Portfolio:	**Pathways to Fellowship**	**Ref. No.**	**TOR-2016**
Team:	**Surgical Education and Training**		
Title:	**RACSTA Committee**		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy details the terms of reference for the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Trainees' Association (RACSTA) Committee and its role in the representation of the Association.

RACSTA is comprised of all Trainees of RACS and membership is automatic upon registration into the training program. A RACS Trainee is defined as any registrar on the Surgical Education and Training (SET) program who has yet to become a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS). This includes Trainees who are undertaking flexible training, exam pending, on a period of interruption of leave from training and/or on parental leave.

The RACSTA Committee, as the managing committee of the Association, fulfils a number of functions relevant to RACSTA members. These include working towards improving surgical training, representation of surgical Trainees on many RACS committees and events, the protection of Trainees' interests and the provision of an avenue for communication between the Trainees and RACS.

In this policy, 'RACSTA' is defined as the Association, 'Committee' as the management committee of the Association and 'Executive' as the executive of the Committee. 'Fellow', 'Trainee' and 'Region' are used as defined by RACS.

2. KEYWORDS

RACSTA, Committee, Trainee, Association, Training, Surgical, Education, Executive

3. BODY OF POLICY

The RACSTA Committee was established to provide leadership and strategic direction for the Trainees' Association and to facilitate its goals and objectives.

3.1. Objectives

3.1.1. To be the channel of communication within RACS for the perspectives of all surgical Trainees in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

3.1.2. To advocate for Trainees in matters relating to the educational experience, including selection, training, assessment and supervision.

3.1.3. To facilitate Trainees' representation within and external to RACS by providing an avenue to voice opinions and perspectives.

3.1.4. To promote inter-disciplinary relations between surgical specialty groups within the SET program.

3.1.5. To assist new Trainees in understanding the requirements of SET and their transition to SET.

3.1.6. To promote and assist in the smooth transition from Trainee to Fellow.

3.2. Duties and Responsibilities

3.2.1. To ensure the Committee membership represents the diversity of Trainees.

3.2.2. To develop and present policy recommendations in response to the needs of Trainees to the appropriate RACS Committees and Boards.

3.2.3. To disseminate information to Trainees regarding SET and other RACS activities relevant to Trainees.

3.2.4. To investigate any appropriate issue raised by the Association or its members and to remain actively involved in all matters of relevance to Trainees.

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3.2.5. To be responsible for the development of RACSTA publications in Surgical News, the RACSTA webpage, the RACSTA social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and other public relations activities that inform all members of RACS about RACSTA and its associated activities.

3.2.6. To nominate appropriate Trainee representatives, including the RACSTA Co-opted Councillor, to RACS, Committees and Working Parties/Groups as requested, except for Specialty Training Committee/Boards representatives who are determined by the relevant Committee/Board or Society.

3.3. Powers

The Committee has decision-making authority as delegated by the Education Committee.

3.4. Composition of the Committee

In line with RACS Diversity and Inclusion Plan, RACS seeks to increase diversity on our committees, particularly the representation of women. RACS recognises the benefits that diversity in composition and thought brings to a committee.

RACS has set itself targets to have women represent at least 40% of committee membership by 2020. RACS will take proactive steps to reach this target. Pleasingly RACSTA has met or succeeded in 40% representation of women on its committee since the incorporation of the RACS diversity & inclusion plan 2016)

3.4.1. Executive

a. Chair
b. Immediate Past Chair
c. Deputy Chair
d. Training Portfolio
e. Support and Advocacy Portfolio
f. Communications Portfolio
g. Education Portfolio (to be combined with the Deputy Chair (3.4.1 c.) role at the discretion of the Executive)

3.4.2. Specialty Representatives, being one from each of:

a. Cardiothoracic Surgery
b. General Surgery Australia
c. General Surgery Aotearoa New Zealand
d. Neurosurgery
e. Orthopaedic Surgery Australia
f. Orthopaedic Surgery Aotearoa New Zealand
g. Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery Australia
h. Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery Aotearoa New Zealand
i. Paediatric Surgery
j. Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Australia
k. Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Aotearoa New Zealand
l. Urology
m. Vascular Surgery

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3.4.3. State, Territory and National Representatives, being one from each Region.

3.4.4. Co-opted members (Members by application or nomination):

a. ASC Representative

b. Other co-opted Trainees, if required, to facilitate the functioning of the Committee and to ensure appropriate representation of RACSTA.

3.5. Eligibility Criteria

3.5.1 All Trainees (as defined in Purpose and Scope) who have commenced Surgical Education and Training (SET), and who are not suspended, on probation, or pending investigation for unsatisfactory performance or unprofessional behaviour are eligible to nominate for election to the Committee.

3.5.2 Nominees must not be deferred from training or intending to defer at the time of the role commencing.

3.5.3 At the time of nomination, any nominee applying for a vacant Committee role advertised by RACSTA must be an active Trainee at the point of nomination and must not be anticipating completing training within 12 months.

3.6. Election and Terms of Office

3.6.1. Chair

a. Election will be by secret ballot at the last Committee meeting of the year. Secret ballot may be physical or digital.

b. All Committee members have an equal vote.

c. Office will begin from 1 January of following year.

d. In the event of a tied vote the Immediate Past Chair will have the deciding vote.

