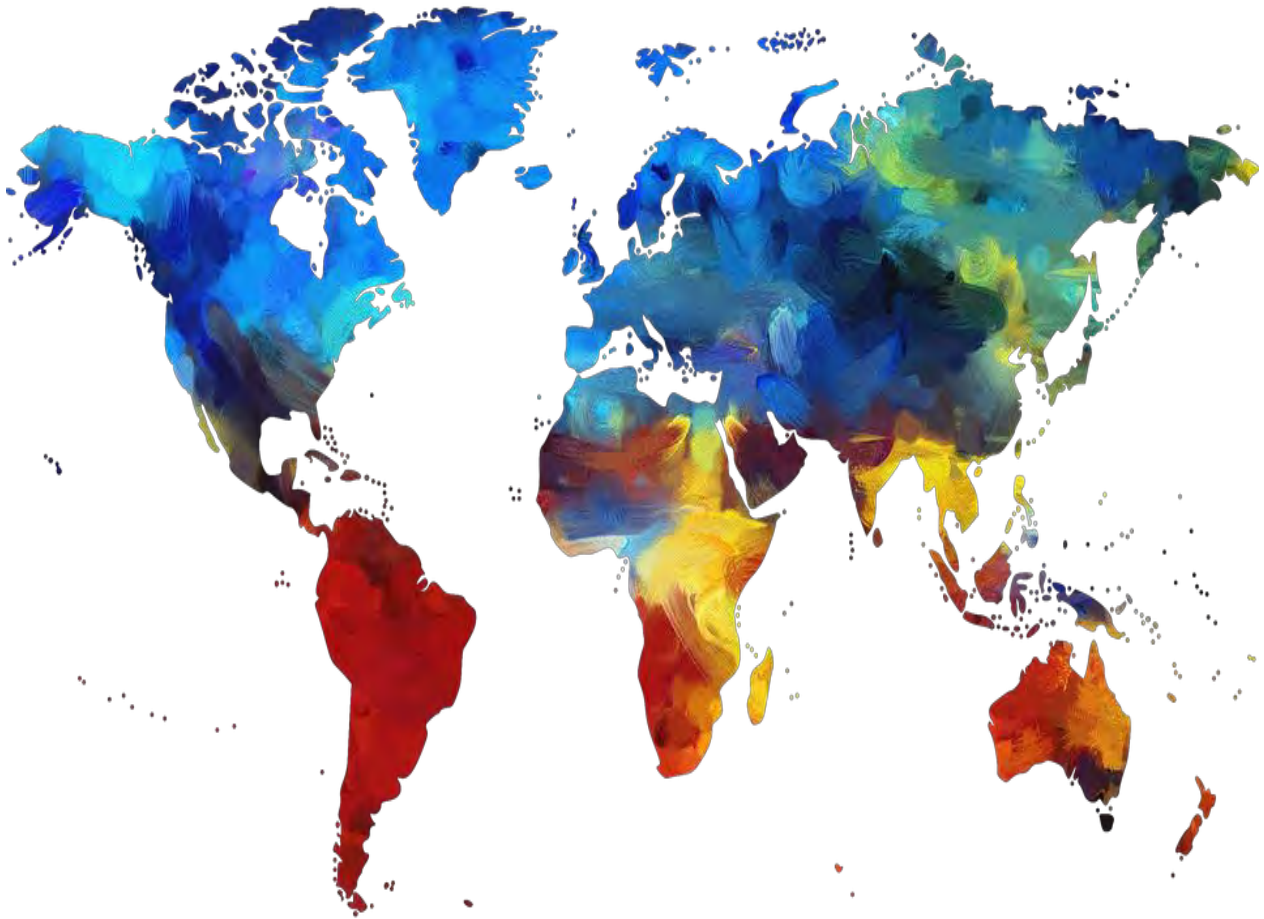




RACP
Specialists. Together
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OVERSEAS TRAINED PHYSICIANS GUIDELINES (AUSTRALIA)

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
What is specialist assessment?	2
Specialties we assess.....	3
Applying in multiple specialties	3
Limited scope of practice	3
Employment in Australia	4
Orientation into the Australian health system, jurisdiction and workplace.....	5
External assistance with your application.....	5
Fees	5
Eligibility requirements	6
Overview of the specialist assessment process	7
Application checklist	9
Stage 1: Interim assessment of comparability	10
RACP Accelerated Specialist Pathway	10
Standard Specialist Assessment Pathway	11
Summary of preliminary review	13
Definitions of comparability	13
Area of Need assessment.....	15
Ahpra registration	15
Stage 2: Ongoing assessment	16
Top up training.....	17
Peer review.....	19
Other requirements and resources.....	21
Monitoring during ongoing assessment.....	23
Stage 3: Final assessment	25
Benefits of RACP Fellowship	25
Timeframes for specialist assessment	26
Re-assessment	27
Withdrawal	28
Your responsibilities	28
Reconsideration, review or appeal of a College decision	30
Help with your application	30
Appendix	31
Definitions.....	32

Introduction

What is specialist assessment?

We're here to help you understand and navigate the specialist assessment process for overseas trained physicians and paediatricians (OTPs) who want to practise as independent specialists in Australia.

Before you apply for specialist registration with the Medical Board of Australia (MBA), the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) will assess your training, examinations, consultant experience and continuing professional development. This assessment will determine your comparability to a physician or paediatrician trained in Australia, not your competency as a doctor.

The RACP conducts the specialist assessment process on behalf of the MBA and according to the [MBA Standards for specialist medical college assessment of specialist international medical graduates](#). The RACP carries out the assessment of OTPs in line with the MBA guiding principles of fairness, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

Specialist training in Australia takes approximately six years; your overseas training will be compared against the RACP standards for [Basic Training](#) and [Advanced Training](#) in your specialty. Your overseas post-graduate experience will be compared against the standard of a first-year consultant working in Australia.

There are three possible outcomes of specialist assessment:

- 1. Substantially comparable** – you are at the standard of an Australian-trained specialist (at the level of a newly qualified Fellow of the RACP). Substantially comparable OTPs are required to complete up to twelve months of supervised practice.
- 2. Partially comparable** – gaps are identified but you will be able to reach the standard of an Australian-trained specialist within a maximum period of 24 months of supervised practice, including completing any further training with associated assessment/s.
- 3. Not comparable** – you will be unable to reach comparability within 24 months of supervised practice and must find a different pathway to registration in Australia.

Before applying for specialist assessment, please read carefully through these guidelines to ensure that you understand the requirements and your responsibilities in the process. We'll guide you along the way.

The RACP is not responsible for the following areas:

- Finding employment
- Immigration or visa requirements
- Medical registration
- Medicare provider status
- English language test requirements
- Primary source verification of international qualifications.

