

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Area of College	Education, Learning & Assessment
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References/Legislation	
Associated RACP Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College By-Law: Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Process • Flexible Training Policy • Progression Through Training Policy • Special Consideration for Assessment Policy
Applicability	Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand

Note: This is a controlled document within the [RACP Policy Framework](#).

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1. INTRODUCTION

RACP training is prospectively approved to ensure it is educationally robust and meets RACP standards. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the formal recognition of learning experiences obtained prior to entry to an RACP training program to avoid unnecessary duplication of learning.

2. PURPOSE

This policy aims to ensure a rigorous and well-documented process for RPL which may result in a trainee being granted exemption from one or more requirements of an RACP training program.

3. SCOPE

This policy defines the RACP principles for recognising prior learning, who may apply, the eligible categories of learning and possible application outcomes.

4. POLICY CONTENT

4.1. Principles of RPL

4.1.1 Validity

The learning experience must be relevant to the training program. Validity of the learning experience is assessed for its alignment with the relevant RACP curricula standards, with consideration of content, level of training and clinical / medical experience.

4.1.2 Authenticity

The learning experience must have been undertaken by the applicant, and the information in the application must be true and accurate.

4.1.3 Currency

The learning experience must have been completed no more than five years prior to entry to the relevant RACP training program to ensure currency.

4.1.4 Reliability

The evidence of the learning experience must demonstrate consistency and repeatability of the competency, the observable abilities related to a specific activity that integrates knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. The assessment tools used to provide evidence of competency should be reliable and comparable to that of the relevant RACP training program.

4.1.5 Comparability

The learning experience must be comparable in terms of content, breadth of experience, level of responsibility, rigour of training requirements, assessment process, supervision and training setting. Comparability ensures that the prior learning experience has similar value to that of the RACP training program.

4.1.6 Continuity

The learning experience must meet clinical experience requirements and standards applicable to the RACP training program for which RPL is sought. Approval of short term training periods of less than one month will be determined by the relevant training program committee.

4.1.7 Timeliness

The application for RPL must be received within the time limit set out in this policy. Recognising prior learning experiences at the beginning of the training program allows the trainee to plan and complete all training requirements and avoid duplication of learning.

4.1.8 Evidence-based

The applicant must provide sufficient evidence of the learning experience to demonstrate that the curriculum standards have been achieved, and to enable the assessor to judge the appropriateness of the learning experience.

4.1.9 Limit to recognition of prior learning

There is a limit to the amount of RPL that can be granted to ensure the integrity of RACP training programs.

- a) RPL may be granted for no more than one phase of training or 12 months training time and associated requirements.
- b) If the learning experience was part of a formal specialty training program (see items 4.3.1 and 4.3.2), the relevant assessing committee has the discretion to grant RPL for up to a maximum of two phases of training or 24 months training time and associated requirements.

4.2. Eligibility

4.2.1 To be eligible to apply for RPL the applicant must be registered with the relevant RACP training program.

4.2.2 The learning experience outlined in the RPL application must have been completed prior to entry to the relevant RACP training program.

4.2.3 The learning experience must meet the principles of RPL set out in this policy.

4.2.4 RPL will not be considered for:

- a) A clinical learning experience undertaken during an interruption of RACP training.
- b) Advanced Training programs where the learning experience has already been granted as RPL towards an RACP Basic Training program.
- c) Advanced Training programs where the learning experience has been completed in Basic Training, prior to the completion of examination requirements. Applications for RPL for postgraduate coursework and research, if they were completed prior to the completion of examination requirements, may be considered subject to meeting other eligibility criteria.

- d) A clinical learning experience undertaken within Australia and New Zealand prior to completion of all requirements for general registration, or registration in a general scope of practice, with the relevant authorities.
- e) The intern year (postgraduate year one) or postgraduate year two. Postgraduate year two should be applied for prospectively as Basic Training Year One and will only be considered for RPL at the discretion of the relevant committee if the applicant can demonstrate they could not reasonably have applied prospectively.

4.3. Eligible categories of RPL

An application which meets the RPL principles and eligibility criteria will be considered under one of the following categories of learning:

4.3.1 RACP training programs

Training that has been completed and certified as part of an RACP training program may be eligible for RPL towards the requirements of another RACP training program.

4.3.2 Non-RACP specialty training programs

Training completed or partially completed under the supervision of another specialist medical college in Australia or New Zealand.

Training completed or partially completed under the supervision of an overseas equivalent specialist medical authority.

4.3.3 Relevant post-graduate coursework and research

A course of study completed through a university or similar institution.

Holding an academic post in a relevant field.

Research or postgraduate coursework that meets the published requirements of an RACP training program requirement, such as an Advanced Training Research Project.

