

Recognition of Prior Learning Guide for PREP Applicants

This guide should be read in conjunction with the College's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

What is Recognition of Prior Learning?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process where, through assessment, exemption from College training requirements is granted for learning which has already been acquired.

RPL is an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills already gained before entry to the training program. At the end of the assessment process you may be granted exemption from College training requirements as a result of the prior learning you have been able to document.

Should I apply for RPL?

Recognition of Prior Learning is a process for trainees who:

- have recently entered a College training program and
- may have experience from previous training, study or work that overlaps with the requirements of the College training program for which they are registered.

Through RPL, you may be able to gain exemption from elements of a training program. This could allow you to give more attention to other elements of the training program, as you would not be required to repeat learning that has already been undertaken.

You are strongly encouraged to speak with your supervisor, and the relevant College Officer, for advice on whether you should apply for RPL before preparing and submitting an application.

You should also reflect on your past learning, your current training program requirements and handbook, and the RPL Policy to determine if your RPL application is appropriate.

When do I need to submit the application?

You are encouraged to apply for RPL as early in your training program as possible. All trainees have 6 months from the commencement of their training program (i.e. from the start date of your first approved training rotation) before their RPL due date for professional experience.

For RPL applications for relevant post-graduate coursework and research towards the requirements of Advanced Training Research Projects, trainees will have 12 months from the

commencement of their Advanced Training program. During this time, you must identify relevant experience which may be eligible for RPL, articulate how the experience is relevant, and gather documentation.

What is the application process?

The College will evaluate your application and wherever possible, will notify you of the decision within 3 months of receipt of the application. If additional information or evidence is required for the TPC or its delegate to make a decision, this may be longer.

You will be notified in writing by email of the outcome and, if required, your training records will be updated. If the College assessor requires further information, the information required will be communicated to you, along with a time frame in which it must be supplied.

Do I need to complete the whole application form?





You will not need to complete all parts of the application form to apply for one category of prior learning. The RPL Policy distinguishes the following categories of prior learning:

1. RACP specialty training programs
2. Non-RACP specialty training programs
3. Post-graduate coursework and research
4. Relevant experience undertaken outside a formal specialty training program

For **all** categories of RPL you will need to complete

1. the main section with your personal and current training details, and
2. the learning portfolio (appendix 1)

If you are applying for:

Category 1 RACP specialty training programs		Complete appendix 1
Category 2 Non-RACP specialty training programs		Complete appendix 1 & 2
Category 3 Post-graduate coursework and research		Use the separate Research Project RPL application form
Category 4 Relevant experience undertaken outside a formal specialty training program		Complete appendix 1 & 3

How do I write a Learning Portfolio? (for Appendix 1)

A learning portfolio is a collection of work designed to provide a record of accomplishments. In

the context of RPL for medical education, a learning portfolio is used to demonstrate competence and is an opportunity for you to reflect on your prior learning. You must clearly show the Assessor why they should approve your application for RPL. Your *purpose* is to present a convincing case that what you have learned is substantially comparable to the outcomes of College supervised training.

When applying for RPL at the College, the Portfolio will comprise of one or more appendices. All applicants are required to complete appendix 1 which includes writing about the Learning goals you have achieved, and one or more Learning Statements. Depending on the RPL category you seek, you might also need to complete appendix 2 or 3 of the application form.

Learning Goals: A space for you to list achieved learning goals that connect with College curricula and then reflect on how your learning fits with your current training program. Some points you might like to answer:

- What you've learned
- How you've learned
- Why you've learned
- What value your learning adds to your training program

Learning Statements: These are also known as competency statements, and they focus in on important experiences. They are a statement of what you know or are able to do as a result of a learning experience.

You should state how your experiences directly relate to the themes of the relevant College curricula.

What is a 'theme'?

