

# Policy and Procedure

## Continuing Professional Development - Exemptions



The Royal  
Australian &  
New Zealand  
College of  
Psychiatrists



|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Authorising Body:</b>       | Board   |
| <b>Responsible Committee:</b>  | Education Committee   |
| <b>Responsible Department:</b> | Education and Training  |
| <b>Document Code:</b>          | <b>POL-PRC Continuing Professional Development - Exemptions</b> |

### 1.0 Introduction

#### Overview

The RANZCP Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program provides a pathway for participants to appraise and further develop professional practice, maintain knowledge, skills, and performance standards, and provide high quality, safe psychiatric care. It is an essential part of public assurance of the ongoing competence of members and the quality of their practice.

Effective January 2023, the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) registration standard requires all doctors registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to meet the CPD program requirements of their accredited CPD “Home”.

Also from 1 January 2023, the RANZCP has been accredited by the Australian Medical Council (AMC) as a CPD Home in Australia for doctors practising in the scope of psychiatry. The RANZCP sets the recognised standard for CPD for psychiatrists in Australia and New Zealand as delegated by the MBA and the MCNZ.

#### Responsibilities

The RANZCP assists its membership achieve registration by providing the CPD program, however it cannot waive the regulators’ requirements for registration as a medical practitioner.

It is every individual member’s responsibility to ensure that they meet the required registration standard annually, and to be acquainted with any re-entry criteria required by the registration bodies for return to clinical practice.

More guidance is available on the College website: [Guidance for leave and return to practice | RANZCP](#).

#### Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the processes for deferral/ exemption for participation in the RANZCP CPD program, including application, relevant situations and circumstances, allowed duration, required documentation, or approval responsibilities.

#### Policy

The RANZCP will continue to work with participants in Australia to meet current requirements of the MBA’s 2023 Registration Standard Continuous Professional Development and with participants in New Zealand, to meet the recertification requirements of the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ)

CPD is a mandatory annual activity required to continue registration as a medical practitioner that is undertaken by RANZCP Fellows and Affiliates as required by the MBA and MCNZ.

Upon application, in certain situations as outlined in this Policy, the RANZCP may defer participation in the RANZCP CPD program.

Applications for deferral/exemption, withdrawal, or retirement from participation in the RANZCP CPD program must be made using the appropriate application form. This may be the deferral/withdrawal form, published on the RANZCP website via CPD for RANZCP Members | RANZCP, or the FRANZCP Declaration of Retirement Form.

RANZCP Fellows and Affiliates and Associates on a Break in Training may apply to the CCPD for an exemption from participation in the CPD program under certain circumstances and for a maximum of twelve months of a CPD year.

Participants in the RANZCP CPD Program are expected to adhere to the [RANZCP Code of Conduct](#) and the [RANZCP Code of Ethics](#).

## Procedures

### 2.0 The CPD Program

The RANZCP CPD Program aims to facilitate and support activities that promote engagement, reflection on current practice, and the ongoing development of skills and knowledge. The program embraces adult and lifelong learning principles and aims to be:

- flexible and inclusive of a wide range of learning activities
- supportive of participants
- responsive to feedback, to audit of the program and to research in the evolving field of CPD.

#### 2.1 Completion of the Program

The RANZCP requires that all Fellows and Affiliates and Certificants undertake annual CPD and meet the requirements of the CPD program. As of 2023 the 50-hour RANZCP program includes minimum requirements of:

- Section 1: - 2 hours for the development of a Professional Development Plan (PDP)
- Section 2: - 10 hours of Formal Peer Review Activities\*
- Section 3: - 5 hours of Practice Improvement / Measuring Outcomes activities\*
- Section 4: - 12.5 hours of educational activities or self-guided learning
- Section 5: - an additional 12.5 hours from sections 2, 3 or 4 to make up a total of 50 hours.

\*For the trainees on a Break in Training CPD Program: - \*Sections 2 and 3 contribute to “reviewing performance and measuring outcomes” activities which together are required for a total minimum of 23 hours.