4.3.4 Relevant experience undertaken outside a formal specialty training program

In exceptional circumstances, experiential learning may be considered where it was undertaken:

- a) for a minimum period of 12 continuous months prior to entry to the RACP training program;
- b) at a setting considered appropriate for the experience by the assessing committee; and,
- c) at an equivalent or higher level of responsibility to that of an RACP trainee in the relevant training program.

Combined with:

- d) evidence of ongoing educational activities; and

- e) attainment of curriculum standards and requirements of the relevant RACP training program.
- f) evidence that the applicant could not reasonably have applied prospectively, where the learning experience was undertaken within Australia or New Zealand.

4.4. Application process

- 4.4.1 Applications must be made within three months of the date of commencement of the first training rotation in the relevant RACP training program.
- 4.4.2 RPL Applications for recognition of relevant postgraduate coursework and research towards the requirements of Advanced Training Research Projects must be made within six months of the date of commencement of the first training rotation in the relevant RACP training program.
- 4.4.3 Applications must be made using the relevant RPL application form with payment of a non-refundable assessment fee.
- 4.4.4 It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all necessary documentation to demonstrate the learning experience meets the principles and eligibility criteria as outlined in this policy.
- 4.4.5 Evidence required is dependent on the training program and the category of RPL.

4.5. Assessment process

- 4.5.1 Applications will be assessed by the relevant training program committee, or its delegate.
- 4.5.2 In assessing applications for RPL, the assessor will refer to the principles and eligibility criteria in this policy.
- 4.5.3 Each application will be considered on its merits and the outcome will depend on:
 - a) The completeness and relevance of evidence provided by the applicant;
 - b) The extent to which the evidence demonstrates that the application meets RPL criteria and principles; and
 - c) Whether the evidence demonstrates that the learning experience meets the learning outcomes of the category of RPL applied for.
- 4.5.4 The assessment process will be completed within three months of receipt of the application wherever possible. This may be longer if an assessing committee requires additional information or evidence from the applicant to assess an application.
- 4.5.5 At the discretion of the assessor, the granting of RPL may be conditional upon certification of prospectively approved period or phase of training.

4.6. Outcomes

4.6.1 Recognition of prior learning may exempt an applicant from one or more training program requirements. Exemptions will not be granted for any RACP examinations.

4.6.2 One of the following outcomes will be communicated in relation to each application:

a) **Request granted**

The applicant's request meets the required standard and is granted with no conditions.

b) **Request partially granted**

The assessor agrees the applicant's claim is valid but does not agree with the full scope of the application. The exemption granted is less than requested, or the full application is granted with conditions.

c) **Request not granted**

It is not appropriate for the assessor to grant any part of the application.

5. RECONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPEALS

Rights of reconsideration, review and appeal are set out in the College By-Law: Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Process.

6. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Provisions for special consideration of exceptional circumstances are set out in the RACP Special Consideration for Assessment Policy.

7. REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required in the event of legislative changes or requirements. The policy may also be changed as a result of other amendments.

Staff and members of the College may provide feedback about this document by emailing RACPPolicy@racp.edu.au.

8. DEFINITIONS

Term	Means
Board	the Board of Directors of the College.
Certification of training	is prospectively approved training that is deemed satisfactory and complete by the relevant training program committee. It is the process of verifying that a trainee has met the program requirements for the training period being considered.
College	The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, ACN 000 039 047, an incorporated body limited by guarantee.
Fellow, Trainee, and Member	have the same meaning as in the College Constitution.

Term	Means
Interrupted training	is an approved extended absence from training as provided for in the Flexible training policy.
Prospective approval of training	is the process of applying for approval of the proposed training program with the relevant RACP training program committee (or delegate) before commencement of the training position or by the relevant deadline. For Advanced Training in Public Health Medicine trainees are required to apply for prospective approval of training via Learning Contracts.
RACP training program	refers to any of the education programs of the RACP's Divisions, Faculties and Chapters. Basic Training and each specialty Advanced Training program are considered separate programs for the purposes of this policy.
Training program committee	is the relevant committee or its delegate or progress review panel responsible for oversight of trainee progress in an RACP training program.
Training requirements	are the components of a training program that a trainee must satisfactorily complete to progress through training. Mandatory program requirements are linked to the certification of training, progression through training and program completion.

9. HISTORY

Revision	Effective Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	01.01.2011	New policy
2.0	01.02.2015	Full revision
3.1	01.08.2020	Revision of policy to align with new curricula
3.2	02.12.2022	Administrative update and transfer of policy to new template
3.3	01.01.2024	Updates regarding RPL for Advanced Training Research Projects
3.4	27.03.2025	Administrative update of committee titles as part of the Education Governance Review Initiative.
3.5	18.06.2025	Administrative update to remove reference to the discontinued Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine Module 1 Written and Module 2 Clinical Assessments, as these assessments were removed from the training program from September 2024