

Portfolio:	Operations	Ref. No.	POL-4914
Department:	Scholarship & Grant Department		
Title:	Learning and Development Grants		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy governs Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) administered Fellowships and grants established to support learning and development, including travel opportunities. These opportunities aim to benefit the surgical community and improve the quality of surgical practice.

The policy sets out an equitable and transparent approach to Fellowship and grant applications, selection criteria, conditions and recipient obligations.

Each Fellowship and grant is supported by a guideline, accessible to prospective applicants, which outlines information specific to the respective grant's purpose, value, duration, conditions and recipient eligibility criteria including pre-vocational qualification, specialty, research location, residency status, or citizenship status, heritage and personal and/or financial circumstance.

This policy is for RACS staff and committee use. Prospective applicants can, via the RACS Scholarship and Grant webpages, access all general information relating to grants, along with the grant-specific information contained in the guidelines.

Fellowships and grants that are facilitated (but not administered) by RACS are not governed by this policy.

2. KEYWORDS AND GLOSSARY

ANZSGC	Australia and New Zealand Scholarship and Grant Committee
PSFSC	Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee
SEMC	Scholarship Evaluation and Monitoring Committee
Fellow	An active, admitted Surgeon with up-to-date membership of RACS
Trainee	A doctor enrolled in the RACS Surgical Education and Training (SET) program.
SIMG	Specialist International Medical Graduate
Junior Doctor	A registered doctor who has not yet committed to a specialty. Also can be called pre-vocational doctor, PGY1, PGY2, PGY3, Junior Medical Officer, Resident, Registrar
Grant*	A RACS grant is awarded to support the exchange of knowledge relating to surgical science, clinical practice or education. Grant payments are disbursed by RACS directly to the recipient. Approved grant activity includes (but is not limited to) mentoring programs, travel, conference attendance, professional development, SET fees, specialist training and small research projects.
Scholarship	A RACS research scholarship is awarded to support the investigation of knowledge through academic study and higher-level learning. The activity is to be undertaken at an approved institution. Scholarship funds are disbursed as a stipend via an administering institution and may include a departmental maintenance portion.
Fellowship	A scholarship or grant for which only RACS Fellows are eligible.

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Recipient	The person to whom the scholarship has been awarded.
Scholarship and Grants Reviewer Panel	A panel of RACS Fellows who have been selected and approved by the ANZSGC, and can replace The Chair or any other member of the ANZSGC to review or sit on the selection panel of any scholarship or grant.

**For the purpose of this policy, the term 'grant' shall be used as the general description for all RACS Learning and Development Fellowships and grants.*

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Background

The Learning and Development Fellowship and Grant Policy has been developed in line with the 2019 Council approved recommendation to streamline the governance of RACS administered scholarships.

3.2. RACS Diversity and Inclusion Statement of Commitment

The Learning and Development Fellowship and Grant Policy upholds the RACS Diversity and Inclusion Plan and RACS commitment to setting the standards for valuing diversity and inclusion of gender, ethnicity, indigeneity, sexual orientation and identity, age, disability and religion, for participation in surgery and RACS governance and leadership roles. RACS recognises that Trainees, Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) and Fellows may be under-represented in more than one 'category' of diversity and may have multiple barriers to a successful career in surgery.

As such, all RACS grants will:

- Actively focus on removing any barriers to the participation of women and increasing their representation.
- Ensure a cohesive and comprehensive response that considers the overlap of diversity qualities.
- Continue current initiatives designed to increase the participation of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori peoples in the practice of surgery.

3.3. Benefit of Grants

The prestige of being awarded a RACS grant is well recognised in the surgical community.

A RACS grant offers funding to support one or more of the following benefits:

- conference/scientific meeting attendance
- presentation opportunities
- mentorship, leadership and networking opportunities
- training and experience
- professional development
- small research projects.

Being a recipient of a RACS Fellowship or grant also provides the opportunity to input into the future of the RACS grant and grants program.

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Prospective applicants should refer to the RACS [Scholarship and Grant webpages](#) for information on the current value (in Australian dollars) of each opportunity.

3.4. Eligibility Criteria

Specific eligibility requirements are detailed in the respective grant guidelines.