#### Certificants of Postgraduate Training in Clinical Psychiatry CPD completion requirements:

- 5 hours of formal Peer Review Activities (Section 2)
- 5 hours combined over Practice Improvement/ Measuring Outcomes and/or Self-Guided Learning (Section 3 and/or 4)

### 3.0 Exemption from Participation in the RANZCP Specialist CPD Program

**3.1** The RANZCP’s requirement for annual CPD participation and completion aligns with those of the two regulatory bodies in Australia and New Zealand (i.e. the MBA and MCNZ) for the maintenance of specialist or vocational scope of practice registration.

- 3.2 RANZCP Fellows and Affiliates may apply to the CCPD for an exemption from participation in the CPD program under certain circumstances and for a maximum of twelve months of a CPD year.
- 3.3 Applications for deferral/exemption, withdrawal, or retirement from participation in the RANZCP CPD program must be made using the appropriate application form. This may be the deferral/withdrawal form, published on the RANZCP website via [CPD for RANZCP Members | RANZCP](#), or the [FRANZCP Declaration of Retirement Form](#).
- 3.4 Applications will be considered under the authority of the Committee for Continuing Professional Development (CCPD).
- 3.5 The applicant must submit a written application citing one of the grounds for exemption and the expected duration of non-participation and provide evidence.
- 3.6 Where the exemption from CPD participation requested is for an extended period, RANZCP Fellows and Affiliates will need to be acquainted with any re-entry criteria required by the registration bodies for return to clinical practice.
- 3.7 Fellows and Affiliates who no longer hold a practising certificate and have formally advised the RANZCP of their retirement, through the completion of the [FRANZCP Declaration of Retirement Form](#) and its acceptance by the RANZCP Board, are not required to complete the annual CPD program.

- 3.7.1 Continued participation of retired Fellows and Affiliates in CPD is optional. Continued access to My CPD and its PRG functions, and Learn*it*, requires continued active enrolment which will usually generate automated reminders to complete CPD. Such reminders can be disregarded if participation in the program is voluntary and not required for medical registration.
  - 3.7.2 Fellows and Affiliates, whose retirement has been formally processed will be offered the option of remaining active in CPD.
  - 3.7.3 Fellows and Affiliates who choose not to remain active in CPD will continue to have access to the online resources, including Learn*it*, but will not have access to My CPD and its PRG functions.
  - 3.7.4 Fellows and Affiliates who have completed a Declaration of Retirement Form will remain enrolled in the CPD program until their status on the relevant Medical Register is listed as non-practising, or their name is no longer on the Register, Obligations for CPD remain while a medical practitioner remains on the relevant Medical Register and may be subject to pro rata arrangements as outlined in Clause 5.4.
- 3.8 Fellows who have non-practising specialist registration (in Australia) or do not hold a current practising certificate (in New Zealand) are not required to complete the CPD program but may choose to do so.
- 3.8.1 As per the [FRANZCP Declaration of Retirement Form \(cognitofirms.com\)](http://cognitofirms.com): "A Fellow participating in any of the activities outlined in the definition of Practice, irrespective of remuneration, frequency or duration, must remain a practising Fellow of the RANZCP and continue to complete full Continuing Professional Development requirements". This includes Fellows who do not hold specialist medical registration but retain generalist medical registration.

#### 4.0 Grounds for Temporary Exemption

- 4.1 Temporary exemptions from completing requirements of the CPD program may be provided by the RANZCP for extenuating circumstances including:
- 4.1.1 bereavement
  - 4.1.2 illness
  - 4.1.3 parental leave
  - 4.1.4 supporting ill family members, including support as carers
  - 4.1.5 full time study
  - 4.1.6 Other special circumstances, including leave for cultural responsibilities
- 4.2 CPD deferral/exemption will only be granted in accordance with the Policy and with the expectation that the Fellow or Affiliate is not practising in any capacity during the period for which exemption is requested. There may be capacity for consideration of this clause, for example on compassionate grounds, however any variation should be discussed by the Fellow or Affiliate with their medical registration authority.
- 4.3 When considering applications for exemptions, the CCPD will consider the period of absence from practice and the time available for the completion of CPD requirements.

