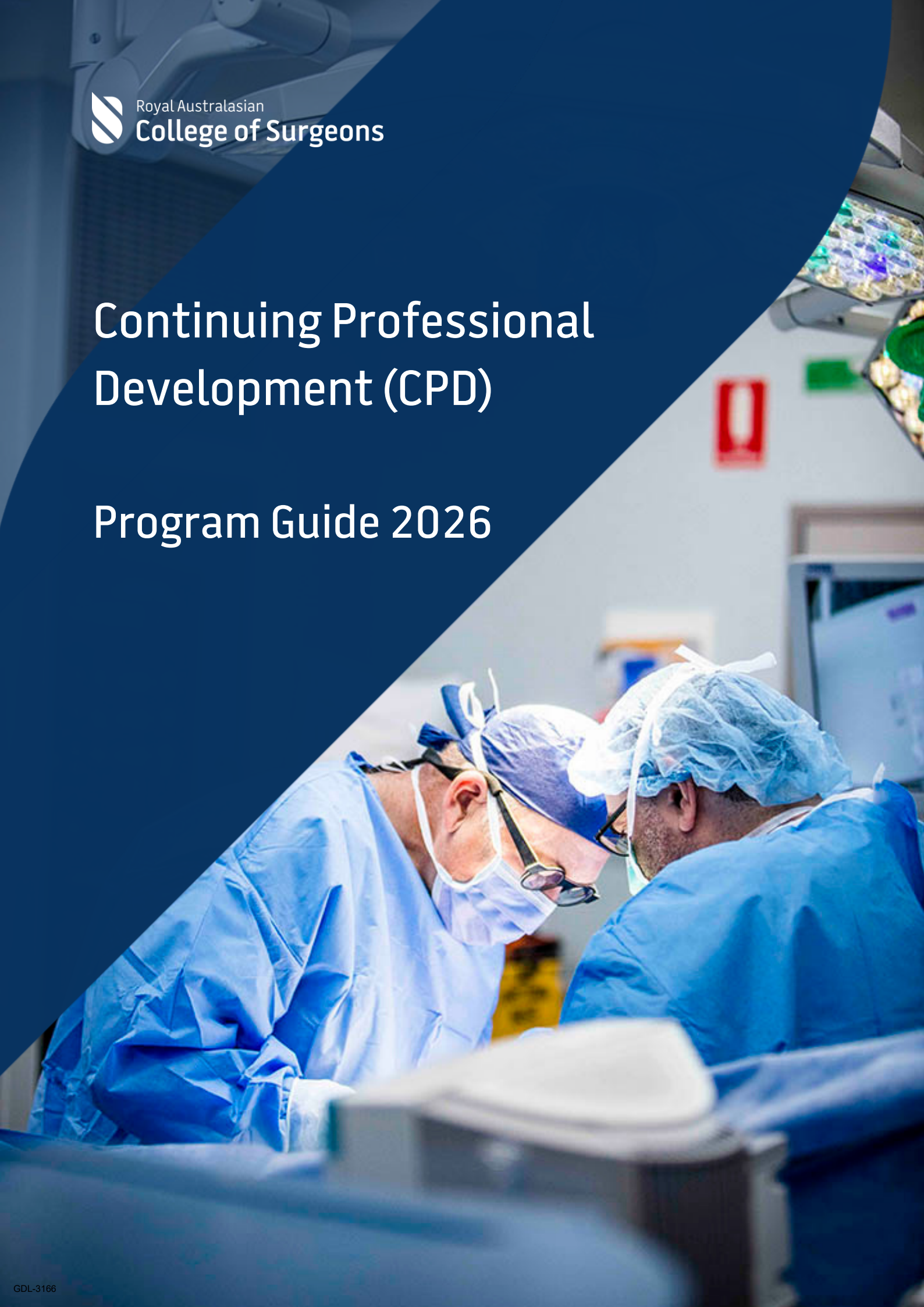


Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Program Guide 2026



RACS acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people as the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and respects their continuing connection to culture, land, waterways, community and family.

