

REGULATION

Portfolio	Fellowship Engagement	Ref. No.	REG-3034
Department	Professional Standards		
Title	Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) includes the determination and maintenance of professional standards for the practice of surgery in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Clause 1 of the RACS Constitution outlines a purpose of the College being to encourage and support Fellows to undertake continuous professional development.

Clause 6 of the RACS Constitution gives the Council power to make regulations as it deems necessary or desirable for the proper conduct and management of the RACS, the regulation of its affairs and the furtherance of its objectives.

Clause 14 of the RACS Constitution gives the Council power to delegate all or any of its functions, powers, or discretions to committees comprising such persons as the Council determines, and that the Council can determine the powers and duties of each sub-committee.

The Council has delegated powers and duties associated with participation and compliance with continuing professional development obligations to the Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee (PSFSC).

This regulation establishes the RACS Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program.

The regulation applies to RACS Fellows, Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMG) and surgically affiliated practitioners.

2. KEYWORDS

Continuing Professional Development (CPD), CPD home, CPD Recertification Program, vocationally registered surgeons, compliance, verification, Fellows, surgically affiliated practitioners, PGY 3+, annual practising certificate.

3. BODY OF POLICY

The RACS CPD Program has been developed to align with the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) CPD registration standard and CPD recertification requirements set by the Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa - Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ).

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.

RACS provides a CPD Program for the following medical practitioners:

- Fellows of RACS (Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand)
- Specialist International Medical Graduates, including those on a pathway to Fellowship of RACS (Australia)
- Medical practitioners who hold vocational registration in Aotearoa New Zealand in scope/s of practice of surgery

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- 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 program, the medical practitioner must hold active registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) or vocational registration with the MCNZ.

3.1. Area of Practice

Participation in CPD activities should reflect a participant's Area of Practice (AoP). An AoP - often used interchangeably with Scope of Practice - is self-defined by the participant and can be reviewed at any time throughout the year. A participant's AoP for CPD is determined by their main surgical speciality or specialties.

A list of defined AoP's is available for a participant to select, which were developed in consultation with specialty associations and societies. Participants can also select other areas that form part of their practice outside of their speciality which may include teaching, supervision, medico-legal practice etc.

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

3.2. Minimum Annual Requirements

The minimum annual requirements in the RACS CPD Program are outlined in Table 1, including how the RACS CPD Program aligns to the Australian (MBA) and Aotearoa New Zealand (MCNZ) regulatory framework.

Category	Australian Participants	Aotearoa New Zealand Participants
Structured Conversation	N/A	1 per annum
CPD Plan	1 per annum	
Audit (incl. peer review)	10 hours per annum	
Performance Review	15 hours per annum	
- Self - Others		
Education Activities	25 hours per annum	
Program Level Requirement	At least 1 activity per annum relevant to the following: Cultural Safety Addressing Health Inequities	

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	Professionalism	
	Ethical Practice	
High-Level Specialist Requirement	Participation in the Australian and New Zealand Audit of Surgical Mortality (ANZASM) by completing surgical case forms sent to the surgeon by ANZASM	N/A

Note:

- RACS Audit category is the equivalent of the MBA/MCNZ Reviewing Outcomes requirement
- RACS Performance category is the equivalent of the MBA/MCNZ Measuring Performance requirement
- RACS Education category is the equivalent of the MBA/MCNZ Traditional Learning or Educational Activities and Free Choice of Activities requirement.

3.3. Category Level Requirements

All participants must meet the minimum requirements of each RACS CPD category each year.

A description of the minimum standard for each RACS CPD category (CPD Plan, Audit, Performance Review, Education Activity) and guidance on how to undertake a structured conversation with a peer is available to support participants in meeting their requirements (please see associated documents).

3.4. Program Level Requirements

All participants in the RACS CPD Program must undertake at least one activity per annum in:

- Cultural safety
- Addressing health inequities
- Professionalism
- Ethical practice

Adding activities aligned to the CAPE requirement and guidance on how to embed program level requirements into CPD and everyday practice is outlined in Program Level Guidance for cultural safety, addressing health inequity, professionalism and ethical practice (please see associated documents).

3.5. Specialist High Level Requirements

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

The high-level specialist requirement for surgery is:

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

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Under the RACS CPD Program, participation in ANZASM is credited towards 'Audit' (in the MBA framework, ANZASM participation is aligned to reviewing performance and/or measuring outcomes activity). Guidance is available on how to comply with the ANZASM requirement (please see associated documents).

3.6. Participation and Compliance

Participants must undertake and satisfactorily complete CPD for each calendar year (1 January to 31 December).

As required by regulatory authorities in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, all participants must comply with the requirements of the CPD Program regardless of practice type.