Specialties we assess

Addiction Medicine	General Paediatrics	Occupational & Environmental Medicine
Cardiology*	Geriatric Medicine	Paediatric Emergency Medicine
Clinical Genetics*	Immunology & Allergy*	Palliative Medicine*
Clinical Haematology*	Infectious Diseases*	Public Health Medicine
Clinical Pharmacology *	Medical Oncology*	Rehabilitation Medicine*
Community & Child Health	Neonatal & Perinatal Medicine	Respiratory Medicine*
Endocrinology*	Nephrology*	Rheumatology*
Gastroenterology*	Neurology*	Sleep Medicine*
General Medicine	Nuclear Medicine*	Sexual Health Medicine

Specialties with an asterisk (*) indicate specialties that can be assessed under either Adult Medicine or Paediatrics & Child Health.

Applying in multiple specialties

You may apply for specialist recognition in multiple specialties if you hold a verified specialist qualification in each of those specialties. Some OTPs are permitted to complete concurrent supervised practice (top up training and/or peer review) in both specialties, while other OTPs must undertake separate periods of supervised practice for each specialty. During your interim assessment, the RACP will determine whether you can complete this time concurrently or not.

Please check with us if you cannot find your specialty in the list above. We may be able to point you to a different specialist medical college who can assess it.

Limited scope of practice

We accept applications for specialist assessment in some limited scopes of practice that fall within the broader scope of a recognised specialty, e.g. Non-Interventional Cardiology (instead of the full scope of Cardiology) or Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine (instead of the full scope of General Paediatrics).

To be eligible for assessment, the practice must be viable in Australia and you must demonstrate a high level of subspecialist skill within your limited scope. This means significant experience in your country of training that is substantially comparable to the skills of an Australian-trained subspecialist.

You cannot be found partially comparable in a limited scope of practice because you must demonstrate that you have the knowledge, skills, professional attributes and experience to practise competently and safely in your limited scope of practice.

If you are found to be substantially comparable and successfully complete specialist assessment, then the MBA will impose conditions on your specialist registration which will limit your practice to that scope only. The conditions will be published on the public [Register of Medical Practitioners](#).

Employment in Australia

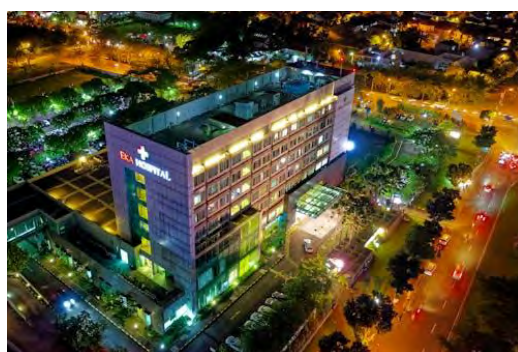
It is important to note that the RACP, as an education provider, is unable to find employment for OTPs, Trainees or Fellows. Our role is limited by the MBA to assessing an applicant's comparability with an Australian-trained physician or paediatrician in the same specialty. It is your responsibility to research potential employment opportunities and to secure a suitable top up training or peer review position in Australia within the timeframe specified. Your position must meet the specific requirements outlined by the RACP.

We strongly recommend that you research potential employment opportunities before applying for specialist assessment. Securing a suitable position is likely to be very competitive.

If you are found to be partially or substantially comparable, you will have a maximum of two years to start your requirements in Australia. All requirements must be completed in Australia.

To find a job, we recommend that you:

- review the [medical positions vacant](#) on the RACP website
- review state/territory recruitment webpages such as:
 - [NSW Health](#)
 - [Western Australia Country Health Service](#)
 - [WA Department of Health](#)
 - [NT Department of Health](#)
 - [SA Health](#)
 - [Department of Health Victoria](#)
 - [Queensland Health](#)
 - [ACT Health](#)
 - [Department of Health and Human Services Tasmania](#)
- review the [Doctor Connect website](#)
- contact hospitals directly
- contact medical recruitment agencies.



Orientation into the Australian health system, jurisdiction and workplace

We recognise that as you begin to work within the Australian health system, you will need to speak with your employer to incorporate ongoing orientation into your period of supervised practice. It is important that you consider the challenges of working in a different health environment and speak to your supervisors, peer reviewers or your Case Officer if you need further assistance.

Additional support can be found within the RACP OTP Orientation Program online course that you are required to complete within your first three months of supervised practice. We recommend that you complete this course before you start your employment. You may also repeat modules if you need.

Your employer should provide you with appropriate orientation into their workplace and the local health jurisdiction. We recognise that you will need to spend some of your top up training time or peer review time orientating into your new workplace.

External assistance with your application

You may use external agents to assist with completing your application, such as medical recruitment agencies, a mentor or family member. However, you must disclose the name of the person and/or agency, and the level of assistance that you received in your application. All information provided in your application must be written by you personally and be an accurate record of your own experience. The RACP has the right to request any additional information and documentary evidence during the assessment of your application.

Any application found to contain non-original or misrepresented content may be deemed invalid and may not be considered further. The RACP has an obligation to forward any such breaches to the health regulators, which may impact your ability to gain registration in Australia or Aotearoa New Zealand.

Fees

Non-refundable fees apply at each stage of the specialist assessment process. Please ensure that you are aware of the relevant fees before applying to the RACP. Your assessment will not progress to the next stage until you pay the required fee as listed [on our website](#).

Eligibility requirements

Points 1-3 below are minimum eligibility requirements for a specialist assessment application to be accepted by the RACP. If you are unsure whether you meet these requirements, you should ask the OTP Team for pre-assessment advice before applying. Once you submit your application, you will be charged the OTP Application Submission fee which is non-refundable, even if you are found to be not comparable.

1

Qualification: You are required to hold a verified specialist qualification in the specialty being assessed and to provide evidence of current or previous specialist registration in that specialty.

2

Specialist training: If you have limited experience at the level of a consultant physician or paediatrician, you must have successfully completed a minimum of four years of accredited overseas specialist training. Accredited specialist training must be formally recognised in your country of training.

3

Consultant experience: If you have less than four years of accredited overseas specialist training, you should have a minimum of three years consultant experience at the level of an Australasian trained physician or paediatrician in the specialty in which you are applying for assessment.

The following points also apply if relevant to your application:

4

Training on the [Short Term Training in a Medical Specialty Pathway](#) in Australia is not accredited or monitored by the RACP. Short-term training that is not accredited by an overseas training institution cannot be recognised for the minimum period of accredited overseas specialist training as outlined in item 2 above. Experience in Australia under general Ahpra registration is also not recognised for items 2 or 3 above.

5

OTPs who have attempted the RACP Training Program but have been withdrawn from the program by the RACP (including but not limited to exhausting the attempt limit in RACP Basic Training and Faculty and Chapter Examinations) are not eligible to apply for specialist assessment unless they can provide evidence of further accredited overseas training and experience since exiting the RACP Training Program.

6

OTPs wishing to apply for re-assessment must be able to demonstrate significant further overseas training and/or consultant experience before applying for re-assessment with the RACP. You cannot apply for re-assessment within two years of your previous interim assessment decision or final assessment decision.

Overview of the specialist assessment process

The specialist assessment process can take between six months and four years to complete. Your friendly Case Officer will guide you through the process.

Specialist assessment application

1

Apply for primary source verification to the AMC

Before applying to the RACP for specialist assessment, you must have your primary medical degree and your specialist qualifications verified by the Australian Medical Council (AMC). Primary source verification confirms that your qualification documents are genuine.

