

## Trainee in Difficulty Support (TIDS) Policy

<b>Policy Name</b>	Trainee in Difficulty Support Policy
<b>Department</b>	Education Services
<b>Approved By</b>	College Education Committee
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<b>Policy Status</b>	New

### 1. Purpose and scope

It is common for trainees to experience some degree of difficulty in meeting the challenging demands of RACP training. The College offers a framework to support trainees to resolve training difficulties.

This policy sets out what in difficulty means in the context of RACP training. It defines the principles to be employed by the trainee, the supervisor and the College when a difficulty is identified, and the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.

This policy applies to all RACP Division, Faculty and Chapter trainees in Australia and New Zealand.

### 2. What is a Trainee in Difficulty?

**2.1. Trainee performance/progression difficulties:** The College assesses trainees to confirm attainment of the relevant competency and training requirements expected at each stage of training. A trainee in difficulty is a trainee who is not making the expected progress in training or who is experiencing difficulties with certain elements of their training and therefore needs extra support in order to maintain their capability to undertake RACP training.

The elements of capability to undertake RACP training are:

- a) **Health** – The trainee’s physical and mental health enables fulfilment of expectations for the training position, appropriate to the stage of training.
- b) **Competence** – The trainee’s application of knowledge, skills and professional behaviour is appropriate for the stage of training. This is directly linked to the relevant training program curricula.
- c) **Compliance** – The trainee complies with College training program requirements and adheres to College policies.

Failure to demonstrate capability to undertake RACP training is grounds for discontinuation from the training program.

**2.2. Training setting or trainee/supervisor relationship difficulties:** Issues which impact on training may not be connected to the individual capability of the trainee and instead may relate to the training setting or the trainee/supervisor relationship. A trainee may need support from the College to facilitate resolution of these types of difficulties.

### **3. Principles for supporting Trainees in Difficulty**

The College has established the following principles to enable the resolution of difficulties encountered in RACP training:

#### **3.1. Patient and trainee safety as a priority**

Patient and trainee safety take precedence over all other considerations. Employers and clinicians are bound by mandatory notification requirements to the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) or Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) as appropriate. Reportable behaviours are dealt with directly by the MBA or MCNZ, and not by the College.

#### **3.2. Centred on educational progress and professional development**

The College is concerned with ensuring a quality training setting and facilitating trainees' progress towards attainment of RACP standards. The College will endeavour to collaborate with employers on difficulties which are of mutual concern.

#### **3.3. Early intervention wherever possible**

The difficulty is identified as early as possible, with appropriate and timely intervention to maximise the opportunity for resolution.

#### **3.4. Local remediation wherever possible**

Trainees and supervisors are best placed to negotiate and implement individually tailored support strategies. Involvement of supervisor colleagues, including the training program director or equivalent is appropriate, particularly if the difficulty relates to the training setting or trainee/supervisor relationship. The relevant College committee will review training difficulties which were not resolved by local interventions.

#### **3.5. Fair and transparent processes easily accessible by all parties**

The College has a fair and transparent process for enabling the resolution of training difficulties. Information about the process is easily accessible by all parties involved.

#### **3.6. Transfer of important educational information**

To facilitate ongoing support, information about a trainee's educational progress and performance, and any existing support arrangement is transferred between College supervisors and Fellows. This transfer should be only between those College supervisors and Fellows directly involved in the training of a particular trainee and should occur from one training rotation to the next. College staff may facilitate the transfer of educational information.

### **3.7. Support focused**

The College facilitates appropriate support and guidance within available resources to enable trainees to maintain their capability to undertake physician training within a quality training setting.

### **3.8. Centred on solutions**

Attempts to support a trainee in difficulty are centred on solutions within available resources with the aim of resolving the difficulty and facilitating satisfactory progress in RACP training. The trainee is an active participant throughout the process.

## **4. Framework for supporting Trainees in Difficulty**

The College has a formal process for dealing with identified trainee difficulties. This framework, called the Trainee in Difficulty Support Process, comprises the key elements of identification, evidenced based assessment and diagnosis, support and management, and committee review and decision (refer Trainee in Difficulty Support Process).