#### 5.0 Duration of Temporary Exemptions

- 5.1 Temporary exemptions are typically granted for periods of up to 12 months. For CPD deferrals longer than 12 months, the CCPD will be formally consulted, and the applicant is advised to also discuss their circumstances with their medical registration authority, as prolonged absence from practice may impact on the applicant's ability to meet the recency of practice registration requirements.
- a) CCPD can only grant exemption/variation for a maximum of three (3) consecutive years.
- 5.2 Where an exemption for 12 months of a CPD (calendar) year is requested (and accompanied by no work as a medical practitioner), an exemption from the full annual CPD requirements will generally be granted. Otherwise, generally, pro-rata completion of annual activities per CPD (calendar) year will be required. The table below is based on advice from Ahpra.

**From 2025:**

| Approved exemption length                  | Total hours required | Section 1<br>PDP | Section 2<br>Formal Peer Review | Section 3<br>Practice improvement | Section 4<br>Self-guided learning | Section 5<br>Additional hours |
|--|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Less than 6 months</b>                  | 50                   | 2                | Minimum 10 hours                | Minimum 5 hours                   | 12.5                              | 12.5                          |
|  |                      |                  | Combined total of 23 hours      |                                   |                                   |                               |
| <b>6 months - but less than 7 months</b>   | 26                   | 2                | 7.5                             | 5                                 | 6                                 | 5.5                           |
| <b>7 months - but less than 8 months</b>   | 22                   | 2                | 5                               | 5                                 | 5                                 | 5                             |
| <b>8 months - But less than 9 months</b>   | 18                   | 2                | 5                               | 3                                 | 4                                 | 4                             |
| <b>9 months - But less than 10 months</b>  | 14                   | 2                | 4                               | 2                                 | 3                                 | 3                             |
| <b>10 months - But less than 11 months</b> | 10                   | 2                | 4                               | 0                                 | 2                                 | 2                             |
| <b>11 months - But less than 12 months</b> | 6                    | 2                | 2                               | 0                                 | 1                                 | 1                             |
| <b>12 months</b>                           | 0                    | 0                | 0                               | 0                                 | 0                                 | 0                             |

- 5.3** Exemptions for less than six (6) months will generally be granted only under certain circumstances, for example maternity leave that spans two CPD years.
- a) Where a period of requested exemption spans two calendar years and is less than six months in each year, but totals six months or more overall, consideration for exemption/deferral from the RANZCP CPD program will be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with this policy.
- 5.4** Pro rata requirements will be applied to new Fellows, according to the date on which they are admitted to the Fellowship. Refer Clause 6.4.
- 5.5** Members who intend to retire during a calendar year are required to complete CPD activities until the time that they are retired and no longer hold practising medical registration. It would be expected that this would result in an appropriately tailored pro rata program for that year.

## **6.0 Special exemptions from part or whole of the CPD program**

### **6.1 Dual College membership**

- 6.1.1 RANZCP Fellows who hold dual Fellowship with another College and are not working in the field of psychiatry in any capacity, may be eligible for exemption from the full program.
- 6.1.2 Exemption from the full CPD program is granted only while the RANZCP Fellow holds non-practising specialist registration (in Australia) or does not have a current practising certificate in the vocational scope of psychiatry (in New Zealand).
- 6.1.3 Fellows exempt under this clause will need to provide evidence of completion of the CPD program of their other College annually, to meet the CPD requirements of the RANZCP.
- 6.1.4 On return to practice as a psychiatrist, the Fellow must be aware of the requirements of the regulatory bodies and the RANZCP for recency of practice and CPD. The RANZCP has a refresher program to support safe return to specialist work in psychiatry ([Refresher and remediation programs | RANZCP](#)).
- 6.1.5 Fellows with dual College membership who continue to work in any capacity in the field of psychiatry must adhere to all annual requirements of the RANZCP program.
- 6.1.6 Some CPD activities undertaken by dual Fellows may be reportable for both Colleges' programs and guidance regarding this should be sought from the CPD team.