For further information about primary source verification, please refer to the [AMC website](#) and the [Electronic Portfolio of International Credentials](#).

2

Send application to the RACP

After completing verification of your qualifications and ensuring that you meet [Ahpra's English language skills registration standard](#), submit your specialist assessment application to the RACP. Upon receipt of your application, we will invoice you for the OTP Application Submission Fee.

Interim assessment of comparability

3

Undergo assessment of comparability

If you are eligible for specialist assessment, you must pay the OTP Assessment of Comparability Fee to proceed to the next stage of interim assessment.

You may be required to attend an interview as part of your interim assessment. The interview provides an opportunity for experienced Fellows of the RACP to discuss your training and consultant experience with you.

You will have the opportunity to review your application documents, including referee reports and the interview report, before the RACP makes an interim assessment decision.

4

Receive interim assessment decision

The RACP determines your comparability to an Australian-trained specialist. The interim assessment decision will specify the requirements you must complete to obtain specialist recognition in Australia.

If you are found not comparable to an Australian-trained physician or paediatrician, the specialist assessment process will end at this stage.

Ongoing assessment

5

Complete supervised practice

If the interim assessment decision is that you are substantially or partially comparable to an Australian-trained physician or paediatrician, you can start your requirements for specialist recognition. You must pay the OTP Work-Based Assessment Annual Fee at this stage before starting top up training or peer review.

Your requirements may include:

- work-based assessments
- a research project
- top up training
- peer review
- a practice visit
- OTP orientation program
- cultural safety course
- multisource feedback (MSF).

Final assessment

6

Receive final assessment decision

The RACP assesses whether you have successfully completed your requirements for specialist recognition.

If you have satisfactorily completed your requirements, the RACP will notify the Australian Medical Council (AMC) and recommend you for specialist recognition. In most cases, the RACP will also recommend you for Fellowship of the appropriate Division, Faculty or Chapter of the RACP. The RACP's Member Support team will contact you to advise how to apply for Fellowship.

If you do not complete your requirements within the designated time, you will not achieve specialist recognition.

7

Contact Ahpra to apply for specialist registration

8

Apply for Fellowship of the RACP

Application checklist

1. Review the information in these guidelines before applying for specialist assessment.
2. Complete [primary source verification](#) of your qualifications via the AMC before applying to the RACP. You may also need to complete a satisfactory English language test according to [Ahpra's English language skills registration standard](#).
3. Submit the relevant documentation as detailed below.

The following items are mandatory. Your application will not progress until all of the below documents are received by the RACP. Please submit all documents electronically to the RACP OTP Team email address: OTP@racp.edu.au.

- Proof of [primary source verification](#) (PSV) from the Australian Medical Council (AMC)
- Proof of completion of an appropriate English language examination (if relevant) according to [Ahpra's English language skills registration standard](#)
- Certificate of specialist registration from the relevant overseas registration body, to demonstrate your status and eligibility to practise as a specialist in your country of training.
- EPIC identification form
- Logbook of procedures (relevant to procedural specialties only). Logbooks are normally completed during specialist training and should be signed by supervisors or the institution that accredited your specialist training.
- If a logbook is required with your application, you will also need to submit a one-page summary sheet with the total numbers of procedures listed in the logbook.
- Documentary evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD):
 - a record/transcript of CPD activities (no longer than one page) and/or
 - a list of CPD activities for the past 24 months and/or
 - a CPD certificate of completion from the relevant overseas body.
- Completed and signed [RACP specialist assessment application form](#)
- Payment of the OTP Application Submission fee online (you will receive an invoice from the RACP after submission of your application)

The following items may be required. Please submit them with your application if relevant.

- Certified copy of change of name documentation (if your name has changed)
- Disclosure of personal information form (if using a third party to assist with your application)
- Area of Need application form (if concurrently applying for Area of Need assessment)

After you submit your application for specialist assessment, you will be allocated a Case Officer who will advise you if any further documents are required. You will have six months to provide the required documents before your application expires.

Stage 1: Interim assessment of comparability

The interim assessment determines your comparability with an Australian-trained specialist.

To determine comparability, the RACP will:

- review the documentation you have provided in your application
- request reports from your nominated referees
- conduct an interview if necessary
- make any other enquiries it considers necessary.

We will consider your training, examinations, experience, recent practice and continuing professional development as a whole, to assess your comparability to an Australian-trained physician or paediatrician.

When assessing comparability, we consider technical clinical skills as well as the non-technical professional attributes described in the [RACP Professional Practice Framework](#).

An interim assessment determines if you are substantially comparable, partially comparable, or not comparable to an Australian-trained physician or paediatrician. An interview may be required as part of your interim assessment.

In assessing recency of practice, the RACP adheres to the MBA's [Recency of Practice registration standard](#). If you do not meet this standard, you may be found partially comparable or not comparable.

If you are found to be partially comparable or substantially comparable, you can progress to ongoing assessment under supervised practice to complete the requirements set by the RACP.

If you are found to be not comparable, you cannot progress and will need to find an alternative pathway to registration in Australia.

RACP Accelerated Specialist Pathway

If you hold an acceptable specialist qualification that has historically been found substantially comparable, e.g. a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) from the United Kingdom, you may be eligible for the Accelerated Specialist Pathway.

OTPs who are eligible for this pathway do not normally require an interview, so they receive their outcome quicker than through the Standard Specialist Assessment Pathway (which involves an interview). Successful applicants on the Accelerated Specialist Pathway require 6-12 months supervised practice before they are eligible for full specialist recognition in Australia.

Your Case Officer will advise you if your case is eligible for the Accelerated Specialist Pathway (this cannot be requested by the applicant). You will need to pay the OTP Assessment of Comparability fee before your application progresses through the Accelerated Specialist Pathway.

If gaps are identified in your application, you may be referred for an interview and moved to the [Standard Specialist Assessment Pathway](#).

Please refer to [our website](#) for an up-to-date list of eligible qualifications for the Accelerated Specialist Pathway. All other acceptable qualifications will be processed through our Standard Specialist Assessment Pathway and will require an interview.

Applicants in Paediatric Emergency Medicine are not eligible for the Accelerated Specialist Pathway. They must be interviewed under the Standard Specialist Assessment Pathway because there are specific requirements in Australia around exposure to Adult Medicine and trauma which require clarification.

[Our website](#) includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the RACP Accelerated Specialist Pathway and how it compares with the MBA's Expedited Specialist Pathway.

Standard Specialist Assessment Pathway



OTPs who are eligible for the Standard Specialist Assessment Pathway need to be interviewed before a comparability decision can be made by the RACP. Successful applicants will require 6-24 months of supervised practice before they're eligible for full specialist recognition in Australia.

The interview provides an opportunity for two or three experienced Fellows of the RACP to discuss your training and consultant experience with you. They will assess how your training, examinations, consultant experience and continuing professional development compare with an Australian-trained physician or paediatrician in the same specialty. This is not an examination and there are no clinical test questions.

The interview lasts for approximately one hour. You are encouraged to research the Australian healthcare system and ask questions during the interview. Please have a copy of your application form available during your interview for easy reference.