Depending on the grant, applications are open to any, or all, of the below:

Fellows	Active Fellows of RACS may apply for grants and Fellowships. Some opportunities are limited to younger Fellows only (i.e. less than ten years since attaining Fellowship).
Surgical Education and Training (SET) Trainees	SET Trainees may apply for grants.
SET applicants	Junior doctors may apply for grants available to SET Trainees in anticipation of their acceptance into the SET Program. They must be accepted into the SET Program by mid December (date as advertised) in the year of application.
Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs)	SIMGs on the pathway to RACS Fellowship and who can demonstrate a commitment to working in a clinical or research role for the two years following the scholarship/grant activity in Australia or Aotearoa New Zealand may apply for grants.
Non-RACS members	May apply for some grants, as specified in the eligibility criteria in the respective guidelines.

3.5. Application and Selection Process

The objective of this policy is to facilitate an equitable and transparent process that enables selection of the most suitable and deserving candidate.

3.5.1 Application and selection timeline

Grant applications open together with Research applications in March/April each year and close approximately six weeks later– specific dates are to be promoted in advance via RACS channels. After selection, all applicants are advised by email of the outcome of their application.

3.5.2 Application process

All applications are administered by the RACS Scholarship and Grant department, with the Scholarship team available via email and phone to answer queries and provide support to applicants.

Applications are open via RACS [Scholarship and Grant webpages](#). Online resources such as *General Information* and *Frequently Asked Questions*, are to be reviewed for relevance each year and, when necessary, redeveloped.

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3.5.3 Selection process

The recipient is chosen based on their written application and references along with a subsequent interview (when applicable). All personally identifiable information is removed from the application prior to the selection process commencing.

The selection panel for each grant is defined in the corresponding guideline. Where a guideline specifies that a member of the Australia and New Zealand Scholarship and Grant Committee (ANZSGC) sit on a selection panel, this may be substituted for a member of the Scholarships and Grants Reviewer Panel.

Respective selection panel/s assess applications (electronically) based upon any, or all, of the following as provided in the application: written references, abilities and experience of the candidate, proposed activity and use of the funds, the merit of the activity and the extent to which it will benefit surgical or clinical skills, the individual, other surgeons and/or the relevant community.

3.5.4 Due diligence

To finalise selection, candidates are vetted through a due diligence assessment that includes checking registration and if the candidate is, or has been, the subject of sanctions, dismissals, suspensions or complaints.

The due diligence checklist includes:

- checking the mandatory application questions regarding any practice restrictions
- checking the RACS membership database
- checking the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and Medical Council of New Zealand databases
- requesting a check from the RACS Complaints Manager and SET Enquiries Department
- requesting a check from the Executive Directors of Surgical Affairs of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

3.5.5 Approvals

ANZSGC considers the outcomes from all selection panel/s and findings from the due diligence assessment to make final selection recommendations. ANZSGC forwards the list of recommended candidates, along with the due diligence checklist, to the Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee (PSFSC) for noting.

3.6. Implementation of the Grant

3.6.1 Notification and acceptance of an offer

All applicants are to be notified by email via Unlock.

Successful candidates will be asked to complete the RACS acceptance form via Unlock by the due date. In so doing, the recipient acknowledges and agrees to the conditions and recipient obligations stipulated on the RACS website and respective guidelines.

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3.6.2 Grant commencement and duration

Unless otherwise negotiated or stipulated in the respective guideline, the commencement date for grants is 1 January in the year following application and the end date is 31 December in that same year.

The activity or travel for which the grant was offered may commence before 1 January in the scholarship year but it must be after the deadline for applications. The activity must have started before the end date of the grant (31 December in the grant year). A maximum of 12 months' extension may be requested via the amendment form. Activity must have been undertaken by 31 December of the year following the grant year if approved. If the recipient does not meet these requirements the grant will have to be repaid.

3.6.3 Grant frequency

Unless otherwise specified in the respective guideline, grants are offered annually, subject to availability of funding and providing there is an applicant that meets the selection standards.

3.6.4 Grant leave

Grant recipients are able to apply for leave for special circumstances that affect the successful completion of the grant, such as but not limited to, illness or injury, natural disasters, parental or family needs.

Please refer to the Scholarship Program Leave Policy.

3.6.5 Grant funding source

Grants are funded from the income revenue derived from the corpus under the Foundation of Surgery, direct sponsorships or RACS operational budget.