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1. Trainees**

Trainees play a key role in managing and directing their own learning within the framework of a supportive learning environment and RACP training program. Trainees are required to:

- a)** Be aware of, and refer to their employer's workplace policies. Employment issues and the management of these are the responsibility of the employer and not the College.
- b)** Notify their employer regarding workplace difficulties as early as possible following identification.
- c)** Maintain their capability to undertake physician training as outlined in item 2.
- d)** Actively seek and receive feedback on their performance and progress in training.
- e)** Actively participate in the Trainee Support Process. This includes implementing an agreed Improving Performance Action Plan, if required, to resolve an identified difficulty.
- f)** Attempt to resolve the difficulty in the training setting, in collaboration with their supervisors/Training Program Director, before notifying the College.
- g)** Notify the College about an unresolved training setting or supervision difficulty.

### **5.2. Supervisors**

Supervisors have responsibilities to both the College and the trainee's employer. Supervisors have the following responsibilities:

- a)** Be aware of, and refer to their employer's workplace policies. Employment issues and the management of these are the responsibility of the employer and not the College.

- b) Notify their employers of any workplace difficulties that have been identified.
- c) Provide frequent and constructive feedback to the trainee regarding their performance and progress in training.
- d) Directly support trainees who encounter difficulty in training. They play a vital role in facilitating resolution of such difficulties.
- e) Notify the relevant training committee where an educational difficulty needs to be reviewed and monitored.
- f) Ensure that ongoing support is delivered to the trainee in difficulty where a trainee moves between departments or training settings. This includes the handover and implementation of an existing Improving Performance Action Plan or development of a new plan in collaboration with the trainee.
- g) Notify the College about an unresolved training setting or supervision difficulty.

### **5.3. Training Program Directors**

The training program director at the accredited training setting has an important role in assisting the trainee in difficulty and their supervisor to resolve the difficulty and/or address the training or supervision issue. The role of training program directors includes:

- a) Actively monitor trainee progression, supervision and training setting issues to improve training quality.
- b) Provide advice, support and management oversight to supervisors in the training setting who are supporting trainees in difficulty.
- c) Provide advice and support to trainees experiencing difficulty.
- d) Provide advice and support with the resolution of difficulties that may arise with the trainee-supervisor relationship.
- e) Ensure the appropriate workplace policies are adhered to, and involve Human Resources personnel when required.

### **5.4. Employers**

- a) Employers have industrial obligations and responsibilities; this includes the management of all employment issues, including performance management and disciplinary matters in a timely, fair and objective way. Such matters may include, but are not limited to, sexual misconduct, drug and alcohol abuse, breaches of work policies, unacceptable standard of work, health issues, work hours and conditions, workplace bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- b) Accredited training settings must meet the College's accreditation standards regarding the provision of a quality environment for RACP training. The College will endeavour to work collaboratively with employers where a difficulty is both an employment issue and a training difficulty.

### **5.5. College Committees and Training Support function**

#### **a) College Training Committees**

College training committees are responsible (as per their relevant Terms of Reference) for monitoring an individual trainee's progress throughout the duration of a training program, and across training rotations, settings and supervisors. They are also responsible for monitoring an individual trainee's capability to undertake and continue in physician training.

**b) Training Support Function**

The College Training Support Unit (Australia) and the Education Services Training Staff (New Zealand) are responsible for providing advice and assistance to College trainees, committees and supervisors in implementing this policy and the Trainee Support Process.

**6. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be monitored and evaluated in accordance with the College's Education Policy Development Process. The effectiveness of the policy and impact on the trainee progress outcomes will also be evaluated.

**7. Related policies and other documents**

Supporting Trainees in Difficulty Support Process

**8. Acknowledgements**

In addition to the numerous Fellows, Trainees and working groups who developed the draft version of this policy, the RACP would like to acknowledge and thank those who participated in the consultation process as well as members of the Development Working Group and Peer Review Working Group.