### **6.2 Fellows working overseas**

- 6.2.1 Fellows working overseas (i.e. Overseas Fellows) participating in a local and equivalent CPD program overseas, who do not hold a current practising certificate for the specialty of psychiatry in New Zealand, or do not hold practising specialist registration in Australia, are not required to complete the RANZCP CPD program.
- 6.2.1.1 Evidence of CPD registration and completion of the requirements of the overseas program must be provided to the RANZCP CCPD annually for College membership purposes.
- 6.2.2 Fellows residing overseas who retain specialist practising registration in Australia, or a current practising certificate for New Zealand in the vocational scope of psychiatry, must meet the requirements of the RANZCP CPD program, including completion of their online My CPD Record.
- 6.2.2.1 For a Fellow's participation in overseas CPD programs to be recognised as fulfilling the requirements of the RANZCP program, evidence of CPD activity, mapped to the RANZCP program and logged in My CPD, must be provided.
- 6.2.3 Certificates of completion of the CPD programs of international Colleges of Psychiatry, for example the Royal College of Psychiatrists (United Kingdom) or the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, are not automatically recognised as fulfilling the requirements of the RANZCP program.
- 6.2.4 To ensure Peer Review requirements are met, an Overseas Fellow who is required to complete the RANZCP CPD program, and who intends to achieve Section 2 via 2.1

(Peer Review Groups), should liaise with the CPD team for the recognition of any local Peer Review Group/s (PRGs) and the logging of that activity in My CPD.

### 6.3 Fellows and Affiliates involved only in specific, non-clinical areas of practice

- 6.3.1 Non-clinical areas of practice include, for example, education, research, administration, and leadership positions with no direct patient contact or potential to influence direct patient care.
- 6.3.2 Fellows and Affiliates who do not undertake any direct or indirect clinical work (e.g. supervision of another clinician), or provision of advice regarding ongoing patient care, may apply for partial exemption from the RANZCP CPD Program.
- 6.3.3 Fellows and Affiliates exempted under this clause are expected to develop a PDP and complete sections 4 and 5. (A total of 35 hours annually).
- 6.3.4 All Fellows and Affiliates applying for this category must submit a written application outlining their current non-clinical role and provide evidence, for example a letter from their employer.

### 6.4 New Fellows

- 6.4.1 New Fellows admitted to the Fellowship will be enrolled in the CPD Program but may not have to meet the annual requirements for that year.
- 6.4.2 Participation will be pro rata for the number of months remaining in the CPD year of admission to Fellowship.

| Fellowship Round | The actual period of CPD enrolment | CPD program  |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| January          | 11 months                          | Full program   |
| February         | 10 months                          | Full program   |
| March            | 9 months                           | 75% program  |
| April            | 8 months                           | 66% program  |
| May              | 7 months                           | 66% program  |
| June             | 6 months                           | 50% program  |
| July             | 5 months                           | 50% program  |
| August           | 4 months                           | 33% program  |
| September        | 3 months                           | 25% program  |
| October          | 2 months                           | Exemption with encouragement to record any relevant activity |
| November         | 1 months                           | Exemption with encouragement to record any relevant activity |
| December         | -                                  |  |

### 6.5 Affiliates or non-members (individuals), joining the program part way through the year

- 6.5.1 Affiliates or non-RANZCP members (individuals), joining the program part way through the calendar year will be expected to complete pro rata requirements of the annual program for that year.
- 6.5.2 Participation will be pro rata for the number of months remaining in the CPD year of enrolment.

