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Advanced Training - RACP Research Project
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

To be read in conjunction with the College's Advanced Training Research Project Guidelines.

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Background

1. **What is the RACP Research Project?**
   The RACP Research Project is a report on a project in which the trainee has had significant involvement in design, conduct of research and analysis of data.

2. **Who does it apply to?**
   The RACP Research Project is applicable to most Advanced Training specialties however some requirements vary across specialties and cohorts. Please consult your relevant program requirement handbook for more detailed information.

3. **Why was this introduced?**
   The RACP Research Project has been introduced to address wide variations in purpose, type, quantity and assessment criteria across College training programs across all specialities. Submission provides evidence of the skills of considering and defining research problems; the systematic acquisition, analysis, synthesis and interpretation of data; and effective written communication.

4. **When was it introduced?**
   The RACP Research Project was introduced for most trainees commencing after 2017. Please consult your relevant program requirement handbook for more detailed information on the requirements and implementation period for your specialty.

5. **What are the key changes to the existing Research Project requirements?**
   Existing Research Project requirements vary across Advanced Training specialties; however the new requirements are standardised. Some specialties may still have additional research or written requirements; please consult your relevant program requirement handbook for program specific information.

Requirements

6. **How do I determine my research topic?**
   Your clinical supervisor may be able to help you with an idea for a project. Supervisors often have project ideas that they are yet to start. We recognise that it is not always feasible to present an idea for a research project to a potential supervisor, particularly if you are inexperienced in conducting research.

7. **Does my project need to be specialty specific?**
   Your project needs to be broadly relevant to the specialty you are undertaking. Broadly relevant can be defined as topics that can enhance, complement and inform trainees' practice in the chosen specialty.

8. **What types of Research Projects are acceptable?**
   There are three types of acceptable projects:
   - systematic review
   - research in human subjects, populations and communities and laboratory research; epidemiology; field research; and medical education research
   - audit

   Please see the RACP Research Project Guidelines for further information regarding the project types.

9. **Who can complete only one Research Project?**
   Please consult the program requirements handbook relevant to your specialty to determine the number and type of Research Project requirements for that specialty.

10. **How many projects do I need to complete if I am dual training?**
    All trainees including dual trainees need to complete one RACP Research Project over the course of their training. Some specialties may have additional research or written requirements. Please consult the relevant program requirement handbook for program specific information.

11. **I am a dual trainee. Will both specialty training programs accept my project?**
    You only need to submit one RACP Research Project over the course of Advanced Training. Some Advanced Training specialties require additional written assessments. Please check your relevant program requirements handbook to ensure you meet all requirements.

12. **As a post-Fellowship trainee, can I submit the same project previously accepted by another specialty?**
    If you completed a Research Project during Advanced Training, you do not need to submit another one. However some Advanced Training specialties require additional written assessments. Please check your relevant program requirement handbook to ensure you meet all requirements.

13. **Will the one RACP Research Project requirement increase the workload for trainees and project supervisors?**
    As existing project requirements are phased out, trainees and supervisors will benefit from more streamlined, College-wide research project requirements.

Research Supervisors

14. How can I find a research supervisor?

There are many pathways for engaging a supervisor for the Research Project. Noting that your project supervisor may be different to your nominated rotation supervisor, you may wish to:

- explore the work of notable researchers in your hospital or network who may be able to help you find suitable potential research supervisors
- ask your clinical supervisor for advice, where he or she can provide relevant contacts, or direct you to another colleague who can.
- attend research groups or events held at your hospital to get ideas, meet research supervisors and network with trainees.

15. What should I look for in a research supervisor?

The relationship and role between a trainee and research supervisor is open to negotiation. Select a research supervisor that aligns with your goals. The following are some general traits that a good supervisor will possess:

- an expert in the area of research
- available for regular meetings or other correspondence
- interested in providing mentorship and guidance on the project
- interested in the topic of the proposal
- provides constructive criticism on completed work, such as abstracts and academic writing;
- enjoys sharing knowledge, such as laboratory or technical skills, academic research and writing skills
- experience supervising research students.

The online e-learning research resources such as 'Finding a Supervisor Guide' may also assist in selecting a research supervisor.

16. I train at a small site that does not have many research opportunities. How can I find a suitable project supervisor?

Your clinical supervisor may be able to provide advice, relevant contacts or direct you to another colleague who can. You may also wish to register for research events and groups in your area.

17. How do I manage the relationship with my research supervisor?

It is important to have open and clear communication with your research supervisor and establish manageable expectations early. You may also wish to consult the e-learning resource titled 'Working Relationship Agreement' to prompt key considerations for your project.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

18. Can I apply for Recognition of Prior Learning?

Trainees may be able to apply for exemption from the RACP Research Project requirements if they have completed and passed one of the three RACP Research Project exemptions. Potential exemptions may include:

- research doctoral degree, e.g. MD or PhD
- Masters by research
- major project completed through a Masters by coursework.

