

Supervision Project Update

1 Background

As of 3 September 2020, RACS has 447 supervisors allocated to 1226 active trainees on the SET program¹.

Supervisors of training play a critical role in the delivery and assessment of surgical training and education. They face the challenges of adequately preparing the next generation of surgeons, while maintaining clinical practice and keeping up with the latest developments and innovations of the field through familiarity with best evidence in literature².

Good surgical education is critical to the quality and safety of surgical care delivered to patients, and the continued advancement of surgery as a profession for future generations. Around the world, the professionalism of surgical education has increased. With the professionalisation of surgical education comes greater acknowledgement and recognition of its expertise³. As the professional body for surgical education and training within Australia and New Zealand, RACS must support its educators through this professionalisation, equipping Supervisors with the skills and resources needed to deliver teaching against the surgical competencies and the specialty curricula.

The SET program relies on the significant pro bono commitment of Fellows who undertake the supervisor role. The surgical supervision role is complex, requiring specific knowledge and skills to facilitate learning through role modelling, teaching, feedback and assessment.

The Supervision project responds to the feedback received from RACS Specialty Training Boards regarding difficulties in recruiting Supervisors, lack of time to undertake the role, lack of recognition of the role and the demands of the position. BSET directed that the Education Portfolio should prioritise and work on the Support for Supervisors project at the February 2019 BSET meeting.

2 Project Update

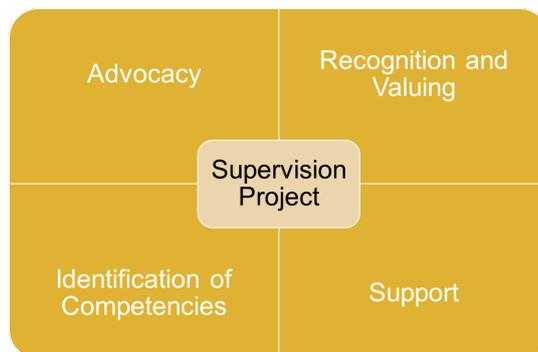
The scoping phase of the project included phone consultations with representatives from each Specialty Training Board and focus groups with Supervisors across Australia and New Zealand. Discussions focused on current successes and challenges in the role, resources provided to Supervisors, support required, and current methods of recruiting and evaluating Supervisors of Surgical Training.

¹ Data excludes trainees and supervisors specialising in Orthopaedics in Australia

² *Advancing Surgical Education : Theory, Evidence and Practice*, edited by Debra Nestel, et al., Springer Singapore Pte. Limited, 2019. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/surgeons/detail.action?docID=5973800>. Created from surgeons on 2020-08-13 21:15:16.

³ *Advancing Surgical Education : Theory, Evidence and Practice*, edited by Debra Nestel, et al., Springer Singapore Pte. Limited, 2019. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/surgeons/detail.action?docID=5973800>. Created from surgeons on 2020-08-14 00:10:53.

As a result of this scoping exercise, along with the support, strategic and regulatory requirements, the project has been divided into four pillars:



Each pillar has the following overarching objective:

1. **Support** - Review and improve existing courses and guidance for Supervisors in the delivery of the SET program, including making resources easier to find and access.
2. **Valuing and Recognition** - Improve the ways RACS values the contribution of Supervisors to the delivery of the SET program and;
3. **Advocacy** - Advocate for formal recognition of the role with hospitals and jurisdictions;
4. **Competency** - Create a framework that clearly articulates the competencies required of a Supervisor;

The progress made against each pillar's overarching objective is summarised below:

SUPPORT

A dedicated webpage for Supervisors of all specialties has been developed on the RACS website, easily accessible from the RACS homepage. The webpage named the Supervisor Hub, acts as a central source for Supervisors to quickly access resources to support them in their role. These resources include relevant policies and procedures, the Supervisor standards and surgical competencies, useful contacts, links to relevant Professional Development courses and the Academy of Surgical Educator webinars.

The existing SATSET (Supervisors and Trainers of the Surgical Education and Training Program) course is the first to be reviewed to update the educational content and materials. Now titled "Induction for Supervisors and Trainers", the pausing of face-to-face Professional Development courses due to COVID-19 offered an opportunity for staff to develop an online course which can be accessed from any location. The course content was piloted in September 2020 and Feb 2021. It is now being offered to Surgical Supervisors and Trainers throughout 2021.

There are also plans to review the Keeping Trainees on Track course in 2021.

VALUING AND RECOGNITION

Following initial scoping with Supervisors and relevant stakeholders, considerable work has been undertaken to improve the ways Supervisors are made to feel valued and recognised for their contribution to surgical education and training.

- In collaboration with the convenors of the Annual Scientific Congress, a stream specifically for Supervisors has been implemented at the 2021 event.
- The Academy of Surgical Educators awards have been changed to Supervisor of the year and increased promotion of this award has resulted in increased nominations in 2021.

- The Education Portfolio are collaborating with key members of the Professional Standards team to make it more explicit and widely known that Supervisors can claim for Continuing Professional Development points for their role, and identify new ways they may reflect on their experience in order to gain more CPD points against the new CPD Framework. Currently, Supervisors can claim a maximum of 15 points per year for the Maintenance of Knowledge and Skills, and 20 points for Teaching Activities.
- A series of articles in Surgical news have been published to highlight the value of the role.

A comprehensive communication strategy has been developed to improve the targeted communications sent to Supervisors.

ADVOCACY

The project aims to advocate for formal recognition of the Supervisor role with hospitals and jurisdictions. Plans are being developed for a higher-level advocacy approach, which will utilise research and data to target policy makers and influence jurisdictions.

To improve the foundation of data RACS holds on the role, a short survey was sent to all Supervisors to ascertain the average amount of time spent with their assigned Trainees. Research has been undertaken to identify time allocations currently provided to Supervisors of other specialist medical colleges both nationally and internationally to benchmark RACS' current advice against. The consensus statement writing workshop at the ASC will develop a statement that can be used in advocating for our Supervisors at a jurisdictional level.

In parallel to this, the hospital training post accreditation standards are being revised. The current accreditation standards specify how much time a Supervisor should be allocated for assigned trainees. This standard will be specifically addressed and updated as part of the review with STBs and the working party. The results from this stream of the Supervisor project will feed into the standards.

COMPETENCY

In line with regulatory requirements, the Supervisor Framework has been developed and implemented.

The Framework clearly articulates the competencies required of Supervisors and helps to clarify the expectations of the supervisory role. It aims to assist surgical educators in delivering their role, consider their teaching expertise and seek improvement. Used as a tool, the Framework can be referenced by the STBs as a guide to improve the quality of clinical teaching and learning.

A mapping document has been developed which clearly shows the resources available to assist Supervisors in attaining the competencies outlined in the Supervisor Framework. A self-assessment tool has been developed to allow Supervisors to monitor their achievement of the competencies.

3 Consensus Writing Workshop

The Consensus Writing Workshop has been established as the first step in developing a Consensus Statement that outlines the support required by our Surgical Supervisors. Supervisors have been invited to attend and have their input. The workshop will address four questions:

1. What support should RACS be developing for Supervisors?
2. What do Trainees need from their Supervisors?
3. How can RACS improve the recognition for the work Supervisors do?
4. What should we be advocating for at a local/state/national level?

The workshop is stage 1 of developing the Consensus Statement and there will be broader consultation with Supervisors once a draft statement is written.