As a bi-national college, RACS respects Ngā Iwi Māori as the Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa and is committed to upholding the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, fostering the college's relationship with Māori, supporting Māori Fellows and Trainees, and striving to improve the health of Māori.



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To ensure that users have access to the latest version of the 2026 RACS CPD Program Guide, the version (and version date) of the document appears within. There will be periodic updates to this document so please consider this if printing or downloading the document. RACS only provides this document online and not in print.

A Message from the Chairs

As the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, RACS brings almost a century of expertise in supporting the surgical profession to uphold the highest standards of practice and pursue lifelong learning.

Since the term Continuing Medical Education was coined in the 1970s, RACS has been at the forefront of advancing recertification, surgical audit and lifelong learning, helping shape the standards that underpin surgical excellence today.

Developed by surgeons for surgeons, our CPD Program has evolved continuously to support surgeons across all nine surgical specialties, in both public and private practice, and at every stage of their professional journey.

Wherever you are in your surgical career, RACS is your partner in professional growth, helping you stay current, maintain excellence and continue delivering the highest quality care to your patients.

Help and Support:

RACS provides a self-service online portal and mobile app to support logging and reporting CPD activity. See page 20 for more information.

RACS also has staff situated in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, who are here to provide support throughout the year and can be contacted on:

Phone: +61 3 9249 1282 / +64 4 595 1432
Email: CPD.College@surgeons.org

Professor Mark Ashton FRACS
Chair, Professional Standards &
Fellowship Services Committee

Dr Roxanne Wu FRACS
Professional Standards Committee

Overview

The Medical Board of Australia (MBA) and the Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa – Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) require registered medical practitioners to undertake an annual program of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) that is relevant to the practitioner's scope of practice.

To support this objective the MBA and MCNZ set CPD requirements that all medical practitioners must meet to be eligible for on-going medical registration.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, RACS is the only recognised provider of a CPD Program for surgeons.

In Australia, the MBA recognises CPD Programs that meet the minimum accreditation standards set by the Australian Medical Council (AMC) and requires all medical practitioners (unless exempt) to:

- Join an AMC-accredited CPD Home before they start doing their CPD in 2026
- Choose a CPD home that is suitable for their scope of practice
- Log CPD activities with their CPD home.

As an accredited CPD Program in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, the program is available to:

- Fellows of RACS
- Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMG), including those on a pathway to RACS Fellowship
- Medical practitioners who hold vocational registration in Aotearoa New Zealand in scope of surgery
- Non-specialist PGY3+ medical practitioners who practice in a surgically affiliated scope (i.e., surgical assistants, those aspiring to become surgical trainees)

To enrol in the RACS CPD Program, a medical practitioner must hold active registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) or vocational registration and an Annual Practising Certificate (APC) with the MCNZ (for more information please see [Enrolment in the RACS CPD Program](#)).

Aims

The aims of the RACS CPD Program are to:

- Advance the individual surgeon's knowledge, skills, competence, and behavioural awareness for the benefit of patients.
- Encourage a culture of life-long learning that promotes collaboration, peer review and reflective practice.
- Ensure compliance with regulatory authority standards.

CPD Cycle

Participation in CPD is founded on a continuous cycle of learning with an emphasis on planning, participation, measuring outcomes, reflection and change as outlined in Diagram 1.