Interviews are usually conducted via videoconference and are arranged according to the availability of your interview panel. We'll send you videoconference details once your interview date is confirmed.

You will need to cover all costs related to your interview, including access to a fast and secure internet connection and a suitable device with a camera. Your Case Officer will arrange a videoconference test call 1-2 weeks before your interview. During this call, your Case Officer will provide you with further information, test your audio/video/internet connection, and answer any questions you may have about the interview and assessment process at that stage.

You will need to have photo identification available for your videoconference test with your Case Officer. The test call will last approximately 10-15 minutes.

There will be a waiting period of up to three months for your interview. The RACP processes applications in the order that they are received.

How to prepare for your interview

The purpose of the interview is to gather further information about how your experience compares with the scope of practice of a physician or paediatrician in the same specialty in Australia.

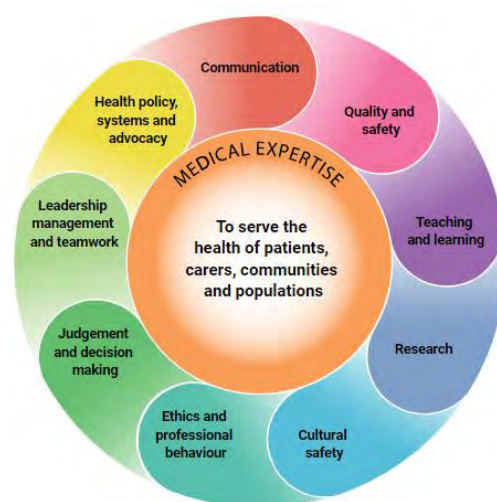
The interviewers will prepare questions based on the information you have provided in your application. Questions may cover the following areas:

- basic or core training
- advanced or specialist training
- formative and summative assessments completed during training
- examinations
- consultant practice
- recency of practice
- participation in continuing professional development
- quality assurance practices
- contributions to the field of medicine
- your readiness for practice in Australia.

You will need to have a good understanding of the Australian physician or paediatrician training program to demonstrate how your training, assessment and experience compares.

We recommend that you research the relevant RACP [Basic Training program](#), [Advanced Training program](#) and [Professional Practice Framework](#) in preparation for your interview.

At the end of the interview, there will be an opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have about specialist practice in Australia.



Summary of preliminary review

To ensure procedural fairness and transparency, you will be provided with a summary of preliminary review (SPR) before your interim assessment decision is determined by the RACP. The SPR will include copies of the documentation obtained by the RACP which you have not yet reviewed, including referee reports and your assessment report. You will have 21 days to respond to the SPR with any further information you would like considered by the RACP before an interim assessment decision is made. If no response is received from you within 21 days, your application will proceed to the next stage.

Definitions of comparability

Specialist assessment determines your comparability to an Australian-trained specialist. We use the definitions of comparability provided by the MBA, which have been adapted to make them specific to the RACP:

- Substantially comparable
- Partially comparable
- Not comparable.

Substantially comparable

‘Substantially comparable’ means that you are at the standard of an Australian-trained specialist commencing practice (at the level of a newly qualified Fellow).

Applicants who are found substantially comparable are assessed as suitable to undertake the intended scope of practice, taking full responsibility for individual patients with oversight by approved peer reviewers.

To be considered substantially comparable, you must satisfy the RACP’s requirements in relation to previous overseas training, assessment, recent specialist practice, overseas experience and continuing professional development (CPD).

If you are found to be substantially comparable, you will be required to undertake a period of supervised practice under peer review in Australia. Peer review is assessed at the level of a first-year consultant. The length of peer review and nature of assessment is determined by the RACP on a case-by-case basis, but your peer review period will not exceed 12 months full-time equivalent (FTE). Peer review positions must be approved by the RACP before you can start work in the position.

After satisfactory completion of your peer review requirements, you will be eligible for Fellowship and may apply for full registration as a specialist.

Partially comparable

'Partially comparable' means that you will be able to reach the standard of an Australian-trained specialist within a maximum period of 24 months (FTE) of supervised practice, including completing any further training with associated assessment/s.

Applicants who are assessed as partially comparable are suitable to undertake their intended scope of practice in a supervised capacity.

If you are found to be partially comparable, you will need to complete a period of top up training. Top up training is assessed at the level of a final-year RACP Advanced Trainee. During this time, you will undertake upskilling with associated assessments under supervisors approved by the RACP. After successful completion of your top up training requirements, you will be able to progress to practise under peer review.

The length of supervised practice and nature of assessment is determined by the RACP on a case-by-case basis, but your supervised practice period will not exceed 24 months FTE. Top up training and peer review positions must be approved by the RACP before you can start work in the positions.

After satisfactory completion of your top up training and peer review requirements, you will be eligible for Fellowship and may apply for full registration as a specialist.

Not comparable

'Not comparable' means that you will be unable to reach the standard of an Australian-trained specialist within 24 months (FTE) of supervised practice.

Applicants who are assessed as not comparable do not meet the requirements of the RACP on previous overseas training, assessment, recent specialist practice, overseas experience and CPD.

If you are found to be not comparable, you cannot progress with specialist assessment and will need to explore other [pathways to registration for international medical graduates](#) in Australia, or apply for the RACP Training Program and [recognition of prior learning](#).



Area of Need assessment

Area of Need assessment is for OTPs who have been offered a position in Australia in a designated 'area of need', where there is a recognised shortage of specialists in a particular field. The RACP is not responsible for designating Area of Need positions or assisting applicants to find an Area of Need position; positions are determined by the relevant state or territory health authority. Your employer will advise you if the position you have been offered is designated in an Area of Need.

If you have secured an Area of Need position, you will need to be assessed by the RACP before you can start the role. Due to the demanding nature of these positions, the RACP will only support your appointment if there is suitable supervision available and you are found to be substantially comparable to an Australian-trained specialist.

We will assess your application to determine whether you have the specific training and experience required for the position. We will decide that you are either suitable or not suitable to undertake the responsibilities described in the Area of Need position description.

If you are found to be suitable, the RACP will determine any recommendations including proposed restrictions on scope of practice.

A separate fee applies for Area of Need applications as listed [on our website](#).

All applicants seeking Area of Need assessment must apply at the same time or after specialist assessment in the relevant specialty/specialties.

Ahpra registration

If you receive an interim assessment decision of partially comparable or substantially comparable, the RACP will notify the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) that you are eligible for registration for the purpose of progressing your specialist assessment requirements.

Most OTPs need to apply to Ahpra for limited registration to complete their specialist assessment requirements. However, this may not be necessary if you already have general (non-specialist) registration in Australia.

Please [contact Ahpra directly](#) for information on the appropriate registration pathway for you.



Stage 2: Ongoing assessment

If your interim assessment decision is partially or substantially comparable, the RACP will give you requirements for supervised practice in Australia. These requirements must be completed to achieve specialist recognition in Australia, even if you have considerable senior experience overseas.

The purpose of ongoing assessment is to ensure that you are supported in your transition to practise in Australia and to confirm that you are able to practise safely and competently at the level of an Australian-trained specialist.

