



## POLICY: RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

### 1. OVERVIEW AND SCOPE

This policy defines the requirements for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Registrars enrolled in the College's training program.

### 2. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

**2.1.** The College requires training to be approved prospectively in order to ensure that it is undertaken within the framework provided by the College's training program. This includes appropriate curricula, teaching and learning opportunities, planning and recording learning and progress, formative workplace based assessment and opportunities for feedback and support.

**2.2.** The College has made a commitment to providing flexible pathways for training. This includes recognising learning (either formal or non-formal) which has taken place prior to enrolment in the College training program.

**2.3.** This policy has been developed in accordance with the *Australian Medical Council Standards for Specialist Medical Education and Training* (June 2008) and is founded on the principles of authenticity (claims of experience, competencies and/or knowledge can be demonstrated), currency (meeting predefined time limits), validity, sufficiency, reliability, transferability and comparability.

**2.4.** The purpose of this policy is to clarify the framework for dealing with applications for recognition of prior learning, and to ensure transparency and consistency in approach to all such applications assessed by the College.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**3.1. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** the recognition of learning which has taken place prior to enrolment in the College's training program. It may be either **formal** or **non-formal learning**:

**3.1.1. Formal learning** is program-based learning which takes place in an organised formal way. It is specifically designated as learning, with specific program content, learning objectives, stated duration for the program and learning support. It typically leads to certification.

**3.1.2. Non-formal learning** takes place through planned, organised and supervised learning activities but typically does not receive formal certification. Examples of non-formal learning include learning and training activities undertaken in the workplace, the voluntary sector or in community-based settings, and learning that has occurred in supervised clinical rotations that were not undertaken as part of a formal training program.

**3.2. Learning outcomes:** refer to a learner's knowledge, understanding, skills and/or competencies, i.e. what the learner knows and can do to the required standard as a result of prior learning.

### 4. THE POLICY

#### 4.1. Eligibility criteria

**4.1.1.** Applicants must be enrolled in the College's training program with payment of all College fees up to date at the time of application.

**4.1.2.** The College will only assess learning which has occurred prior to enrolment in the College's training program.

**4.1.3.** Only learning that occurred less than five years prior to the date of application for RPL will be considered, in order to ensure the currency of prior learning.

**4.1.4.** The focus of the RPL process will be on the **outcome of learning**, rather than the experience of learning and as a general principle, credit or exemption will only to be given for evidence of **learning outcomes**, not for experience or time spent in training.

**4.1.5.** The prior learning for which the applicant is seeking recognition must be substantially comparable to the College's training program in terms of:

**4.1.5.1.** structure and content (learning outcomes, curricula, teaching and learning opportunities, and formative assessment);

**4.1.5.2.** supervision and support;

**4.1.5.3.** the level of responsibility;

**4.1.5.4.** the environment for teaching and learning and access to facilities.

**4.1.6.** The types of experiences and skills that will be considered for RPL depend on the specific requirements of the training program in which the applicant is enrolled. Generally these will include:

**4.1.6.1** hospital, community health or advanced skills/specialist practice, which has been supervised, occurring in hospitals/sites in Australia that were accredited at the time of practice;

**4.1.6.2** participation in a specialist podiatric surgical training program, which has been supervised, in appropriate sites overseas;

**4.1.6.3** relevant courses of study including PhD or Master degree studies.

## **4.2. Applications for RPL**

**4.2.1.** Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their RPL application is complete and that all relevant supporting documentation and evidence are submitted prior to the application deadline.

**4.2.2.** All applicants must provide evidence of learning through certified supporting documentation from relevant institutions. An application must include evidence of:

**4.2.2.1.** the relevance of the prior learning to the learning objectives of the training program in which they are enrolled;

**4.2.2.2.** attainment of the learning objectives;

**4.2.2.3.** participation in relevant associated educational activities; and

**4.2.2.4.** participation in formative and/or summative assessments where relevant.**4.2.3.** Applications for the recognition of non-formal learning must demonstrate that the learning was adequately supervised and that the cited learning outcomes are comparable to those of the College's training program.

**4.2.4.** Applications for the recognition of formal learning must demonstrate that the period of learning was continuous. The period should be no less than three months in duration.

**4.2.5.** Applications for RPL must be submitted within two months of joining the College's training program.

**4.2.6.** Applicants are required to pay a non-refundable application fee to cover the cost of the administration and vetting of initial materials and documents.

### **4.3. Assessment of application**

**4.3.1.** Applications for RPL will be assessed by the Training Committee as required and appropriate.

**4.3.2.** Additional information will be sought from applicants in cases where the Chair of the Training Committee deems this to be necessary.

**4.3.2.1.** If the additional evidence is not provided within 8 weeks of it being requested, the application will lapse.

### **4.4. Outcome of assessment**

**4.4.1.** Recognition of Prior Learning may entitle an applicant to credit towards completion of a training program or exemption from specific training program requirements, including one or more of the following:

**4.4.1.1.** training time requirements (total time required/number of rotations/nature of rotations);

**4.4.1.2.** training program project/module requirements;

**4.4.1.3.** other training program requirements.

**4.4.2.** Under no circumstances will Registrars be exempted from the College's written or clinical examinations.

**4.4.3.** Approval of application:

**4.4.3.1.** The minimum amount of prior learning to be recognised towards a particular training program for an individual applicant is 3 months, and the maximum is 12 months.

**4.4.3.2.** In exceptional circumstances where formal specialist training has been undertaken overseas, up to a maximum of 24 months may be granted towards the College's training program.

**4.4.3.3.** The Training Committee Chair may require applicants to satisfactorily complete some or all of the formative assessment requirements of the training program which would otherwise be required during the period of training to be recognised.

### **4.5. Appeals**

The College's *Reconsideration, Review and Appeal of Decisions Policy* will be available to all applicants should an applicant remain dissatisfied with the outcome of an application.

#### **VERSION CONTROL**

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