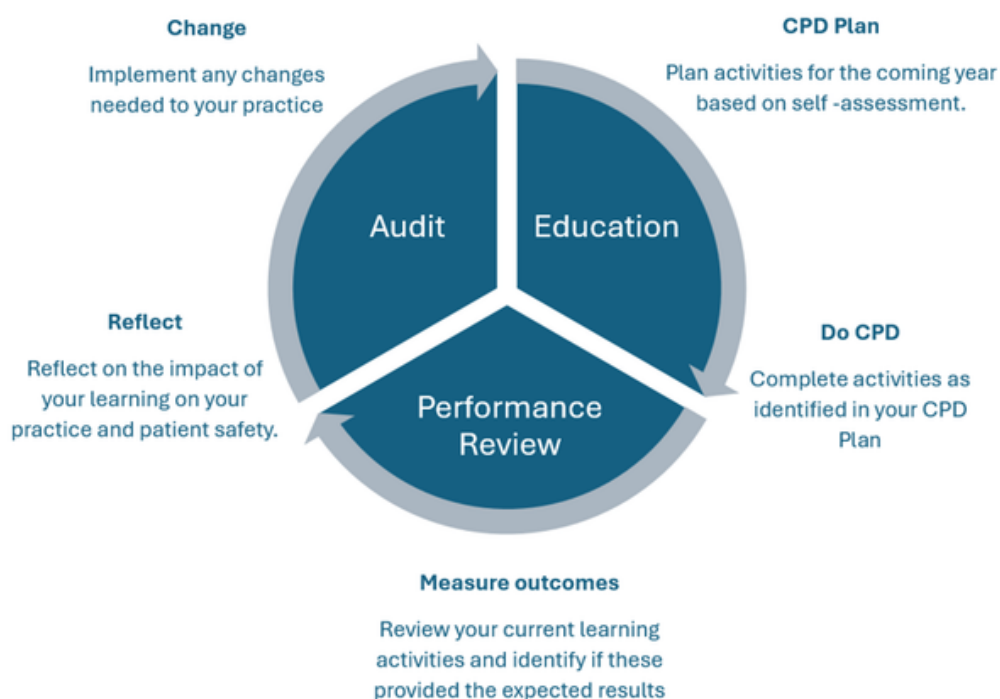


Diagram 1: CPD Cycle

Area of Practice

Participation in CPD activities should reflect a participants 'Area of Practice', often referred to as Scope of Practice.

In the RACS CPD Program, this is self-defined by the participant and reviewed at any time throughout the year. A participant's area of practice for CPD is determined by their main surgical specialty or specialties.

A list of defined areas of practice is available for a participant to select as well as an option to select other areas that form part of their practice outside of their specialty which may include teaching, supervision, medico-legal practice etc.

At least 50% of CPD each year must be relevant to a participant's area of practice. The other 50% can relate specifically to an area of practice, other medical interests or to pursue CPD that supports re-skilling or re-training.

Surgical Competencies

Participants in the RACS CPD Program are encouraged to complete activities across the breadth of the RACS surgical competencies.

These ten surgical competencies reflect the standards we hold as a profession and our commitment to the community to deliver high quality and patient-centred surgical care.

For more information about the surgical competence framework please visit: [Surgical Competence and Performance Guide](#).

What is CAPE?

CAPE is an acronym which refers to cultural safety, addressing health inequity, professionalism and ethical practice.

In Australia, the MBA requires all CPD programs to set program level requirements' relating to cultural safety, addressing health inequities, professionalism and ethical practice.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the MCNZ requires a recertification program to 'define the required participation in activities that maintain and develop the knowledge, skills and performance required for safe and appropriate practice in the relevant scope(s) of practice, this must include the areas of cultural safety, professionalism and ethical practice' and that 'cultural safety and a focus on health equity are embedded' across all CPD categories.

All participants in the RACS CPD Program must undertake at least one activity per annum in cultural safety, addressing health inequity, professionalism and ethical practice.

To support participants meeting this requirement, RACS has developed a range of resources including:

- Standards for CAPE and CPD:
 - [Cultural Safety](#)
 - [Addressing Health Inequity](#)
 - [Professionalism](#)
 - [Ethical Practice](#)
- CPD Activity Guide which highlights activities delivered by RACS that support CAPE participation ([RACS CPD Activity Guide](#))
- A list of RACS and externally delivered activities to support cultural safety professional development ([Cultural Safety Training | RACS](#))

CPD Program Requirements

The RACS CPD Program has three distinct requirements:

- Specialist High-Level Requirement - ANZASM (Australia only)
- Category Requirements
- Cultural Safety, Addressing Health Inequity, Professionalism and Ethical Practice (CAPE)

The minimum annual requirements in the RACS CPD Program are outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: RACS CPD Program Requirements

		Australia	Aotearoa New Zealand	CAPE
Specialist High Level Requirement	Audit of Surgical Mortality (ANZASM)	Yes	No	
Category Requirements	CPD Plan	Yes	Yes	Plan/Reflect
	Structured Conversation with a Peer	Optional	Yes	At least one activity in any category:
	Audit and Peer Review	10 hours		Cultural Safety
	Education Activities (min. 2 activities)	25 hours		Addressing Health Inequity
	Performance Review	15 hours		Professionalism
	Performance of Self (min. 1 activity)			Ethical Practice
	Performance Review of Others (min. 1 activity)			

Specialist High Level Requirements

Specialist high-level requirements are set by the MBA and are only applicable to participants practising in Australia.