Ongoing assessment requirements are determined on a case-by-case basis and may include:

- supervised practice under top up training
- supervised practice under peer review
- work-based assessment tasks
- multisource feedback (MSF)
- a research project (in accordance with the respective RACP Advanced Training curriculum)
- examinations (for Faculties and Chapters only)
- OTP orientation program
- cultural safety course
- participation in continuing professional development (CPD).

You may be required to complete additional assessments depending on your progress.

You must complete your training and assessments in the order specified by the RACP. Any requirements for supervised practice under top up training must be completed before you can progress to practise under peer review.

If you are a dual specialist, we may consider applications for positions that address concurrent practice in both specialties or may provide an additional 12 months for you to commence requirements in your second specialty.

During your ongoing assessment, you are permitted to take a total of eight weeks (40 working days) of leave per 12 months of supervised practice during top up training or peer review. If leave is taken for four consecutive weeks or more, please notify your Case Officer as this time needs to be added to your reporting period. Part-time positions and OTPs completing supervision periods shorter than 12 months may take leave calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Your responsibilities during periods of top up training and/or peer review include:

- securing a suitable position which must be prospectively approved with appropriate supervision/peer review arrangements
- ensuring you have regular meetings with your supervisors/peer reviewers and that the required documentation is completed for each reporting period

- engaging fully with the top up training/peer review process and responding constructively to feedback and areas for development
- communicating with the RACP at all times regarding concerns, changes and developments that impact your top up training/peer review arrangements.

Applicants and supervisors/peer reviewers must also be familiar with the [MBA guidelines for supervised practice for international medical graduates](#).

Top up training

If you are found to be partially comparable, you will be required to undertake a period of top up training as part of your work-based assessment.

Top up training is a period of supervised practice that allows a partially comparable OTP to address identified gaps in the competencies required for Australian specialist practice. Top up training is usually required for 6 months or 12 months (cannot exceed 12 months). Top up training is assessed at the level of a final-year RACP Advanced Trainee and is followed by a period of practice under peer review.

You must secure a suitable training position and apply to the RACP for approval before you begin your top up training. Top up training must be undertaken in Australia.

Top up training requirements

The requirements for top up training are determined on a case-by-case basis. If applicable, you will be notified of these requirements when you receive your interim assessment decision. The following requirements generally apply:

1. All top up training positions must be approved by the RACP before you can start work in the position. Previous practice in Australia cannot be retrospectively approved for top up training.
2. The Workplace-Based Assessment annual fee (as listed on [our website](#)) must be paid before you start work in the approved position. Any time worked in top up training before the fee is paid may not count towards your requirements. This fee must be paid each year of supervised practice, whether you work full-time or part-time.
3. Generally, each top up training position must be minimum 0.5 FTE to ensure quality assessment, supervision and support. This also ensures that you can complete your requirements for top up training and peer review within the regulatory timeframe.
4. The RACP recommends Ahpra Level 3 supervision for OTPs completing top up training; however, your employer will propose an appropriate supervision level in the application for top up training. Ahpra will decide your final level of supervision.

5. Top up training positions must be undertaken in a [site accredited for RACP Advanced Training](#) in the respective specialty.
6. To ensure that OTPs have high quality top up training, the number of OTP positions should not exceed the number of RACP accredited training positions at the same site for the same specialty. OTP positions are in addition to RACP training positions.
7. Top up training can be completed in multiple locations, but at maximum three sites concurrently.
8. You must have at least two onsite supervisors at each training site who are registered consultants in the same specialty, unless otherwise specified by the RACP. Visiting Medical Officers, locums or doctors who visit the site infrequently are not acceptable supervisors for top up training.
9. At least one supervisor must have held Fellowship of the relevant RACP Division, Faculty or Chapter for a minimum of three years. All other supervisors must have held Fellowship of the relevant RACP Division, Faculty or Chapter for a minimum of 12 months.

How to apply for top up training

You will need to find a suitable top up training position at one of the [accredited training sites for RACP Advanced Training](#) in your specialty. When you have secured an appropriate position, please submit a top up training application form and position description to the OTP Team. The application form should include the roles and responsibilities of the position; generic position descriptions or letters of offer are not accepted as the training program needs to be relevant to you.

Your Case Officer will provide you with the top up training application form when you are eligible to apply for top up training. We will assess the roles and responsibilities of the position as well as the proposed supervision arrangement, to ensure that they meet your top up training requirements. Review of your top up training application may take approximately six weeks, so please submit it for approval to OTP@racp.edu.au as soon as you have secured a position.

What happens during top up training

During top up training, your supervisors will assess whether you are operating at the level of a final-year RACP Advanced Trainee. Top up training requires you to have regular meetings with your supervisors and for there to be direct supervision of your clinical practice. Supervisors should guide and facilitate your development of knowledge and skills, as outlined in the [Advanced Training curricula](#). Both technical clinical skills and non-technical professional attributes described in the RACP's [Professional Practice Framework](#) are considered important. Satisfactory reports of competency are required in all specified domains every three to six months. After successful completion of your top up training requirements, you will be able to progress to practise under peer review.

Peer review

Peer review is a period of supervised practice to ensure that your performance is comparable to an Australian-trained specialist, assessed at the level of a first-year consultant. It is a supportive process that assists your transition into the Australian healthcare system and connects you with experienced Australian specialists who can be mentors while you are new to specialist practice in Australia. All OTPs are required to undertake peer review in Australia.

Where possible, the RACP will be flexible with supervision arrangements to support workforce needs. Peer review arrangements are assessed on a case-by-case basis. It is essential that robust mechanisms are in place both to assess and support your transition to Australian practice.

Peer review requirements

1. The RACP determines the duration and specific peer review requirements for each individual OTP. All OTPs must satisfactorily complete a minimum of six months FTE of peer review.
2. All peer review positions must be approved by the RACP before you can start work in the position. Previous practice in Australia cannot be retrospectively approved for peer review.
3. The Workplace-Based Assessment annual fee (as listed on [our website](#)) must be paid before you start work in the approved position. Any time worked in peer review before the fee is paid may not count towards your requirements. This fee must be paid each year of supervised practice, whether you work full-time or part-time.
4. Generally, each peer review position must be minimum 0.5 FTE to ensure quality assessment, supervision and support. This also ensures that you can complete your requirements for peer review within the regulatory timeframe.
5. The RACP recommends Ahpra Level 4 supervision for OTPs completing peer review; however, your employer will propose an appropriate supervision level in the application for peer review. Ahpra will decide your final level of supervision.
6. The peer review position should be at the level of a consultant physician but must be at least at the level of a senior registrar with Level 4 Ahpra supervision. If the position is at a level of a senior registrar, your peer review reports should explicitly state that you practiced independently with appropriate supervision.
7. The position should allow you to practise independently. The role of your peer reviewers is to provide you with oversight and constructive feedback in contrast to the close supervision that would be expected during training.
8. The position must expose you to the full range of clinical activities required in your specialty, so that the RACP can assess your competence for independent and safe practice.

