

Acceptable Conduct of Courses and Events

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS), in pursuit of upholding the values of *Service, Integrity, Respect, Compassion* and *Collaboration*, is committed to fostering a respectful and safe environment for RACS courses and events.
- 1.2 RACS courses and events are governed by relevant RACS policies in relation to professional behaviour and conduct, including bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment.
- 1.3 RACS acknowledges that courses and events can be intellectually and physically challenging and recognises the importance of creating a respectful and safe environment.
- 1.4 The purpose of this document is to provide further guidance to promote professional behaviour and socially, culturally and ethically responsible conduct. To achieve this, RACS will strive to:
- nurture a positive, diverse, inclusive and culturally safe learning and social environment
 - promote open, fair, ethical and transparent decision making that reflects RACS values and Code of Conduct
 - effectively identify, disclose, and manage any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest to protect the integrity of RACS
 - be consistently accountable and sustainable in course and event planning, delivery and management
 - promote equitable access to courses and events to facilitate diverse participation
 - include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Māori knowledge and perspectives in the planning and delivery of courses and events
 - foster a culture of respect that recognises the value of individuals that promotes dignity, equality and mutual respect
 - regard the setting of courses and events as professional environments.

2 Scope

- 2.1 These guidelines apply to any course or event conducted, co-badged or endorsed by RACS or delivered on behalf of RACS. Representatives of RACS invited to attend a course or event conducted by another organisation should endeavour to role-model the principles of these guidelines.

3 Definitions

- 3.1 **Attendees** refers to any person attending a course and event, including but not limited to faculty, examiners, board and committee members, presenters, candidates, participants, award recipients, coordinators, simulation patients and staff.
- 3.2 **Content** refers to any multimedia required for the purposes of conducting a course or event, including images, videos, curriculum and articles, and includes written and verbal content.

3.3 **Courses and events** refer to any formal or informal physical or virtual gathering for the purposes of education, training, assessment, professional development, advocacy, management or governance including:

- courses and events organised by RACS;
- courses and events delivered on behalf of RACS; and
- courses and events co-badged or endorsed by RACS.

Workshops, committee and board meetings, and social activities are included in this definition.

3.4 **Professional standing** refers to a person who demonstrates respectful and professional behaviour reflecting RACS Code of Conduct and values and has the appropriate knowledge and/or experience as determined by the course and event governing bodies.

4 Standards of conduct

4.1 Duty of care

4.1.1 The welfare of attendees is paramount to fostering a respectful and safe environment and achieving good learning and development outcomes. Course and event organisers should actively manage processes to anticipate and mitigate any foreseeable risk of harm to ensure the safety of all attendees.

4.2 Professional behaviour

4.2.1 Attendees at RACS courses and events must be respectful, professional and sensitive to cultural and diverse needs.

4.2.2 Feedback is essential for learning and developing performance and should be respectful and constructive with appropriate support given for remediation when necessary.

4.2.3 Any concerns regarding safety or unacceptable behaviour should be reported as soon as possible to course or event organisers and may be escalated to appropriate RACS representatives.

4.3 Cultural safety and inclusivity

4.3.1 In line with the RACS cultural competence and cultural safety principles courses and events should aim to promote ongoing self-reflection and self-awareness to protect against unconscious bias, racism, prejudices and stereotypes.

4.3.2 Courses and events will acknowledge the local traditional owners of land in Australia, or tangata whenua in Aotearoa New Zealand.

4.3.3 Course and event organisers should include consideration for Treaty of Waitangi principles as it applies to Aotearoa New Zealand.

4.3.4 Courses and events held overseas should respect local customs.

4.3.5 In line with the RACS Diversity and Inclusion plan, individuals involved in courses and events governance should strive to increase diverse representation by identifying and addressing barriers impacting participation.

4.3.6 Course and event organisers should endeavour to choose venues and entertainment which align with RACS values; that identified suppliers are inclusive of all; and are not affiliated with industries that conflict with RACS values.

4.3.7 RACS should make every effort to manage any power imbalances that may impact the psychological safety of individuals at courses and events.