In 2024 the MBA introduced a high-level specialist requirement for surgery:

A specialist surgeon (including all fields of specialty practice) must participate in the Australia and New Zealand Audit of Surgical Mortality (ANZASM) by completing all surgical case forms sent to the surgeon by ANZASM.

Participation in ANZASM is credited towards ANZASM and Performance Review in the RACS CPD Program (in the MBA framework, ANZASM participation is linked to 'reviewing performance and/or measuring outcomes activity').

Guidance is available on how to comply with the ANZASM requirement (please see [more information](#)). Information on how to contact your local ANZASM office for assistance with this requirement can be found in Table 2 below:

Table 2: ANZASM Contact Information

State/Territory Office	Contact
Australian Capital Territory Audit of Surgical Mortality (ACTASM)	+61 2 6285 4558 actasm@surgeons.org
Collaborative Hospitals Audit of Surgical Mortality (CHASM) (NSW)	CHASM Website: https://cec.health.nsw.gov.au/Review-incidents/mortality-review-authorised-committees/chasm
Northern Territory Audit of Surgical Mortality (NTASM)	+61 7 3249 2971 ntasm@surgeons.org
Queensland Audit of Surgical Mortality (QASM)	+61 7 3249 2971 qasm@surgeons.org
South Australian Audit of Perioperative Mortality (SAAPM)	+61 8 8239 1144 saasm@surgeons.org
Tasmanian Audit of Surgical Mortality (TASM)	+61 3 6223 8848 tasm@surgeons.org
Victorian Audit of Surgical Mortality (VASM)	+61 3 9249 1153 vasm@surgeons.org
Western Australian Audit of Surgical Mortality (WAASM)	+61 8 6389 8650 waasm@surgeons.org

Category Requirements

CPD Plan (also known as a Professional Development Plan)

The MBA and MCNZ requires all medical practitioners to undertake a structured approach to their CPD by completing an annual CPD Plan.

A CPD Plan is a tool that supports planning of professional development goals and reflection on CPD activities undertaken in pursuit of these goals.

For more information about your CPD Plan, see the [CPD Plan Standard](#) on the website.

Structured Conversation

The MCNZ requires all registered medical practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand to undertake an annual structured conversation to maintain medical registration.

While the MBA in Australia does not require specialist medical practitioners to undertake an annual structured conversation, RACS strongly encourages Australian participants to undertake a structured conversation annually as a valuable tool to support reflection, receive constructive feedback and share best practice.

A structured conversation aims to generate reflection on learning goals, professional development and personal growth through guided discussion and constructive feedback.

For more information about structured conversations, see the [Structured Conversation Standard](#) on the website.

Audit and Peer Review

Surgical audit is an educational exercise that is grounded in everyday practice. Research shows that audit and feedback is an effective educational strategy and helps participants analyse their performance and plan effective responses to improve their performance.

Only by looking objectively at our own practice of surgery will we be able to compare our current performance and derive information which may help us consider how to improve what we do for the benefit of our patients.

Surgical Audit and Peer Review is a mandatory requirement for all participants in the RACS CPD Program.

For more information about audit and peer review, see the [Audit and Peer Review Standard](#) on the website.

Education Activity

A CPD Program reflects the value of lifelong learning throughout a surgeon's career, recognising that continued improvement in operative skills and non-operative skills are necessary to achieve improved patient care and outcomes. Education activities comprise a significant weighting of the continuing professional development criteria as set out by RACS and the medical regulators.

For more information about Education activities, see the [Education Activity Standard](#) on the website.

Performance Review

The impact of a surgeon's performance beyond technical or surgical expertise is an important aspect of a well-rounded professional development program.