9. Both technical clinical skills and the professional attributes described in the RACP's [Professional Practice Framework](#) will be observed and assessed by your peer reviewers.
10. The first six months of peer review must take place either in a public health setting or in a private site that is accredited for a minimum of six months of Advanced Training in the same specialty. After completing six months FTE of satisfactory peer review, you may be able to undertake your remaining peer review in a non-accredited private practice setting. Generally, practice in a public setting is preferable as it allows OTPs to experience work in the full scope of their specialty in Australia, with exposure to a different case mix than private practice.
11. Peer review can be completed in multiple locations, but at maximum three sites concurrently.
12. Generally, you must have at least two onsite peer reviewers at each site who are registered consultants in your specialty. Where only one onsite peer reviewer is available in your specialty, you will be required to have a second onsite peer reviewer in a different RACP specialty and a third offsite peer reviewer in your specialty.
13. At least one peer reviewer must have held Fellowship of the relevant RACP Division, Faculty or Chapter for a minimum of three years. All other peer reviewers must have held Fellowship of the relevant RACP Division, Faculty or Chapter for a minimum of 12 months.

How to apply for peer review

After you have secured an appropriate position, please submit a peer review application form and position description to the OTP Team. The application form should include the roles and responsibilities of the position; generic position descriptions or letters of offer are not accepted as the supervision plan needs to be relevant to you.

Your Case Officer will provide you with the peer review application form when you are eligible to apply for peer review. We will assess the roles and responsibilities of the position as well as the suitability of the peer reviewers. Review of your peer review application may take approximately six weeks, so please submit it for approval to OTP@racp.edu.au as soon as you have secured a position.

What happens during peer review

During this period, your peer reviewers will assess whether you are practicing at the level of an Australian-trained specialist in their first year of consultant practice. Peer review requires you to have regular meetings with your peer reviewers, and for them to have direct observation of your practice. Both technical clinical skills and non-technical professional attributes described in the RACP's [Professional Practice Framework](#) are considered important. Satisfactory reports of competency are required in all specified domains every three to six months.

After successful completion of your peer review requirements, you will be able to apply for full specialist registration and Fellowship of the RACP.

Reduction of peer review period

If you have been assessed as partially or substantially comparable, you will be required to complete a period of satisfactory peer review. The required period of peer review is usually 12 months (FTE), but a minimum peer review period of 6 months (FTE) may be permitted subject to satisfactory progress.

For a reduction to be considered, you will need to provide a signed letter of support from each peer reviewer. Generally, the RACP will not grant a reduction in peer review until you have practised in Australia in an appropriately supervised position for a minimum of six months FTE, with all reports satisfactory. Please note, the OTP Workplace-Based Assessment annual fee is non-refundable if your peer review period is reduced.

Other requirements and resources

OTP orientation program

If you are approved for supervised practice, you will need to complete the online [RACP OTP orientation program](#) to help you understand the Australian healthcare environment and culture. You must complete the program within the first three months of starting your requirements in Australia.

Cultural safety course

During supervised practice, you will also need to complete a cultural safety course. You may complete the RACP's online [Australian Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety Course](#) or complete an alternative course provided by your Australian employer.

The cultural safety course prepares you to work and interact with Australia's First Nations peoples. The cultural safety course must be completed within your first six months of practice under specialist assessment in Australia.



Continuing professional development (CPD)

During your supervised practice under peer review, you will need to actively participate in the RACP continuing professional development program called 'MyCPD'. Access to MyCPD is free and your participation will be monitored as part of your peer review assessment.



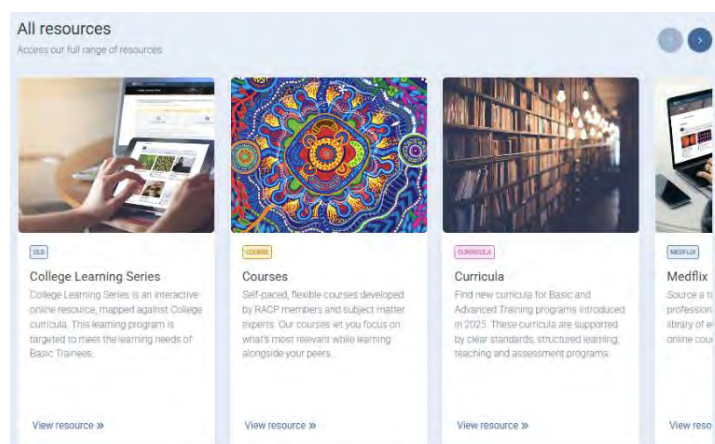
We recommend that you record your CPD activities in the online MyCPD platform regularly, including:

- educational reading, courses or conferences
- meetings with your peer reviewers
- hospital and multidisciplinary meetings
- audits and incident reporting/monitoring
- activities addressing ethics, professional behaviour, cultural safety and health inequities.

Your Case Officer will organise your access to MyCPD when it is required. You can find more information about MyCPD on [our website](#).

RACP Online Learning

The RACP is dedicated to delivering quality online education for all members. RACP Online Learning is your home for learning resources covering a range of clinical and professional topics, designed to support your ongoing learning and professional development. Explore our latest clinical and professional learning resources, including podcasts, webinars, courses, educational videos, handbooks, and readings at <https://elearning.racp.edu.au/>.



OTP Connect

OTP Connect is an online discussion forum that enables you to connect with fellow OTPs who are currently going through or who have already completed the specialist assessment process. It's a safe and supportive space to ask questions, share ideas and explore topics of interest with your peers. Your Case Officer will let you know the login details for OTP Connect when your application is processed.

RACP support program

The RACP Support Program is a free 24/7, fully confidential and independent help line for Fellows and trainees. The program provides members with access to confidential counselling, coaching and support for workplace and personal issues. Further details are available on [our website](#).



Monitoring during ongoing assessment

Changes to approved positions

Your approved position and supervision arrangements must be in place throughout the approved period of supervised practice. If your circumstances change and you do not inform us, the period of top up training or peer review may not be recognised for specialist assessment.

You must disclose any changes in supervisors, peer reviewers, supervision arrangements, responsibilities, or work timetables to the RACP for approval.

If a supervisor or peer reviewer is going to be absent for more than four consecutive weeks, an alternative supervisor/peer reviewer needs to be nominated and approved by the RACP before these new arrangements start.

Unsatisfactory progress

If your supervisors/peer reviewers rate that your progress is unsatisfactory or if you fail an assessment, the RACP may:

- require that you complete additional assessments e.g. multisource feedback
- require that you complete additional learning and development e.g. a communication course
- require that you complete additional time under top up training or peer review
- conduct a practice visit
- downgrade your interim assessment decision (comparability status).

It is recommended that an Improving Performance Action Plan (IPAP) be implemented by your supervisors/peer reviewers within the first three months of unsatisfactory progress. Your supervisors/peer reviewers can implement an IPAP at any time during your supervised practice.

If unsatisfactory progress continues and there are significant concerns for patient safety, your comparability status may be downgraded (i.e. from substantially comparable to partially comparable or not comparable, or from partially comparable to not comparable). If you choose to move to a new site, your IPAP will be shared with the new supervisors/peer reviewers to ensure that you receive adequate support in the identified areas for improvement.

