appointment in training posts

The appointment of trainees to accredited training posts is at the discretion of the BTC (or delegated body) and is contingent on post availability. Once RPL is granted, the BTC (or delegated body) may not be able to accommodate changes to post allocations immediately and the trainee may be required to continue in their current training post.

8.0 Relation to the Trainee Progress Trajectory

A trainee's progress along the Trainee Progress Trajectory (as per the Progression through Training Policy [6.1]) will be adjusted to reflect the exemption from any training time granted as a result of a successful RPL application. For example, a trainee who is granted exemption from 12 months FTE of Stage 1 adult psychiatry including 6 months FTE in an acute setting with corresponding OCAs and EPAs (i.e. all Stage 1 training) will be considered to have completed 12 months FTE in relation to the Progression through Training Policy deadlines. They will also be considered to have undertaken 12 calendar months training in relation to the Failure to Progress Policy maximum training time requirements.

Refer to the Trainee Progress Trajectory, available on the College website, for a visual representation of deadlines aligned to training time.

9.0 Reviews of decisions

Any request by trainees for review of a decision in relation to an application for RPL should follow the education review process (X.X).

10.0 Monitoring, evaluation and review

The EC shall implement, monitor and review this policy and report on anomalies and issues as these arise. The Committee for Educational Quality and Reporting (CEQR) will provide advice to the EC as to the ongoing implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

This policy and procedure document will be reviewed biennially and updated as required.

11.0 Associated documents

11.1 Regulation: **14.1** Recognition of Prior Learning Education Training Regulation

11.2 Policy:

- 8.1** Entrustable Professional Activity Policy
- 15.1** Workplace-based Assessment Policy
- 11.1** Psychotherapy Written Case Policy
- 13.1** Scholarly Project Policy

11.3 Procedure:

- 8.1** Entrustable Professional Activity Procedure
- 15.1** Workplace-based Assessment Procedure
- 11.1** Psychotherapy Written Case Procedure
- 13.1** Scholarly Project Procedure

11.4 Forms: Recognition of prior learning form – Stage 1 and 2
Fee payment form

11.5 Other: RANZCP training and administration fee schedule

Document control

Contact:		Project Officer, Education and Training	
Date	Version	Approver	Description
01/03/12	v.1.12	General Council	First version approved by General Council – Out of session March 1, 2012
18/11/12	v.2.0	General Council	Edits made at the recommendation of the CFT; approved by GC GC2012/4 – R58.
08/02/14	v.3.0	RANZCP Board	Significant revisions to entire policy to clarify RPL. Reviewed by TRC 28/11/13. Approved by CFT out of session 3/12/13. Approved by EC out of session 17/12/13. Approved by CGRC 23/01/14. Approved by RANZCP Board B2014/1 – R15.

30/09/14	v.4.0	RANZCP Board	Edits to clarify the date on which the '6-month clock' during which a trainee can apply for RPL starts ticking to ensure it can be tracked by the Training Department, that applications won't be assessed w/o payment, that RPL will generally not be granted for exams, that items for consideration must have been done in the past 8 years (except SP), to clarify that the granting of training time will move a trainee along the Training Progress Trajectory, to clarify the maximum time possible for RPL and the submission of Certificate RPL applications. Approved by CFT 28/8/14. Reviewed by CGRC 9/9/14. Approved by EC 19/9/14. Approved by RANZCP Board out of session 30/9/14.
21/05/16	v.4.1	RANZCP Board	Clarification provided in paragraph 5.1.1i regarding time not eligible for RPL after date of general registration. Once a trainee has General Registration, they are effectively the same as an AU/NZ trainee. Approved CFT 19/02/2016, EC 29/04/2016. Reviewed CGRC 28/04/2016. Approved RANZCP Board 21/05/2016.
20/07/16	v.4.2	RANZCP Board	Revised to reflect targeted learning/targeted learning plan (formally remediation/remediation plan) and standard expected at End of stage 3 (formally junior consultant standard) terminology changes. EC approved 29/04/2016. CGRC reviewed 28/04/2016. RANZCP Board approved B2016/4.
16/06/18	v.4.3	RANZCP Board	Revised with addition of paragraph 5.3, Trainees who elect to move zones between New Zealand and Australia while training may be subject to restrictions in practice due to requirements to obtain medical registration in the new country. Trainees may be required to undergo supervised placement as part of their requirements to attain medical registration with either the MBA or MCNZ. EC approved 11/05/2018. RANZCP BOARD approved 2018/4 R15.
10/10/2019	v.4.4	n/a	Fixed incorrect numbering section under 6.6.1, following the submission process from point <u>5.2-5.4</u> changed to <u>6.2- 6.4</u> .
23/04/2021	v.4.5	RANZCP Board	Amendments of the policy as a result of decoupling the previous Essay-style Examination into two independent examinations: Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) Examination and Critical Essay Questions (CEQ) Examination. (EC approved 23/04/2021)

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NEXT REVIEW