3.6.6 Payment of the grant

The recipient must provide RACS with a valid tax invoice for the annual value of the grant, which will be paid to the recipient by 1 March of the grant year.

Recipients are to be advised to refer to a financial or taxation advisor to ascertain the taxability of the grant. General information about income tax in relation to grants is available on the Frequently asked questions (FAQ) page of the [RACS website](#).

3.6.7 Reapplication for grants

Unsuccessful applicants who continue to meet the eligibility criteria may reapply for grants in subsequent years.

Unless otherwise stated in the respective guideline, previous recipients are eligible to reapply for the same grant in subsequent years.

3.6.8 Grant termination

RACS may, at its discretion for what is considered a grave cause, withdraw or suspend the tenure of a grant. From the date of either of these decisions, the entitlement to funding and other allowances shall cease.

Upon termination, monies already paid and not duly expended shall be refunded to RACS.

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3.7. Conditions and recipient obligations

By accepting the grant, the recipient agrees to the following conditions and obligations and will for the duration of the grant:

- Undertake the activity as outlined in their application and approved by RACS.
- Undertake the activity within the grant calendar year (i.e. the activity must have commenced by 31 December of the grant year).
- Request an amendment to the activity or leave from RACS, or repay grant funds to RACS, should circumstances prohibit them from fulfilling the approved travel plans or activity. Report on activity in accordance with the respective reporting requirements.

3.7.1 Access to additional funding

Recipients may hold two RACS grants or scholarships concurrently if both grants or scholarships are worth less than \$10,000. They may hold a RACS grant in conjunction with non-RACS funding but must notify RACS immediately upon receipt of the non-RACS funding if it was awarded for the same purpose as the RACS funding.

3.7.2 Reporting

The recipient must provide a report on the grant activity. Grants conclude in December of the year the funds are received (unless otherwise stated); therefore, upon request, reports are required in the prescribed format in January of the following year.

Reports are reviewed by ANZSGC with copies sent to the relevant stakeholders, including the benefactor or sponsor, as appropriate.

If reports are not received or are inadequately completed, the recipient will be ineligible for any further financial assistance from RACS and may be required to repay the grant funds.

3.7.3 Evaluation survey

Upon request from the Scholarship Evaluation and Monitoring Committee, recipients will be required to complete two Scholarship Evaluation Surveys. The first is due upon completion of the scholarship, with the second due approximately five years later. These surveys are essential for the ongoing improvement of the program.

3.7.4 Publications and patents

RACS must be notified of any publications arising from the grant opportunity as soon as practicable after acceptance by a journal.

Upon request and following completion of the grant, recipients are required to make themselves available to prepare an article for publishing in RACS Surgical News.

RACS must be notified of the results of any research resulting from the grant that is to be commercially developed, and of any patents arising from the grant.

3.7.5 Presenting at an annual meeting

Recipients may be invited to present their findings at an annual meeting (such as the RACS Annual Scientific Congress), within 12 months after completion of the grant period.

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3.7.6 Ethics approval

Where stipulated in the respective guideline, the recipient must provide RACS with documented ethics approval from their institution's ethics committee, as evidence that the project conforms to the general principles set out in the NH&MRC "Statement on Human Experimentation", the "Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes", the "Health Research Council of New Zealand HRC Research Ethics Guidelines".

3.7.7 Acknowledgements

RACS, the Foundation for Surgery, the name of the grant and the benefactor or sponsor (where appropriate), must be acknowledged in any relevant correspondence, public announcement, advertising, publication, presentation or other material relating to the grant.

If invited, recipients are obliged to speak at Foundation for Surgery events.

3.7.7 Privacy

Information will be collected, stored and disclosed in accordance with the RACS Privacy of Personal Information Policy.

3.8 Access

This policy is for RACS staff and committee use only. Information contained within this policy is to be available to applicants on the RACS website.

3.9 Administering Committee

ANZSGC administers RACS scholarships, fellowships and grants

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

POL: Privacy of Personal Information

POL: Scholarship Program Leave

PRC: Learning and Development Travel Grants and Fellowships procedures

FRM: Scholarship Program Amendment Form

GDL: Learning & Development Grant Guidelines

Approver ANZ Scholarship and Grant Committee

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