In some instances, the RACP may decide to conduct a practice visit – a one-day site visit by two RACP OTP assessors. During the day, the assessors will review your records, observe procedures and interactions with patients, and meet with your supervisors/peer reviewers. If you are required to undertake this assessment, you will need to pay the practice visit fee as listed on [our website](#).

The RACP may withdraw support for your specialist assessment and Ahpra registration if you do not meet RACP requirements during the assessment process.

Problems and disagreements

Most supervisor and peer reviewer relationships are effective and supportive, but sometimes there can be disagreement between an OTP and their supervisors/peer reviewers. You and your supervisors/peer reviewers should make every effort to work together professionally to resolve any issues, communication problems or disagreements in your regular meetings. If serious issues arise, we advise you to contact your employer's Human Resources department.

We encourage OTPs and their supervisors/peer reviewers to communicate with the RACP as soon as possible if you consider that the supervision relationship is not effective or that the other party is not meeting their responsibilities. It is much more effective to raise issues early rather than wait to make a complaint at the end of the supervision period.

For example, you are encouraged to contact us if:

- you are not having regular meetings with supervisors/peer reviewers
- a supervisor/peer reviewer is not giving you feedback
- you cannot reach agreement with a supervisor/peer reviewer about your performance.

Your supervisors/peer reviewers are encouraged to contact us if:

- you are not attending regular meetings with them
- the supervisor/peer reviewer is concerned about your unsatisfactory performance
- you are not responsive to their feedback.

You may leave your approved top up training/peer review arrangement at any time for any reason; however, reports will still be required by your supervisors/peer reviewers up to the date when you leave your approved position. You will need to secure another appropriate position (with prospective approval from the RACP) before you can continue your top up training or peer review.

If an Improving Performance Action Plan (IPAP) was required at any stage of top up training or peer review, the IPAP will be shared with all future supervisors/peer reviewers. This is to ensure that you receive sufficient support with your areas for development at any new sites.

Stage 3: Final assessment

After you have completed all your specialist assessment requirements, we will conduct a final check of documentation to confirm that you are ready to practise as an independent specialist in Australia.







Once you have passed the final assessment stage, we will:

- provide you with a report confirming that you have completed the RACP’s requirements for specialist recognition
- notify Ahpra that you are eligible for full specialist registration
- invite you to apply for Fellowship of the RACP in the relevant Division, Faculty or Chapter.



Benefits of RACP Fellowship

Benefits of Fellowship with the RACP include:

 <p>RACP post-nominal</p> <p>Use of the relevant RACP post-nominal in your title, a form of specialist recognition linked to training and specialist practice</p>	 <p>RACP Online Learning</p> <p>Access to RACP Online Learning, which has a wide range of quality resources, curated collections, and self-paced online courses</p>
 <p>MyCPD</p> <p>Access to the accredited RACP platform ‘MyCPD’, to fulfil your professional development requirements</p>	 <p>Events</p> <p>Access to a professional network and events</p>
 <p>RACP membership benefits</p> <p>Access to RACP membership benefits</p>	 <p>RACP Support Program</p> <p>Access to the RACP Support Program</p>



Training and education

Involvement in Australian training and education



Advocacy

Involvement in advocacy for your profession

We look forward to welcoming you as a new Fellow.

Timeframes for specialist assessment

The RACP adheres to the timeframes for assessment listed in the [MBA Standards for specialist medical college assessment of specialist international medical graduates](#). We will provide you with clear instructions on the timeframes for your specialist assessment requirements.

Interim assessment decision

Your interim assessment decision of comparability (i.e. substantially comparable, partially comparable or not comparable) is valid for two years.

If you are found to be partially or substantially comparable, you must secure a suitable position and start your requirements in Australia within two years from the date that you were notified of your interim assessment decision.

Partially comparable

If you are found to be partially comparable, the maximum timeframe for completing your specialist assessment requirements is up to four years to complete up to 24 months FTE of supervised practice and upskilling with associated assessments, including formal examinations if required. The starting point is the date that you start work in your first top up training position approved by the RACP. The maximum timeframe allows for requirements to be completed part-time.

Substantially comparable

If you are found to be substantially comparable, the maximum timeframe for completing your specialist assessment requirements is up to two years to complete up to 12 months FTE of peer review. The starting point is the date that you start work in your first peer review position approved by the RACP. The maximum timeframe allows for requirements to be completed part-time.

Extensions

During ongoing assessment, the RACP may consider your circumstances and grant an extension to the timeframe due to interruptions to your specialist assessment (for example due to parental leave, serious illness or other exceptional circumstances). You must submit your request for extension in writing before the timeframe expires and provide evidence if required. Inability to find a suitable top up training or peer review position or unsatisfactory progress during supervised practice in Australia are not considered exceptional circumstances.

Non-completion

If you do not successfully complete all requirements within the maximum timeframes specified or during any extension granted to you, your specialist assessment will expire.

Re-assessment

If there has been a substantial material change to your overseas training and/or overseas experience since you received your interim assessment decision from the RACP, you may apply for a re-assessment. The following guidelines apply to applications for re-assessment:

- To apply for re-assessment, you must provide documentary evidence of significant further overseas accredited training and/or overseas consultant experience at the level of an Australian-trained physician or paediatrician since receipt of your previous RACP interim assessment decision. This evidence will be made available to the relevant Committee for review, along with your initial interim decision. We recommend that you obtain at least two years FTE of overseas consultant experience that addresses the gaps and deficiencies identified in your initial comparability decision.
- You cannot apply for re-assessment if you have been withdrawn from the specialist pathway because you have failed an examination or not progressed satisfactorily during your ongoing assessment. Under these circumstances, you should explore the RACP training pathway or contact Ahpra regarding alternative pathways to registration in Australia.
- You cannot apply for re-assessment less than two years after receiving your interim assessment decision or final assessment decision.
- You cannot apply for re-assessment if you are currently undergoing supervised practice for specialist assessment in the same specialty.
- To apply for re-assessment, you must follow the steps to submit a new application for specialist assessment. To ensure that you are not submitting unnecessary documentation, we recommend that you contact the OTP Team for individual advice on acceptable evidence.

- Re-assessment outcomes are the same as initial assessment decisions: not comparable, partially comparable or substantially comparable.
- All fees apply to the re-assessment process as listed on [our website](#) for a new application.
- Once issued, your re-assessment decision falls under the College Reconsideration, Review and Appeals By-Law.

Withdrawal

You may withdraw your specialist assessment application at any stage. This includes, but is not limited to:

- withdrawing from one specialty and continuing in another
- withdrawing from the specialist recognition or Area of Need component of an assessment
- withdrawing an entire application if you do not wish to undertake the required assessments.

Please note, all fees for the specialist assessment process are non-refundable.

Your responsibilities

Understand the process

You will have a Case Officer to guide you through the assessment process, but it is your responsibility to read through and ensure you understand all aspects of assessment, registration and employment regulation in Australia. This includes understanding the roles of different organisations. You are required to take actions to advance your application within the timeframes specified by the RACP.