Self-reflection or evaluation of performance at an individual or systemic level supports a cycle of on-going quality improvement that can deliver a more cohesive and patient-centred healthcare environment.

In the RACS CPD Program, participants are required to complete at a minimum:

- One activity - 'Performance Review of Self'
- One activity - 'Performance Review of Others'

For more information about performance review, see the [Performance Review Standard](#) on the website.

Recognition of CPD Activities

RACS recognises a broad range of activities within the CPD Program, including those which are completed within the workplace and/or hospital setting. We also recognise the experience of non-operative surgeons to the surgical workforce and provide options that support achievement of the CPD standard.

A list of activities that are recognised within the RACS CPD Program framework can be found in Appendix 2.

Further information about the types of activities that can be claimed for CPD can also be found under FAQ's on the [AMC website](#).

Participation and Compliance

Compliance

All participants in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand must comply with the requirements of the CPD Program - unless exempt - regardless of practice type or whether they are in full or part time practice, for each calendar year (1 January to 31 December).

Activities cannot be credited retrospectively unless in extraordinary circumstances and approved by the Executive Director for Surgical Affairs (Australia) or Surgical Advisor (Aotearoa New Zealand)

Participants who are selected to verify their annual CPD must also provide documentation in support of their participation.

Verification

In accordance with regulatory standards governing CPD Programs in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, RACS verifies 5%* of all CPD participants undertaking the RACS Program.

With the exception of participants granted a full exemption, all CPD participants are eligible for selection to verify their CPD activity every year. Participants granted a partial exemption from one or more categories are eligible for selection but will not be required to verify activities in exempted category/categories.

The verification selection process is administered via a computer-generated algorithm that selects participants in accordance with the criteria listed above. The process is random and to comply with regulatory standards, it is possible to be selected to verify in consecutive years.

Participants who are selected to verify their CPD are required to provide additional documentation to support their participation in activities. For further information on the type of evidence that can be used to verify CPD activities, please visit the [RACS website](#).

For more information about verification, please see the [CPD Verification Policy](#) on the RACS website.

* Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMG) on a pathway to RACS Fellowship undergo full verification annually.

Exemptions

Participants who are unable to complete their CPD can request an exemption from CPD participation. Further information on how to apply for an exemption and grounds for approving an exemption can be found in the [CPD Exemptions Policy](#).

RACS Fellows residing overseas

Australia: Fellows of RACS in active practice who reside overseas and maintain registration in Australia must participate in a CPD Program.

Aotearoa New Zealand: Fellows of RACS who hold an annual practising certificate must participate in the RACS CPD Program.

Fellows who do not hold registration in Australia or Aotearoa New Zealand but maintain Fellowship with RACS, can either meet the CPD standard in the country of residence or participate in the RACS CPD Program.

Support and Remediation

Requests for remediation support can be submitted directly by the CPD participant, a regulatory authority or an employer. All requests must be submitted in writing to the Professional Standards Department.

Upon receipt, the Professional Standards Department will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the request
- Seek clarification from the participant, if required.
- Prepare relevant documentation and contextual information for review.

For more information about remediation and support, please see our [policy](#) on our website.

Reporting Compliance

Participants must report their CPD participation by no later than 28 February of the following year (i.e. for the 2026 CPD year, CPD must be reported by no later than 28 February 2027).

All CPD must be reported online via the CPD Portfolio or CPD App. In extenuating circumstances, paper-based submissions may be accepted.

Participants who do not report their CPD, who provide insufficient reporting of CPD and/or who do not meet the minimum verification requirement (where selected) will receive a series of graduated reminders.

All participants undertaking the RACS CPD Program, regardless of Fellowship with RACS, will be reported to Ahpra and/or the MCNZ in accordance with RACS' accreditation obligations.

