

## POLICY

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Fellowship Engagement</b>	<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>POL-3114</b>
<b>Department</b>	<b>Professional Standards</b>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>CPD Program - Exemptions</b>		

### 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 New Zealand.

This policy outlines the circumstances where an exemption from participating in the RACS Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program can be applied. This policy should be read in conjunction with the CPD Program Regulation and other associated policies and standards (see Associated Documents)

This policy does not apply to CPD requirements for Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMG) which are addressed via a separate regulation and/or policy.

### 2. KEYWORDS

Continuing Professional Development (CPD), compliance, exemption, recency of practice, registration standards

### 3. BODY OF POLICY

All RACS Fellows in active practice must participate in a program of CPD.

A Fellow is defined as 'active' for the purposes of CPD if they are undertaking any form of medicine, surgery, medico-legal work or other non-clinical work (i.e. research, administration) that requires maintenance of medical registration with a requirement to comply with CPD regulatory standards.

#### 3.1. Exemption from CPD Requirements

RACS understands that there may be times during a Fellow's career where an exemption from CPD participation is required.

Grounds for an automatic exemption from CPD include:

- 3.1.1.** New Fellows admitted to RACS after 30 October are granted an automatic exemption from participating in the CPD Program for that year
- 3.1.2.** Fellows undertaking training in one of the nine surgical specialties
- 3.1.3.** Fellows who retire from active practice during the CPD year

Grounds for an exemption from CPD where an application is required include:

- 3.1.4.** Fellows experiencing personal or family hardship
- 3.1.5.** Fellows experiencing personal or family illness
- 3.1.6.** Fellows on family leave
- 3.1.7.** Other special circumstances

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The following reasons **do not** constitute grounds for an exemption from CPD:

- Fellows residing overseas – required to participate in CPD in the country in which they reside or in the RACS CPD Program
- Fellows undertaking sub-specialty training or post-Fellowship training (PFET)
- Fellows who are retired but maintain registration where there is a regulatory requirement to participate in CPD

### 3.2. Applying for an exemption

Fellows can apply for three types of exemption from CPD participation:

- A full exemption from all CPD requirements
- A partial exemption from one or more CPD categories
- A partial exemption from an activity and/or pro-rata points

All exemptions are applied for a CPD period (12 months).

#### 3.2.1. Supporting documentation

Applications for an exemption should be submitted online via the CPD Portfolio. Fellows can elect to submit and attach supporting documentation but are not required to when submitting the application. If supporting documentation is not attached at the time of application, further information may be requested if required.

Information provided to RACS is handled in accordance with the RACS Privacy Policy.

#### 3.2.2. Assessment and approval of exemptions

Applications are initially triaged and assessed confidentially by the Professional Standards Manager and/or Senior Program Coordinator (CPD).

Where an application clearly meets the policy standard, the Professional Standards Manager will approve the exemption.

Where the further information or assessment is required, the Professional Standards Manager or Senior Program Coordinator (CPD) will contact the Fellow to confirm their consent to escalate the matter to the Executive Director for Surgical Affairs (Australia), Surgical Advisor (Aotearoa New Zealand) or the Professional Standards Chair.

All applications that are escalated will be de-identified.

#### 3.2.3. Notification of outcome

Fellows will be notified of an outcome or progress of their application within 14 days. Applications that require escalation may take longer and applicants will be kept updated on the progress.

Where an application is approved, the Fellow's CPD Portfolio will be automatically updated. On request RACS can provide confirmation of an exemption to the Fellow.

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Where an application is not approved, the Professional Standards Manager and/or Senior Program Coordinator (CPD) will contact the Fellow to discuss options and work towards the best possible outcome.

### 3.3. Appeals

Fellows who wish to appeal a decision can write to the Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee (PSFSC) Chair at [professional.standards@surgeons.org](mailto:professional.standards@surgeons.org).

### 3.4. Support

RACS is committed to providing support to surgeons to assist them appropriately through difficult situations. RACS has partnered with [Converge International](#) to provide confidential support to Fellows, Trainees, International Medical Graduates, RACS Global Health Volunteers and their immediate family members.

You can contact Converge International by:

- Telephone 1300 687 327 in Australia or 0800 666 367 in New Zealand
- Visit [Converge International](#) and click on 'Live Chat' or the 'Make an EAP Appointment'
- Email [eap@convergeintl.com.au](mailto:eap@convergeintl.com.au)

### 3.5. Regulatory requirements

There may be additional regulatory requirements if you are returning to practice after an absence of 12 months or more, or if you are only seeking an exemption for a defined period within a CPD year.

Fellows should ensure that they are aware of any regulatory requirements and the impact a CPD exemption may have on their practice.

## 4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Guide

Regulation – CPD Program

Policy – CPD Participation and Compliance

Policy - CPD Verification

CPD Standard - Audit and Peer Review

CPD Standard - Education Activity

CPD Standard - Learning Plan

CPD Standard - Performance Review

CPD Guidance - Recency of Practice (Australia)

CPD Guidance - Registration Standards (Australia)

CPD Guidance - Registration Standards (New Zealand)

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RACS Code of Conduct

RACS Surgical Competence and Performance Guide

RACS Surgical Audit and Peer Review Guide

Regulation - Professional Conduct Committee – Terms of Reference

Regulation - Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee

Policy - Professional Standards Committee – Terms of Reference

Policy - Locum Evaluation and Peer Review Committee

Policy – Recognition of CPD Activities

Position Paper – Interactions with the Medical Industry

**Approver:** Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee  
**Authoriser:** Council