

Division:	Fellowship and Standards	Ref. No.	FES-FEL-057
Department:	Fellowship Services		
Title:	RACS Visitor Grant Program (For Non-RACS Meetings)		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

As a Fellowship based organisation, RACS is committed to excellence in surgical education and practice. To assist this, RACS will provide funding for scientific visitors of note from Australia, New Zealand and internationally to attend specialty society, association and sub-specialty conferences.

2. KEYWORDS

Scientific visitors, named lectures, ASMs, Professional Development, Fellowship Services, Conferences, Sponsorship

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Background

RACS is keen to enhance the ongoing education of surgeons within Australia and New Zealand. Attracting outstanding speakers to the regular scientific meetings of all surgical specialties and sub-specialties is an important component of this.

RACS provides support to its premier meeting (Annual Scientific Congress) through the ASC Visitors fund which is a corpus of funds within RACS, from which the budgeted income stream from the investments covers the costs of visitors to the ASC program. The ASC Visitors program covers travel, accommodation and registration of the Visitor and is determined annually through the budget cycle.

Separate to that, it is recognised that Fellows within sub-specialties and other groups wish to enhance their meetings by inviting visitors of note, from Australia, New Zealand or internationally. RACS will support these initiatives through the RACS Visitors Grant Program.

3.2. Requirements for application

- 3.2.1. The RACS Visitor grant must be used to cover the cost of travel, accommodation and registration of the visitor. The size of the grant requested must be commensurate with these costs but will be limited to the amount determined by Council (\$16,000 in 2019) of base funding and adjusted depending on the origin of the visitor.
- 3.2.2. The base funding will be adjusted according to the origin of the visitor (for meetings in Australia or New Zealand): Australasia 40% of base Asia-Pacific 70% of base, rest of the world 100%.
- 3.2.3. From its yearly operating budget (Subscription based) RACS will make available a limited number of RACS Visitor Grants. The funding amount will be confirmed by Council at the October meeting of each year for the calendar year, fifteen months ahead.
- 3.2.4. Applications are open to any affiliated surgical society or association of Surgeons
- 3.2.5. Applications will be open between 1 February and the third Monday in March for meetings in the following year.

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- 3.2.6. Late applications will not be considered.
- 3.2.7. Incomplete applications will be given lower priority and may not be considered.
- 3.2.8. Successful applicants will be notified by the 10th May in the year prior to the conference.
- 3.2.9. Successful applicants must submit the speaker's biography and a short introduction for promotional purposes.
- 3.2.10. Funds will be released following receipt of the speaker's biography and introduction, and confirmation of the speaker's acceptance and itinerary.
- 3.2.11. The funding will only be made available in the year of the meeting.
- 3.2.12. The number of grants that will be available to any one group will be dependent on the number of applications and grants available. In exceptional circumstances a meeting attracting more than 200 FRACS may be granted funding for more than one visitor.
- 3.2.13. The host society must ensure that the visiting speaker has comprehensive travel insurance.

3.3. Selection Criteria

Awarding of grants will consider the following:

- 3.3.1. The contribution of the speaker to the meeting they are attending, including number of presentations/workshops delivered.
- 3.3.2. Number of RACS Fellows, Trainees and IMGs on a pathway to Fellowship expected to attend. (Based on attendance of meetings during past 3 years).
- 3.3.3. Participation of the applicant in RACS education and training (SET, Skills Courses etc.)
- 3.3.4. Status and profile of the speaker.
- 3.3.5. Diversity should be considered in respect to the overall selection of speakers to ensure the greater participation of women and other diverse groups.
- 3.3.6. Engagement of the speaker before or after the meeting with
 - a. SET trainees.
 - b. PFET participants.
- 3.3.7. Geographic draw of the meeting (International/National/Regional).
- 3.3.8. Venue for the meeting. Preference will be given to meetings held within Australia or New Zealand, with consideration given to meetings held elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific.
- 3.3.9. The profile that will be given to RACS within all publications as related to the meeting, consistent with the equivalent level of sponsorship made available to other non-RACS sponsors.

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- 3.3.10. Funding provided to the applicant and other organisations in the same surgical specialty for meetings held in the same calendar year.
- 3.3.11. Availability of alternative funding options.
- 3.3.12. In the event that the number of applications exceeds the funds available, the selection committee may, at its discretion, select among equally meritorious applicants by ballot.
- 3.3.13. Other conditions as determined by the Fellowship Services Committee.

3.4. Reporting

A report including expenditure of funds, confirmation of sponsorship recognition and a short summary (<250 words) of the contribution of the speaker for publication in Surgical News or other RACS publication will need to be provided within 90 days of the meeting. Applicants who fail to meet these requirements will not be considered for funding in the subsequent year.

3.5. Oversight

The Grants allocation will be overseen by the Fellowship Services Committee, and confirmed by the PDSB Executive. The success of the speaker grant and completion of requirements will be reviewed by the Fellowship Services Committee. If the conditions are not met, then no further grants may be made.

The Manager of Fellowship Services will be the staff member responsible for informing groups of the availability of funds, managing the application process with oversight by the Chair of the Committee and providing reports as appropriate to PDSB and Council.

3.6. Cancelled meetings/speakers

If the conference or meeting is not held or the speaker does not attend, the grant is returned to RACS. It cannot be held for another event.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

ASC Management Policy

RACS Visitor Grant Program Procedure

RACS Visitor Grant Program Application Form

Approver Professional Development and Standards Board
Authoriser Council

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