Disclose all relevant information

It is your responsibility to communicate adequate information to support the assessment of your comparability against an Australian-trained physician or paediatrician at all stages of the specialist assessment process. You must fully and openly disclose all information that may be relevant throughout the application, interim assessment, ongoing assessment and final assessment processes. Non-disclosure of relevant information may result in the RACP rejecting your application, withdrawing support for your registration, or withdrawing your application from the specialist assessment pathway.

Confirm your specialties

You may apply for specialist assessment in multiple specialties. It is your responsibility to clearly indicate which specialties you wish to be assessed in. Once your application has progressed to interim assessment, you cannot amend your application to include additional specialties. You will be required to submit a new application with the relevant fees if you wish to be assessed in an additional specialty after the interim assessment stage. Eligibility criteria needs to be met for each specialty.

Find employment in Australia

The RACP cannot find a job for you. It is your responsibility to research potential employment opportunities and to secure a suitable top up training or peer review position in Australia within the timeframes specified. These positions must meet the specific requirements outlined by the RACP and are likely to be very competitive.

It is also recommended that you seek advice from the Department of Home Affairs to ensure you are aware of your working rights in Australia.

Adhere to timeframes

Completion of specialist assessment and Area of Need assessment can take significant time. To be fair to all applicants, applications are processed in the order that they are received. You can assist the process by ensuring that you provide all the required documents and by responding promptly to requests for information or action including payment of fees.

It is your responsibility act within the timeframes outlined by your Case Officer and stated in these guidelines.

Maintain academic integrity

All OTPs need to be aware of their responsibilities in relation to academic integrity as set out by the RACP Academic Integrity in Training Process and the RACP Academic Integrity in Training Policy. Academic misconduct is a breach of academic integrity. This includes, but is not limited to, obtaining unfair advantage, distribution of restricted material, collaboration in an individual assignment or assessment, falsification, plagiarism and misrepresentation.

All cases of alleged academic misconduct are dealt with consistently, openly, justly and fairly using an appropriate process in line with the RACP academic integrity in training process.

Communicate with the RACP and supervisors

You must let us know about any changes in your circumstances which have an impact on your application, interim assessment, ongoing assessment or final assessment decision. This includes a duty to clearly and respectfully communicate any changes or concerns with your top up training or peer review arrangements. Failure to do so may result in the RACP withdrawing support for your registration with Ahpra and progression on the specialist assessment pathway.

Reconsideration, review or appeal of a College decision

If you are dissatisfied with a decision made by a College Body, you may be eligible to apply for a reconsideration, review or appeal of that decision.

Applications for reconsideration, review or appeal must be submitted within 28 days of receiving your decision. Fees apply for a formal review or appeal. Please refer to the [RACP Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Process FAQs](#) and [By-Law](#) on our website for further information.

Help with your application

The OTP Team at the RACP manages all specialist assessment and Area of Need applications.

Once you have submitted your application, your allocated Case Officer will contact you and help guide you through the assessment process.

We understand that this can be a confusing and stressful time, so please do not hesitate to contact us on the details below if you have any questions.



Email address:
OTP@racp.edu.au



Phone numbers:
1300 697 227 (within Australia)
+61 2 9256 5444 (from overseas)

Appendix

Changes to guidelines

The College may amend these Guidelines at any time and will ensure that future amendments comply with applicable law and applicable RACP policies, guidelines and related documents.

Review date: 2026

Related documents & websites

- [Medical Board of Australia - Standards: Specialist medical college assessment of specialist international medical graduates](#)
- [Medical Board of Australia - Information on the specialist pathway](#)
- [Medical Board of Australia - Information on the expedited specialist pathway](#)
- [Medical Board of Australia - Registration standard: English language skills](#)
- [Medical Board of Australia - Guidelines for supervised practice for IMGs](#)
- [Ahpra - Requirements for translating documents](#)
- [Australian Medical Council - Information on primary source verification](#)
- [RACP policy on assessment of Overseas Trained Physicians and Paediatricians \(OTPs\)](#)
- [RACP Professional Practice Framework](#)
- [RACP Fees](#)
- [RACP Basic Training curricula](#)
- [RACP Advanced Training curricula](#)
- [RACP Academic Integrity in Training Policy](#)
- [RACP Reconsideration, Review and Appeal By-Law](#)

Application forms

All application forms are available on the [RACP website](#).

Definitions

Ahpra	The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. Ahpra's key functions include managing registrations, maintaining a public register and investigating concerns regarding practitioner conduct.
AMC	The Australian Medical Council. The AMC is an independent national standards body for medical education and training. Primary source verification of international medical qualifications is completed through the AMC.
Area of Need	Area of Need positions are declared by Australian state or territory governments in locations where there is a shortage of medical specialists.
Chapters	The chapters of the RACP, namely the Chapter of Addiction Medicine, Chapter of Palliative Care Medicine and the Chapter of Sexual Health Medicine. The Chapters each award distinct Fellowships (e.g. Fellow of the Australasian Chapter of Palliative Medicine - FACHPM).
Comparability	A determination of how an applicant's international qualifications, training and experience compare with the standard of an Australian-trained specialist in the same specialty, at the level of a first-year consultant.
CPD	Continuing professional development – in a medical context, CPD is the lifelong process of learning and development that allows health professionals to maintain and improve their knowledge, expertise and competence. CPD is a mandatory requirement in many countries to ensure practitioners deliver safe, high-quality care.
Divisions	The divisions of the RACP, namely the Adult Medicine Division and the Paediatrics and Child Health Division. Divisions award Fellowship of the RACP - FRACP.
Eligibility	A determination of whether an applicant meets the criteria to apply for specialist assessment according to the RACP OTP guidelines.
Faculties	The Faculties of the RACP, namely the Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, and the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine. The Faculties each award distinct Fellowships (e.g. Fellow of the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine - FAFPHM).
FTE	Full-time equivalent. FTE is defined by Ahpra as 38 hours per week within your scope of practice. This is the maximum number of hours that can be counted per week. If you undertake supervised practice in a part-time position, you must complete the same minimum number of hours of practice over a longer period of time. Pro rata reporting periods will apply for part-time positions. Twelve months of practice means a minimum of 47 weeks FTE practice.
MBA	The Medical Board of Australia. The MBA develops standards, codes and guidelines for the medical profession. The MBA is supported by Ahpra.

OTP	Overseas trained physician or paediatrician, also known as a specialist international medical graduate
Peer review	A period of supervised practice to ensure an applicant's performance is comparable to an Australian-trained specialist, assessed at the level of a first-year consultant.
PSV	Primary source verification. PSV means verifying the credentials or awards that an international medical graduate has achieved from the source, i.e. the training organisation that awarded the credential or qualification.
Practice visit	A one-day site visit by two assessors who assess the practice of the OTP, including a review of records, observation of procedures, observation of interactions with patients, and a discussion with the peer reviewers and the OTP.
RACP	The Royal Australasian College of Physicians
Top up training	A period of supervised practice that allows a partially comparable OTP to address identified gaps in the competencies required for Australian specialist practice. Top up training is assessed at the level of a final-year RACP Advanced Trainee and is followed by a period of practice under peer review.



RACP

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