A project completed through a Masters by coursework must meet the requirements for one of the three acceptable types of RACP Research Projects and must be submitted for marking according to the marking process.

Recognition of all Research Project exemptions completed prior to entry into training will be considered in accordance with the College's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy. Exemptions completed during the training program will be assessed for suitability against the Research Project Guidelines and Marking Criteria.

19. When can I apply for RPL?

RPL needs to be applied for within 3 months of commencing your first rotation in your training program.

20. How long will it take for me to get a result of RPL?

The Committee with oversight of your training program will be in touch with the outcome of your RPL application.

21. I started a PhD before I entered Advanced Training but this is incomplete. Can I apply for RPL once I complete the PhD?

RPL needs to be applied for within 3 months of commencing your rotation. You can submit your PhD for consideration once it is complete. Or you can submit part of your PhD as RPL if it meets one of the acceptable Research Project types, eg – systematic review.

22. What if my PhD is in a different area of specialty and not relevant to my current specialty?

Applications for RPL will be reviewed on a case by case basis and will only be granted if the evidence presented fulfils the relevant Research Project requirements.

23. Will project markers be expected to review the PhD to allow project exemptions?

All supporting documentation relevant to an RPL application must be reviewed by project markers to allow project exemptions.

Submission

24. How are projects submitted?

All projects must be submitted with a Project Cover Sheet and emailed to research.project@racp.edu.au. Please consult your relevant program requirement handbook for additional specialty specific submission information.

25. When is the project due?

In most cases, it is recommended that the project is submitted by the end of your penultimate year. This allows sufficient time for marking and for any resubmissions if required. Please check your relevant program requirement handbook for any program specific submission dates.

26. What is the penultimate year?

Penultimate is your second last year of training. It is recommended that you submit your RACP Research Project prior to the end of your penultimate year. Please check your relevant program requirement handbook for program specific deadlines.

27. If I need an extension to submit my project, what can I do?

Contact your education officer.

28. What are the consequences of submitting my project late?

Failing to meet the prescribed deadline may delay your progression onto further years of training. Alternately, if you are near the end of training, it may delay your Fellowship. It is recommended you plan early and submit your project as soon as possible.

29. What is Turnitin?

Turnitin is an originality and plagiarism detection tool. It compares projects against electronic texts from the Internet, published works (such as journal articles and books), and assignments previously submitted to Turnitin by other students. Trainees will be required to obtain a similarity report from Turnitin that must be submitted with the project. Trainees have the opportunity to obtain the similarity report and make changes prior to submitting the project for marking. An updated similarity report must be submitted with the project if changes are made. If this is not submitted, the College will obtain a report and the trainee will not have the opportunity to make any changes.

30. What is a Similarity Report or Similarity Score Index (SSI)?

The Similarity Report or Similarity Score Index (SSI) is the rating given by Turnitin to show the matches between your work and the work of others.

Marking

31. Who will mark my project?

Your RACP Research Project will be independently marked by two assessors using assessment criteria that are common to all training programs. In the case that the two assessors cannot reach agreement, the research project is sent to a third assessor who will determine the final outcome.

32. Where can I find the marking criteria?

The assessment criteria used to mark all RACP Research Projects is available on the College website.

33. What are the grading outcomes?

There are three grading outcomes that a project reviewer can award:

- pass – meets expected standard
- resubmit – 2 or more areas below the expected standard
- fail – does not meet any of the criteria for a Research Project

34. How and when will I be notified of the outcome of my project?

It is estimated that you will receive the outcome of your project within 6 weeks of submission to the College. Please note, marking delays may occur in peak periods (September – January) as assessors undertake marking on a voluntary basis.

35. How many re-submissions am I allowed?

Trainees will be given two opportunities to resubmit.

36. I am not happy with the outcome of my project. What can I do?

You may request two new reviewers to mark your project if it is marked as a fail in the first instance. There is a fee associated with additional marking. There are only two outcomes that a remark with new reviewers can make – pass or fail. If the project is marked as a fail by the two new reviewers, you cannot resubmit again and will need to complete a new project to meet this requirement.

37. What is the fee associated with additional marking?

To be determined.

38. I am a project marker. What additional support/resources are available to me?

The Advanced Training Research Project eLearning module is available online to support project markers.

Additional Resources

39. Where do I start?

Review the information available on the College website including:

- the RACP Research Project Guidelines
- information on Recognition of Prior Learning
- a self-directed online e-learning research resources for trainees completing Research Projects.

40. Who do I contact for more information?

Contact your education officer, or email Research.Project@racp.edu.au.