Participants must undertake sufficient CPD to comply with minimum annual requirements each year, unless they have received a full or partial exemption (see 3.8).

Participants who are selected to verify their annual CPD must also provide documentation in support of their participation (see 3.7).

Activities cannot be retrospectively applied unless in extraordinary circumstances and as approved by the Chair, Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee (PSFSC) or Chair, Professional Standards Committee (PSC).

3.7. Verification

Each year a random selection of participants is selected to verify their CPD participation. Participants who are selected to verify their CPD are required to provide additional documentation to support their participation in activities (please see associated documents).

A surgeon participating in the RACS CPD Program can also be selected to verify their activities at the discretion of the Executive Director for Surgical Affairs (Australia) or the Surgical Advisor (Aotearoa New Zealand). Selection can occur at any time during a calendar year and may require total verification or evidence of participation in specific activities (i.e., surgical audit).

3.8. Exemptions

Participants who are unable to complete their CPD can request an exemption from CPD participation – grounds for approving an exemption can be found in the CPD Exemptions Policy (please see associated documents).

3.9. Reporting Compliance

Participants must report their CPD participation by no later than 28 February of the following year (i.e. for the 2022 CPD year, CPD must be reported by no later than 28 February 2023).

All CPD must be reported through the RACS CPD Portfolio. 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.

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

In addition to reporting to the MBA or MCNZ, Fellows of RACS who do not comply with the CPD Program may be provided with notice that they are breach of the RACS Code of Conduct and sanctioned in accordance with the Professional Conduct Committee - Terms of Reference Regulation. This applies to all Fellows regardless of which CPD Program they participate in (see 3.10).

3.10. RACS Fellows – Participation in Other Programs

RACS recognises the Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA) and New Zealand Orthopaedic Association (NZOA) as comparable to the RACS CPD Program.

The AOA and NZOA do not hold independent accreditation to administer a CPD Program. These programs are assessed annually by RACS and subject to RACS' assessment of compliance with all regulatory requirements, are available to RACS orthopaedic Fellows.

RACS Fellows participating in these programs are not also required to participate in the RACS Program. Participants undertaking the AOA or NZOA CPD Program will have their compliance with minimum annual requirements reported to RACS by their respective CPD provider.

Ophthalmologists who hold dual Fellowship of RACS and Fellowship of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (FRANZCO) must participate in the RANZCO to ensure participation in a program relevant to their scope and compliance with high level specialist requirements.

3.11. RACS Fellows – Fellows Residing Overseas

Fellows of RACS in active practice who reside overseas and maintain registration in Australia and Fellows in Aotearoa New Zealand who reside overseas who maintain an Active Practising Certificate (APC) must participate in the RACS CPD Program.

RACS Fellows who do not hold Australian registration can participate in either the RACS CPD Program or an equivalent CPD Program in the country in which they reside.

3.12 Conflict of Interest

For the purposes of the RACS CPD Program, a conflict of interest is defined as any circumstance in which a decision-maker's personal interests—whether financial, familial, or otherwise—have the potential to compromise their professional obligation to act in the best interests of the CPD Program, its activities, or its participants.

Examples include, but are not limited to, a Committee Member with governance responsibilities receiving financial incentives for promoting a particular activity, or influencing the compliance status of a participant due to a personal or familial relationship.

All committee members, surgeons, education activity providers and staff affiliated with the RACS CPD Program are required to nominate any conflict of interest as outlined in the RACS Conflict of Interest Policy in order that it can be managed accordingly.

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4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

RACS Constitution (Regulation)
Professional Conduct Committee – Terms of Reference (Regulation)
Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee (Regulation)

Enrolment in the RACS CPD Program Policy
Transferring Data and Records Policy
CPD Exemptions Policy
CPD Verification Policy
Approval of Activities in the CPD Program Policy
Professional Standards Committee Terms of Reference
Conflict of Interest Policy
Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy
Remediation and Support Policy

CPD Category Standard - Audit and Peer Review
CPD Category Standard - Education Activity
CPD Category Standard - Learning Plan
CPD Category Standard - Performance Review

Guide - CPD Program Guide
Guide - Code of Conduct
Guide - Surgical Audit
Guide - Surgical Competence and Performance
Program Level Guidance - Cultural Safety
Program Level Guidance - Addressing Health Inequities
Program Level Guidance - Professionalism and Ethical Practice
Specialist High Level Requirement Guidance - Australian and New Zealand Audit of Surgical Mortality (ANZASM)
Re-Skilling and Re-Entry Guidelines

Position Paper - Interactions with the Medical Industry

Approver: Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee

Authoriser: Council