4.3.8 RACS will routinely review rewards, recognition and entitlements to foster diverse and inclusive pro-bono participation.

4.4 Equitable access

4.4.1 Equitable access, affordability, care requirements, and religious and cultural requirements should be considered during the course and event scheduling process.

4.4.2 There should be awareness of disability requirements to promote equitable access and support, including liaison with disability groups and advocates to identify and address barriers when required.

4.4.3 RACS courses and events should be conducted within Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, where possible, to ensure fair and equitable access for all Trainees, SIMGs, Fellows and members, and uphold RACS' principles of sustainability.

4.4.4 Course and event organisers should consider incorporating virtual components for greater inclusion and sustainability.

4.5 Sustainability

4.5.1 Processes should be implemented for evaluating quality assurance and informing quality improvement.

4.5.2 Planning should include consideration of environmentally sustainable practices to minimise the impact on the environment, including promoting teaching on local courses, minimising waste, maximising recycling and responsible catering options.

4.5.3 Courses and events should be financially sustainable and supported by appropriate fee setting and sponsorship to minimise any out of pocket expenses.

4.6 Faculty, speakers, guests, award recipients and affiliates

4.6.1 Faculty, speakers, guests, award recipients and affiliates should demonstrate professionalism and be regarded to be of appropriate professional standing.

4.6.2 RACS values diverse views and opinions and encourages respectful discussion including, the respectful handling of disagreements. However, views and opinions expressed during a course or event that vary from RACS Code of Conduct and values should be raised with course and event organisers and may be escalated to appropriate RACS representatives.

4.6.3 Course and event organisers should provide appropriate training and support to assist faculty in the preparation and delivery of courses and events.

4.6.4 Gifts, tokens of appreciation and prizes awarded must comply with relevant RACS policies and avoid any link to industries that conflict with RACS Code of Conduct and values, including but not limited to alcohol, gambling and tobacco.

4.7 Social events and entertainment

4.7.1 All social events should be conducted in line with the RACS Responsible Approach to Alcohol Policy and the RACS Workforce Conduct Policy.

4.7.2 All speakers, where appropriate, should be made aware of relevant policies to ensure conduct and content aligns with RACS Code of Conduct and values.

4.7.3 Attendance at social events should always be voluntary. No individual should be compelled to attend or be affected adversely if they choose not to attend.

4.8 Promotion and sponsorship

4.8.1 Sponsorship obtained to support a course or event must in no way compromise or detract from the educational content or value of the activity. Any uncertainty which may arise concerning the appropriateness of a sponsor may be referred to appropriate RACS representatives.

4.8.2 Sponsors should be offered equitable access to sponsorship opportunities relating to courses and events.

4.8.3 RACS must accurately represent what a course or event will offer when promoting.

4.9 Intellectual property and consent

4.9.1 RACS, speakers or any third party presenting at an activity or event, retain their respective intellectual property rights in relation to the content provided, or forming part of, the activity or event.

4.9.2 At all times, there should be free, prior and informed consent relating to patient images displayed at RACS courses and events.

4.9.3 Where personal information is disclosed by the participant to RACS, RACS shall only use that personal information in accordance with the RACS Privacy of Personal Information policy.

4.9.4 Attendees should be aware of issues of copyright and consent when reproducing material for the purposes of social media.

5 Associated documents

- College Sponsorship policy
- Complaints Handling regulation
- Equal Opportunity and Acceptable Workplace Behaviour policy
- Ethical Stories and Images policy
- Examiners Charter
- Faculty Charter
- Gender Equality policy
- Professional Development Activities policy
- Professional Development Fees and Refunds regulation
- Provision of Facilities and Support for Parents of Infants Attending RACS Activities policy
- RACS Code of Conduct
- RACS Privacy of Personal Information policy
- Religious Observance policy
- Responsible Approach to Alcohol policy
- Social Media policy
- Travel and Accommodation policy
- Workforce Conduct policy

Approver Education Board
Authoriser Council
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