

POLICY

Portfolio	Fellowship Engagement	Ref. No.	POL-3114
Department	Professional Standards		
Title	CPD Program - Exemptions		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) includes the determination and maintenance of professional standards for the practice of surgery in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

This policy outlines the circumstances where an exemption from participating in the RACS Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program can be applied. This policy should be read in conjunction with the CPD Program Regulation and other associated policies and standards (see Associated Documents)

2. KEYWORDS

Continuing Professional Development (CPD), compliance, exemption, recency of practice, registration standards

3. BODY OF POLICY

The determination and process for CPD exemptions applies to the following participants:

- RACS Fellows
- Medical practitioners who hold vocational registration in Aotearoa New Zealand in scope/s of practice of surgery
- Medical practitioners in Australia who hold specialist registration (surgery)
- Non-specialist PGY3+ medical practitioners who practice in a surgically affiliated scope (i.e., surgical assistants, those aspiring to become surgical trainees)

Exemptions for Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMG) under assessment is addressed via a separate regulation and/or policy.

3.1. Exemption from CPD Requirements

RACS understands that there may be times during a surgeon's career where an exemption from CPD participation is required.

Grounds for an automatic exemption from CPD include:

- 3.1.1.** New RACS Fellows admitted to RACS after 30 October are granted an automatic exemption from participating in the CPD Program for that year
- 3.1.2.** RACS Fellows undertaking training in one of the nine surgical specialties
- 3.1.3.** RACS Fellows who retire from active practice during the CPD year

Grounds for an exemption from CPD where an application is required include participants:

- 3.1.4.** experiencing personal or family hardship
- 3.1.5.** experiencing personal or family illness
- 3.1.6.** on family leave
- 3.1.7.** attending to cultural responsibilities.

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3.1.8. Other special circumstances

The following reasons **do not** constitute grounds for an exemption from CPD:

- Participants residing overseas (RACS Fellows are required to participate in CPD in the country in which they reside or in the RACS CPD Program)
- RACS Fellows undertaking sub-specialty training or post-Fellowship training (PFET)
- Participants who are retired from clinical or non-clinical practice but maintain registration where there is a regulatory requirement to participate in CPD

3.2. Applying for an exemption

Participants can apply for three types of exemption from CPD participation:

- A full exemption from all CPD requirements
- A partial exemption from one or more CPD categories
- A partial exemption from an activity and/or pro-rata points

All exemptions are applied for a CPD period (12 months).

3.2.1. Supporting documentation

Applications for an exemption should be submitted online via the CPD Portfolio. Participants can elect to submit to attach supporting documentation but are not required to when submitting the application. If supporting documentation is not attached at the time of application, further information may be requested if required.

Information provided to RACS is handled in accordance with the RACS Privacy Policy.

3.2.2. Assessment and approval of exemptions

Applications are initially triaged and assessed confidentially by the Professional Standards Manager and/or Senior Program Coordinator (CPD).

Where an application clearly meets the policy standard, the Professional Standards Manager will approve the exemption.

Where the further information or assessment is required, the Professional Standards Manager or CPD Lead will contact the participant to confirm their consent to escalate the matter to the Executive Director for Surgical Affairs (Australia), Surgical Advisor (Aotearoa New Zealand) or the Professional Standards Chair.

All applications that are escalated will be de-identified.

3.2.3. Notification of outcome

Participants will be notified of an outcome or progress of their application within 14 days. Applications that require escalation may take longer and applicants will be kept updated on the progress.

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Where an application is approved, the participant's CPD Portfolio will be automatically updated. On request RACS can provide confirmation of an exemption to the participant.

Where an application is not approved, the Professional Standards Manager and/or Senior Program Coordinator (CPD) will contact the participant to discuss options and work towards the best possible outcome.

3.3. Appeals

Participants who wish to appeal a decision can write to the Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee (PSFSC) Chair at professional.standards@surgeons.org.

3.4. Support

RACS is committed to providing support to surgeons to assist them appropriately through difficult situations. RACS has partnered with [Converge International](#) to provide confidential support to RACS Fellows, Trainees, Specialist International Medical Graduates, RACS Global Health Volunteers and their immediate family members.

- Telephone 1300 687 327 in Australia or 0800 666 367 in New Zealand
- Visit [Converge International](#) and click on 'Live Chat' or the 'Make an EAP Appointment'
- Email eap@convergeintl.com.au

3.5. Regulatory requirements

There may be additional regulatory requirements if a participant is returning to practice after an absence of 12 months or more, or if a participant is only seeking an exemption for a defined period within a CPD year.

Participants should ensure that they are aware of any regulatory requirements and the impact a CPD exemption may have on their practice.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Guide

Regulation – CPD Program

Policy - CPD Program - Verification

CPD Standard - Audit and Peer Review

CPD Standard - Education Activity

CPD Standard - Learning Plan

CPD Standard - Performance Review

RACS Code of Conduct

RACS Surgical Competence and Performance Guide

RACS Surgical Audit and Peer Review Guide

Regulation - Professional Conduct Committee Terms of Reference

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Regulation - Professional Standards and Advocacy Committee Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference - Professional Standards Committee

Policy - Locum Evaluation and Peer Review Committee

Policy – Recognition of CPD Activities

Position Paper – Interactions with the Medical Industry

Approver: Professional Standards and Fellowship Services committee
Authoriser: Council