## **6.6 Other requests for a variation to the full program will be considered by the CCPD according to individual circumstances**

6.6.1 Requests for variation to the full RANZCP CPD program may be made by individuals, for example those who have had a period of leave, or groups of psychiatrists.

## **6.7 Associates (Trainees) who are not actively training who are participating in the RANZCP CPD program**

6.7.1 Trainees who are not actively training and are enrolled in the RANZCP CPD program are covered by the provisions of this exemption policy during the time they are enrolled in the CPD program.

## **7.0 Special Consideration**

7.1 The CCPD may grant special temporary exemptions for other circumstances not previously outlined in this policy.

7.2 Any exemptions made under this clause should not compromise the medical registration of the member, who will be advised to seek advice from the relevant regulator where the CCPD has concerns that registration standards may not be met.

7.3 Any exemptions made under this clause will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the CCPD.

7.4 Application for consideration of an exemption under this clause must be made in writing to the CCPD with appropriate evidence provided.

## **8.0 Applications for Exemption**

8.1 Applications should be made in advance of the period of exemption requested.

8.2 Retrospective requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

8.3 Additional information may be requested by the CCPD to support an application.

8.4 Possible outcomes of requests for exemptions will be:

- Approved
- Declined
- Deferred pending further information.

8.5 Notification of outcomes will be given in writing.

## **9.0 Definitions**

9.1 Peer: for the purposes of the peer review component of the RANZCP CPD Program (including peer review groups, practice visits and supervision), a peer is a specialist psychiatrist in practice.

9.2 Fellow: qualified psychiatrists who have successfully completed the RANZCP training program or otherwise have met the requirements for Fellowship of the RANZCP and who have maintained membership of the RANZCP by payment of the appropriate annual membership fee.

9.3 Affiliate: overseas-trained psychiatrists (OTPs) currently working in psychiatry in Australia or New Zealand and who have maintained membership of the RANZCP by payment of the appropriate annual membership fee.

9.4 Individual: registered medical practitioners who are neither Fellows nor Affiliates who choose to participate in the RANZCP CPD Program and who have paid the appropriate fee. These medical practitioners may have specialist psychiatry training but are not a Fellow or Affiliate of the RANZCP. (Individual participation in CPD does not indicate membership of the RANZCP).

9.5 Certificants: a new category of CPD participants, introduced in 2026. They are graduates of the Certificate of Postgraduate Training in Clinical Psychiatry.

- 9.6 Associate:** a trainee currently completing the RANZCP training program in psychiatry.
- Associates (Trainees) who are actively training meet the requirements of the registration standard through their participation in the Fellowship program implicitly and therefore are not required to undertake CPD activities.
  - Australian Associates (Trainees) who are not actively training and who are on a prolonged Break in Training (BiT), are required to complete a modified CPD Program for Australian Trainees on a prolonged Break in Training to meet the MBA's registration standard. The College will automatically enrol them in the RANZCP modified CPD program, however, they may choose to complete CPD with a different CPD Home, at their own cost.
  - New Zealand Associates (Trainees) not in active training roles must meet their CPD requirements through Best Practice Advocacy Centre New Zealand (BPAC NZ) as outlined by the Medical Council of New Zealand.
- 9.7 Active Training:** this is defined as 3 months of training plus the submission of an InTraining Assessment. Note that the ITA does not have to have been passed.
- 9.8 Member:** members of the RANZCP including Fellows, Affiliates and Associates.
- 9.9 Participants:** Fellows, Affiliates, Individuals, Associates on a prolonged Break in Training and Certificants who are enrolled in the RANZCP CPD Program.
- 9.10 Fellow Exempt:** any Fellow who has completed 30 years of membership and has reached the age of 65, who has been granted by the Board an exemption from further fees.
- 9.11 CME:** continuing medical education. This term is used to refer to educational activities that focus on medical knowledge
- 9.12 CPD:** Continuing professional development. This term is used to refer to a process of lifelong learning that enables psychiatrists to maintain their ability to practice. It is broader than the acquisition of medical knowledge and recognises that health care is delivered in the context of a system involving many parts, including patients
- 9.13 CCPD:** Committee for Continuing Professional Development, which is the Committee of the RANZCP that oversees the CPD program
- 9.14 MBA:** Medical Board of Australia – the registration board for medical doctors
- 9.15 AHPRA:** Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency – the body supporting the 15 national health practitioner registration boards, including the MBA
- 9.16 AMC:** Australian Medical Council – the independent national standards body in Australia for medical education and training.
- 9.17 MCNZ:** Medical Council of New Zealand –the registration authority for New Zealand and the independent standards body for New Zealand for medical education and training.
- 9.18 BPAC NZ:** Best Practice Advocacy Centre New Zealand – an independent, not-for-profit organisation with the role of delivering educational and continuing professional development programs to medical and other health practitioners in New Zealand.