Additionally, Fellows of RACS who do not comply with the CPD Program may be provided with notice that they are in breach of the RACS Code of Conduct and sanctioned in accordance with the Professional Conduct Committee - Terms of Reference Regulation. This can apply to any RACS Fellow regardless of the CPD Program they undertake.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Guides, Policies & Standards

Regulation	<u>CPD Program Regulation</u>
Terms of Reference	<u>Professional Standards Committee</u>
Policy	<u>Conflict of Interest Policy</u> <u>CPD Exemptions Policy</u> <u>CPD Remediation and Support Policy</u> <u>CPD Verification Policy</u> <u>Enrolment in the RACS CPD Program Policy</u> <u>Reconsideration, Review and Appeals</u> <u>Recognition of Alternative CPD Programs Policy</u>
Standards	<u>Activity Requirement - Structured Conversation with a Peer</u> <u>Category Requirement - CPD Plan</u> <u>Category Requirement – Surgical Audit and Peer Review</u> <u>Category Requirement - Education Activity</u> <u>Category Requirement - Performance Review</u> <u>CAPE Requirement - Cultural Safety</u> <u>CAPE Requirement - Addressing Health Inequity</u> <u>CAPE Requirement - Professionalism</u> <u>CAPE Requirement - Ethical Practice</u> <u>Specialist High Level Requirement – ANZASM</u>
Guidelines	<u>CPD Activity Guide</u> <u>Code of Conduct</u> <u>Reconsideration, Review and Appeals</u> <u>Surgical Audit Guide</u> <u>Surgical Competence and Performance Guide</u>

Appendix 2 - CPD Activity List

RACS CPD Program – Activity List - 2026

Activity	Audit	ANZASM	Performance Review - Self	Performance Review -Others	Education	Annual cap^
Group or Specialty Audit Clinical	✓					
Unit Audit	✓					
Locum Logbook	✓					
MALT	✓					
Total Practice Audit	✓					
Selected Audit from Surgical Practice	✓					
Clinical Registry	✓					
Audit of Reports*	✓		✓			
Student Evaluation*			✓			
Surgical Assistant – Audit*	✓					
CHASM Form		✓				
1st Line Assessment				✓		
2nd Line Assessment				✓		
Structured Conversation			✓	✓		
Structured conversation with a peer			✓	✓		5
Patient Feedback Survey			✓			15
Clinical Governance			✓	✓		
Mentor/Coach				✓		15
Mentee/Coached			✓		✓	15
Structured Practice Visit			✓	✓		15
Annual Performance Review			✓	✓		5
Accreditation Review				✓		15
Examiner				✓		15
Attachment to a Peer			✓	✓		15
MSF/360			✓	✓		15
Review of Reports				✓		10
General Health Check			✓			5
Clinical Supervision				✓		15
Course Attendance					✓	
Research Activities					✓	15
Journal Article (Review)				✓		10

Activity	Audit	ANZASM	Performance Review - Self	Performance Review -Others	Education	Annual cap^
Clinical Text (Author)					✓	10
Journal Article (Author)					✓	10
Presentation to Peers					✓	15
Small Group Learning					✓	15
Volunteer Activities					✓	20
Rural Outreach					✓	20
Conferences/Scientific Meetings					✓	35
Online activities					✓	15
Cultural Safety, Cultural Competence Activities					✓	
Development of Education Material					✓	15
Journal Reading					✓	15
Tertiary Studies					✓	20
Teaching - Faculty					✓	15
Teaching – Courses				✓		20
Teaching - SET & students				✓		20
SET Assessment				✓		10
Clinical Advisor				✓		20
Committee Meetings					✓	15
Advisor to Government					✓	20

^ Maximum number of hours that can be claimed for that activity per annum

*Only applicable for non-operative practitioners. Participants in operative practice must include an audit of their procedures.

Appendix 3 – Access and updating your CPD activities

Access to CPD

Access to RACS CPD Online is available via the website (www.surgeons.org) or the RACS CPD App.

Each experience offers the ability to:

- Navigate between the previous, current and next CPD period.
- Define and edit your CPD Plan (Learning Plan) based on your Area of Practice
- Log activities as you complete them
- Record hours for audit, education, and performance review
- Track CAPE requirements
- Request an exemption
- See if you are under verification
- Download the certificate once you've successfully completed all requirements

Video Guides

The CPD Team have developed a series of short video guides to help troubleshoot updating activities for CPD. You can access these videos on the RACS website: [CPD Video Guides](#)

