Please note that this course outline is only applicable for trainees who commenced their training prior to 2017.

COURSE AIMS
The aim of the course is to familiarise the trainee with the main stages of the clinical research process, so that he/she is able to:

1. Clinically evaluate the experimental design, methodology and statistical analyses of published research on Rehabilitation Medicine.
2. Design and undertake a limited clinical research project.

MECHANICS OF THE COURSE:
- Trainees should undertake this course in the second and third years of training.
- Trainees should email rehab@racp.edu.au to request the published research articles for critique.
- All reports and projects should be sent to rehab@racp.edu.au with an assignment coversheet.
- Trainees should note the College’s Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy, which is available on the RACP website under Education Policies in the Educational and Professional Development Section.
- Paediatric Rehabilitation Trainees will be provided with research articles relating to Paediatric Rehabilitation Medicine for appraisal.

COURSE OUTLINE
1. The evaluation of published research in Rehabilitation Medicine
   The trainee should consider reading a text that provides details about clinical epidemiology and biostatistics. The trainee must access critical appraisal guidelines (JAMA series as attached or Centre for Evidence Based Practice (http://www.cebm.net/index.aspx?o=1157))

   The trainee will then evaluate a published research article provided by the convenor with the course materials, and write a 600 word report describing the methodology and results of this research. This report must use an appropriate clinical appraisal format. The report must be sent to the Faculty Office staff, by email to rehab@racp.edu.au, who will forward the report to the course convenor for marking. The marked report will be returned to the trainee within one month.

   On receipt of the marked report, and after considering the convenor’s comments, the trainee should then evaluate the second published research article, which will be provided by the course convenor with the return of the first marked report. The second research article will be more complex, and require higher level analytical skills. A further 600 word evaluation of the
2. Clinical Research Project

After completion of at least one of the research critiques the trainee will design and implement a limited clinical research project.

It is emphasised that the nature and extent of this project is not to be large or complex.

The main elements of the project should be undertaken within one training term. To achieve this, and to allow sufficient time to complete the project, the trainee should plan to undertake this project during the second year of training. This will require that the trainee liaise well in advance with a prospective Clinical Supervisor, in order to design a realistic and achievable project. Such a project could build on earlier research work undertaken by the Supervisor or the rehabilitation unit. Given the limited time available for this project, descriptive studies may be most appropriate.

The trainee must be the primary author and researcher, although collaboration with a fellow of the Faculty is permissible. Where such collaboration occurs, it is essential that the trainee have substantially participated in the design of the project, in data collection and final analysis. Verification of this level of involvement will be required. Collaboration with other Faculty trainees is NOT permitted.

The project must be designed and undertaken with the supervision of a nominated Fellow of the Faculty, who should review the final report of the project and approve it for submission.

The final presentation of the project should be in a format suitable for journal publication, and be no longer than 3000 words.

- The study should involve a patient or group of patients. A range of study types could be used. There is a hierarchy of study types, with randomised trials, cohort studies, case control studies, cross-sectional analyses and descriptive studies accepted in this order as having greater possibility of bias. The appropriate study type depends on the issue to be researched, but if a treatment is being evaluated, a randomised trial is generally necessary. It is acceptable for the trainee to conduct a pilot study, in order to develop the appropriate methodology for a larger clinical trial.

Projects could involve assessing the outcomes of rehabilitation programmes, investigating aspects of the rehabilitation process, or testing the effectiveness of treatments or techniques applicable to rehabilitation.

Where a project with a single patient or using qualitative methods is planned, the study must be approved in advance by the course convenor.

- Alternatively, trainees are permitted to submit a Position Paper that has been endorsed by the relevant AFRM Special Interest Group, as the research project for this module if it contains a systematic review that is of similar design and standard to a Cochrane Collaboration systematic review.

- Systematic reviews conducted using robust methods, for example those of the Cochrane Collaboration, may be acceptable for the research project. Where this is planned the project must be approved in advance by the course convenor.

- The project supervisor is required to countersign the project report to confirm that all of the above requirements have been met.
COURSE ASSESSMENT
Each research critique is worth 25% of the course mark.
The clinical research project is worth 50% of the course mark.

REFERENCES

COURSE COMPLETION
External Training Module 3 must be satisfactorily completed prior to admission to Fellowship. It is recommended that trainees submit this module by 15 September in their penultimate year of training to allow time for marking and resubmission of assignments initially marked ‘Resubmit’.

EXEMPTION OR PARTIAL EXEMPTION
When a trainee has already completed a research degree with a significant component related to research, for example Master of Public Health by treatise or where the trainee has completed a major published research project, exemption or partial exemption from this module may be granted according to the College’s Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.
Appendix 1:
Tips on Preventing Plagiarism

PREVENTING PLAGIARISM

Learning how to reference correctly and acknowledge all sources is a crucial part of academic and scholarly work. It is not merely an add-on but an integral part of the assignment preparation process. The more proficient a trainee becomes in referencing, he or she will develop a more critical mind and be able to evaluate more rigorously their sources.

All trainees will need to consider the following to avoid unintentional plagiarism:

- master correct referencing practices (most Universities have a range of resources on good referencing techniques — for example, The University of Melbourne and Monash University have developed Acknowledgement, an online resource to educate both staff and students on academic honesty and plagiarism issues — http://calt.monash.edu.au/staff-teaching/plagiarism/acknowledgement/about/index.html)
- attribute appropriately all cited materials (including written text, diagrams and images) where citations occur
- avoid taking short cuts when preparing assignments
- manage time efficiently and effectively when preparing assignments
- write out more than one draft of an assignment
- take the time to check carefully all quoted material used in assignments and ensure quotes/references are fully and correctly referenced.

Trainees should be familiar with the Faculty's strict policy on plagiarism. Please refer to: https://www.racp.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/academic-honesty-and-plagiarism-policy.pdf

The following module, developed by the University of Adelaide, is provided to assist understanding of what constitutes plagiarism: http://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/articulate/avoidingPlagiarism/player.html

Turnitin, a software program for plagiarism detection, also offers a range of webinars (free registration) http://turnitin.com/en_us/resources/category/preventing-plagiarism

Writing and grammar

It is expected that essays will have correct English expression, spelling and/or grammar. If there are significant deficiencies in this area, an essay will need to be resubmitted.

The following are useful introductory resources to academic writing:

- Academic Phrasebank (University of Manchester): http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/
- Academic writing (University of Hull): http://www2.hull.ac.uk/lli/skillsteam/essaysother.aspx