Every College curriculum has a number of themes that describe the key learning trainees are expected to achieve in a training program. They are usually expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

Select a theme and briefly describe:

- What you know that is relevant to this theme
- How you learned this knowledge
- How you apply this knowledge

Complete this process for as many themes as is necessary to describe your prior learning. This may seem like a lot of work, but it is an important and useful reflective exercise. You can organise the statements in bullet points or full sentences – we are not expecting an essay for each learning statement. In fact, the more concisely you can relay all the relevant information, the better.

It is important to collect appropriate documentation to support each learning statement.

A sample portfolio is available on the RACP website.

What supporting documents should I attach?

Some training programs may have a set list of expected supporting evidence. You should contact your College Officer prior to preparing your application for RPL.

Validity	You should source documentation of evidence supporting the prior learning described in your learning narrative and learning statements. Its purpose is to prove that the identified learning has occurred and has been demonstrated.
Authenticity	
Currency	
Reliability	Just as College trainees demonstrate their ongoing learning through completion of PREP assessments and other training requirements, you too must verify your prior learning. Your learning narrative and statements describe your experience, and the documentation provides the proof. Relevant documentation will help the Assessor to determine if you have proven your level of competence.
Comparability	
Continuity	
Timeliness	
Sufficiency	
Maximum Time	

When selecting documentation you should think about the Assessor's perspective. What kinds of evidence would you look for if you had to make a judgement on your application? What would convince you, as an Assessor, that someone has achieved a required competency? You should also consider the assessment principles outlined in the RPL Policy and how you can best demonstrate these principles.



Examples of evidence may include:

Employment contracts or letters of appointment are rarely requested and should not be submitted. It is a good idea to also speak to the College Officer for the training program about your application, as they will be able to help you decide what documentation you should include.

Remember to be concise and make it easy for the Assessor. Too much documentation that is unnecessary will make it harder for the Assessor to understand and quickly comprehend your application.

Some assessing committees may require that overseas documents, university transcripts, certificates of completion etc. be authenticated copies (certified by a Justice of the Peace in Australia). We advise you check with your College Officer before submitting your application.

Any documents not in English should be translated and authenticated as true and accurate.

Some assessing committees require letters of support to:

- be written on hospital letterhead
- include details on the type of position
- state that your work / training was satisfactory
- include dates and subspecialty of the position
- include details of any relevant accreditation held by the hospital

You should check requirements with your College Officer before submitting your application.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure that the portfolio contains all the necessary information that the Assessor will need to make a decision. You should organise the portfolio to help the assessor to easily identify relevant information. What you write in the learning narrative and learning statements should clearly indicate when evidence documents are used to support the application.

Remember, only submit authenticated copies of documents and keep a copy of your application for your records.

I've received the outcome of my RPL application. Do I need to do anything else?

Depending on the outcome of your application, you may need to take further action.

If the outcome is deferred, the assessor wants further information. A) You will receive a letter which may specify that you need to submit more documentation. In this case, you will need to source the requested documents and submit them within 4 weeks of the date of the letter (unless otherwise specified). B) An outcome may also be deferred so that the assessor can see an end-of-year supervisor report for your current training rotation. You should tell your supervisor, so that they know the end of year report might influence the outcome of your RPL application.

Whatever outcome you receive, *you should tell your supervisor*. If you have been granted 12 months of RPL, for example, your supervisor should then assess you at the end of the year at the level of a *second-year* trainee. If your application has been declined, deferred or partially approved, your supervisor should be made aware of the feedback the assessor has given you, as this may include areas that you should focus on in your next learning plan.

College staff will update your training details for you if required, and these changes would be reflected in your online portal information.

Who do I contact for more information?

You are encouraged to contact the College Officer for your training program as soon as you begin to think about submitting an application for RPL.

Program	Email	Phone
Advanced Training Australia (including Chapters)	AdvancedTraining@racp.edu.au	+61 02 1300MY RACP / 1300 697 227
Public Health Medicine	publichealth@racp.edu.au	
Aotearoa New Zealand	AdvancedTraining@racp.org.nz	+64 0508 MY RACP/ 0508 697 227