## 10. Review of Decisions

Participants who aren't satisfied with the outcome of any decision made by RANZCP or its Committees under this Policy, may apply for reconsideration or review in accordance with the RANZCP Review, Reconsideration and Appeal Policy and Procedure, available on the RANZCP Appeals and Complaints webpage.

### Early Resolution

The College also implements an Early Resolution Policy, which Trainees and SIMGs or CPD participants are advised to try and use first, before starting the formal Review, Reconsideration and Appeals proceedings. More information about the Early Resolution process and how to apply can be found on [Disputing a training and assessment decision \(Early Resolution\) | RANZCP](#) webpage.

## 11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- The Education Committee shall oversee the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of this policy.
- This policy will be reviewed every three years or as necessary and updated as required.

### Associated Documents

[Policy for CPD](#)

[Policy-and-procedure-for-cpd-claims \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[Policy and Procedure for CPD Audit \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[Policy and Procedure for CPD Peer Review Activities \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[CPD Program Guide 2026 \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[cpd-program\\_section-3\\_faq.aspx \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[Recertification and professional development | Medical Council \(mcnz.org.nz\)](#)

[Committee for Continuing Professional Development Regulations \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[Policy - Retiring from practice | RANZCP](#)

[Exit and Re-entry Policy and Procedure](#)

[Application for CPD deferral / exemption](#)

[FRANZCP Declaration of Retirement Form](#)

### Revision Record

|                          |                                   |                 |  |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>Contact:</b>          | Manager, CPD and Projects         |                 |  |
| <b>Policy owner:</b>     | Education and Training Department |                 |  |
| <b>Date of approval:</b> | <b>Version</b>                    | <b>Approver</b> | <b>Description</b>   |
| 18/03/2026               | 3.1                               | EC Chair        | Minor amendments: - Section 1 – added new headings for better organizing of existing information; - 2.1- updated information and added CPD completion requirements for Certificants; - added 5.1a) – update regarding consecutive exemptions according to Ahpra’s advice (Ahpra email correspondence to CCPD meeting); - 5.3 – added 5.3a) and updated according to Ahpra’s advice to CPD Managers (@ 13/11/2025 meeting); - removed Table2023; - 9.5 & 9.9 - added and defined Certificants, and added associates on a prolonged Break in Training;- 9.6 – added, updated and clarified CPD requirements for Australian and NZ associates on a prolonged break in training; - removed references to Professional Performance Framework (PPF) as redundant and replaced, where necessary with the MBA’s 2023 Registration Standard CPD; - updated links throughout; - and minor editing updates to align with College Education documents. |
| 19/05/2024               | 3.0                               | B2024/4 R10     | Revised to clarify practising registration implications, address 2023 registration standard changes, pro rata for New Fellows and trainees on break-in-training.   |
| 27/05/22                 | 2.0                               | EC Chair        | Reviewed and updated to describe pro rata requirements.  |
| 17/11/20                 | 1.0                               | B2020/16 R9     | New Document.  |
| Mar 2029                 |                                   |                 | Next review  |