3.6.2. Executive

a. The Executive, as specified in 3.4.1, is elected from the membership of the Committee. Current Executive members are eligible for re-election (subject to specified term limits).

b. Where two or more Committee members indicate their interest to nominate for an Executive position, the Committee will conduct a vote by secret ballot to determine the successful candidate.

e. In the event of a tied vote the Chair will have a deciding vote. In the event of a tied vote and absence of the Chair, the Immediate Past Chair will have the deciding vote.

c. Where a general member of the Committee is elected to the Executive, they will vacate their Regional or Specialty Representative position on the Committee. A new representative for the specialty or region will be elected to commence at the next meeting.

d. If the Training or Communications Officer positions are unable to be filled, they may be held in a caretaker capacity by a member of the Committee, *as these positions should not present a conflict of interest for a Specialty or Regional Representative*. A Committee member should be elected at the next Committee meeting to fill the vacancy.

e. The Committee shall always endeavour to fill all Executive positions.

f. Where there is conflict of an elected Executive member, elected executive will discuss with the final say given by the Chair, regardless of an uneven consensus.

3.6.3. Committee

a. Committee members are elected by Trainees via the regional networks and specialty Trainee groups.

b. When a Regional Representative position becomes vacant, the Executive will seek nominations from Trainees resident in that Region. If more than one nomination is received, Trainees resident in that Region will vote by secret ballot to determine the successful candidate. RACSTA will nominate each Regional Representative to become a co-opted member of the relevant Regional Committee or Aotearoa New Zealand National Committee. In the event of only one nomination, this nominee will go directly to the RACSTA Committee for final decision, with a majority vote (equating the to the rules defining a quorum) taking place.

c. When a Specialty Representative position becomes vacant, the Specialty Training Committee/Board will seek nominations from within the specialty Trainee group and hold a ballot should more than one (1) nomination be received.

d. A member cannot hold Regional and Specialty Representative positions simultaneously. If this occurs, the member must vacate one position and notify the relevant Specialty Training Committee/Boards or Executive.

e. RACSTA will actively seek nominations for positions that are not filled or become vacant during a term of office.

f. Members who become Fellows during their term of office may continue to serve out their tenure.

g. Members who fail to attend two consecutive meetings, fail to provide two consecutive reports and/or fail to provide notification of non-attendance, may be removed from the Committee. This is at the discretion of the Chair, with input from the Executive committee. The decision of the Executive is final, and no correspondence shall be entered into.

3.6.4. Co-opted members

a. Appointment of members co-opted for a working party, specific function or period are approved by the Executive.
b. Co-opted members have an equal vote and right to nominate for any RACSTA position (including Executive and RACS committee Trainee representative)

3.6.5. Members by application

a. Up to three new Committee members may be elected per year, if the total membership of the Committee does not exceed thirty (30) members.

b. Trainees who are interested in a membership role are to write to the Committee, enclosing a CV and a position statement.

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c. The Committee will review applications on a rolling basis, with successful applicants commencing on a date of the committee's choosing, with tenure for 12 months from that date, with the option of a second term.

d. Applications may be approved by the Executive or the Committee.

e. Members by application have an equal vote and right to nominate for any RACSTA position (including Executive and RACS committee trainee representative)

3.6.7 All incoming members are issued the RACSTA Committee Member Introduction Booklet, where role expectations are defined.

3.7. Tenure

3.7.1. Committee

a. Regional Representatives will serve for one year with the option to serve for a further term of one year.

b. Specialty Representatives' tenure will be in accordance with the relevant Specialty Training Committee/Boards. In most instances, this is one to two years.

c. Members by application will serve for one year and may be appointed for a further year by the Committee.

3.7.2. Executive members will hold office for one year, but individual members will be eligible for re-election for a further period of one (1) year.

3.7.3. Chair will be elected annually and hold office for one year but be eligible for re-election for a further period of one year.

3.7.4. Immediate Past Chair will serve for one year only in that capacity, even in the event of the Chair serving another term. If a new Chair is unable to be elected, the Immediate Past Chair may serve in a caretaker capacity until such time as a new Chair is appointed.

3.8. Quorum

3.8.1. A quorum of the Committee will comprise 50% of the membership, including a minimum of three members of the Executive.

3.8.2. A quorum of the Executive is 50% of the membership.

3.8.3 If a quorum is not reached within 15 minutes of the arranged meeting time, the meeting will be rescheduled to the following fortnight as long as quorum can be reached.

3.8.4 In the event the Chair or Deputy Chair are unable to make the scheduled meeting, another member of the Executive is eligible to chair the meeting as long as quorum is reached.

3.9. Meetings

3.9.1. The Committee shall engage in meetings, videoconferences and workshops as required ensuring the ongoing support, direction and leadership of RACSTA.

3.9.2. The Committee may hold three face to face meetings per year.

3.9.3. The Executive may meet more frequently on a need's basis. These meetings may be either via videoconference or face to face.

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3.9.4. All Committee members have equal voting rights (including co-opted and members by application).

3.9.5. Voting, if required, may take place by electronic means, so long as the provision of a secret ballot is possible, should this be required.

3.9.6 If an extraordinary meeting is required, all committee members must be given where possible seven days' notice in writing. No reports are required for these meetings and does not count towards item 3.6.3 (g).

3.10. Reporting

The Committee's proceedings shall be recorded in minutes and presented to Council via the Education Committee report and to the Association via the RACSTA Newsletter Newsletter in the form of a communique from the RACSTA Chair.

3.11. Scheduled activities

RACSTA holds functions relating to Trainee engagement, issues an award and represents Trainees at a number of RACS events. These events are not limited to the below events.

3.11.1 RACSTA Conference

RACSTA annually holds a conference for Trainees. The schedule and format of this conference will be at the decision of the RACSTA subcommittee.

3.11.2 RACS ASC

RACSTA coordinates a Trainee Section as part of the ASC. Committee members annually attend as well as the RACSTA Executive Officer to provide Trainee representation.

3.11.3 John Corboy Medal

Annual award presented at Younger Fellows/Trainees Section event during RACS ASC.

See associated policy.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

John Corboy Medal POL-2028

Approver Education Committee
Authoriser Council