1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines the criteria for approval of Continuing Medical Education (CME) activities and surgical audits within the College’s Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program.

2. KEY WORDS

Continuing Medical Education, Continuing Professional Development, Surgical Audit, Education Activities

3. BODY OF POLICY

Participation in approved CME activities is one way that Fellows can accrue points towards their annual CPD requirement. In addition, all Fellows in active operative practice are required to participate in a surgical audit and peer review cycle. Guidelines on the development and implementation of a surgical audit are outlined in the College’s Surgical Audit and Peer Review Guide.

3.1. Criteria for approval of a CME activity

An activity must satisfy a number of criteria and principles that have been approved by the College’s Professional Development and Standards Board (PDSB) and the Education Board (EB). These criteria and principles are founded on principles of adult learning and research on effective models of on-going professional development. The College has developed the CPD Program: Guide for the Approval of Education Activities to assist providers with this process.

The assessment of an activity and its suitability for CME approval is based on the following principles:

3.1.1. The primary purpose is to improve the quality of patient care
3.1.2. That surgeons are involved in the planning process
3.1.3. A learning assessment is conducted and activities developed that meet the learning needs of participants
3.1.4. Clear and specific objectives are identified
3.1.5. The content demonstrates high clinical and ethical standards
3.1.6. The learning environment promotes fulfillment of the objectives
3.1.7. That the activity is evaluated against the learning objectives

In addition, CME approval also requires the identification and development activities that align to one or more of the RACS ‘Nine Competencies’:

3.1.8. Collaboration
3.1.9. Communication
3.1.10. Health Advocacy
3.1.11. Judgement
3.1.12. Management and Leadership
3.1.13. Medical Expertise
3.1.14. Professionalism
3.1.15. Scholar and Teacher
3.1.16. Technical Expertise

The criteria and principles of CME approval is strongly aligned with those of accreditation of education activities for International Medical Graduates, Surgical Trainees and Pre-Vocational Doctors, and reinforces the importance of lifelong learning across all stages of a surgeon's career.

3.2. Approval of CME Activities (CPD Program)

Education providers can submit their activity for approval at any time. The application is reviewed by the Professional Standards Department and may be deferred for further review to the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) or Education Board (EB) as required who will make a final determination on the suitability of the activity. Activities are awarded 1 point per hour, with all approvals noted at PSC and EB.

3.3. Approval of a Surgical Audit

Education providers and individual Fellows can make an application for approval of a surgical audit at any time. A surgical audit can include:

3.3.1. Total Practice Audit
3.3.2. Craft Group/Specialty Audit
3.3.3. Selected Audit (e.g. specialty based)

The criteria used to assess a surgical audit are:

3.3.4. Purpose
   The primary purpose of the audit is to improve quality and patient safety, and to ensure lessons are learned via the audit and peer review process

3.3.5. Data Set
   Audits must demonstrate that they include the College’s minimum data set and/or expanded data set as outlined in the Surgical Audit and Peer Review Guide

3.3.6. Surgeon Input and Planning
   Applications for approval must demonstrate that surgeons have been consulted in the preparation and design of the audit. Applications must also detail the organisation/planning committee members including their status, expertise and contribution to the planning process

3.3.7. Learning Objectives
   Applications must outline what participants may expect to learn or achieve by participating in the audit.

3.3.8. Data Collection and Use
   Applications must describe the data collection methodology including how the data is aggregated and analysed. This should include reflection of what mechanisms are in place that allow for comparison of results/peer review.

3.3.9. Feedback and Reporting
Where applicable, audits must describe the frequency and structure of meetings for peer review and meet the standards outlined in the Surgical Audit and Peer Review Guide. In the case of generic or focused audits, this must include a description of the processes in place to deal with outliers. All audit types must include a process for providing reports including format and target audience.

3.3.10. Accountability and Qualified Privilege

Applications must include a description of how the audit verifies attendance/participation. This must address privacy concerns and qualified privilege where applicable. Applications where stand-alone software is being provided must describe the cost to the participant and commercial interests/sponsorship where applicable.

3.4. Participation and Reporting

3.4.1. CME

Approval of activities is conditional on providers uploading Fellows attendance at the activity within 2 weeks completion of the activity. Failure to meet this requirement within two weeks may result in the loss of approval for that activity and, at RACS discretion, further applications from that provider may not be considered for approval.

RACS Fellows CPD online records will be auto-populated with attendance at approved CME activities. An approved activity will be automatically verified and Fellows are not required to provide evidence if they are selected for verification for these events.

3.4.2. Audit

All providers of an approved audit are required to submit a summary report to the Professional Standards Committee at the close of the audit or on an annual basis.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Continuing Professional Development Guide
Surgical Competence and Performance Guide
Surgical Audit and Peer Review Guide
CPD Program: Guide for the Approval of Education Activities
Surgeons and Trainees Interactions with the Medical Industry Position Paper
Live Transmission of Surgery Position Paper

Approver
Professional Development and Standards Board

Authoriser
Council