



ASSESSMENT OF LABORATORIES SEEKING ACCREDITATION TO TRAIN REGISTRARS OF THE RCPA AND RENEWAL OF LABORATORY ACCREDITATION

INTRODUCTION

If you wish to apply for accreditation to train Registrars to obtain Fellowship of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) the RCPA needs to assess your current capabilities to provide supervised training. After you have been approved to provide training you must provide an annual laboratory audit and participate in a site visit during the accreditation cycle. After five years you must then apply again to renew the accreditation.

If you want to check on your current accreditation status a current list of accredited laboratories is available on the public access part of the RCPA website
<http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Careers/LabAccreditation.htm>

Scroll down to

To find laboratories that are accredited with the RCPA for training, please download the Accredited Labs Excel spreadsheet by clicking [here](#). If you wish to sort the contents of the spreadsheet by location and discipline to find the combination you require, first save it to your computer, then reopen using your spreadsheet application.

**PLEASE NOTE IF YOU ARE RENEWING YOUR ACCREDITATION PLEASE GO DIRECTLY TO
STEP 17 THEN TO STEPS 2 TO 10**

STEP 1 SUBMIT LABORATORY ACCREDITATION APPLICATION FORM AND TRAINING PROGRAM FOR A LABORATORY WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN ACCREDITED OR ACCREDITATION HAS LAPSED

- To start the formal assessment process of your laboratory you need to apply to the RCPA on the appropriate form for your discipline and supply a comprehensive training program.
- Please note that if you wish to apply for General Pathology as well as for Single Discipline training you need to send in two forms – the Single Discipline form as well as the General Pathology Application Form.
- The Training and Support Administrator (TSA) processes the application and sends to the Chief Examiner to complete a formal decision form as to the number of years single discipline training they approve and for any comments and/or recommendations they wish to pass onto the laboratory

Training Program

- There is a lot of useful information in the appendices of the application form and if you want an example of a training program please contact Heidi Nelson as below
- If there is no training program the application will not progress until one is submitted
- The training program must demonstrate to the Chief Examiner that the training will enable the trainee to pass the required examinations and it may be useful to look at the current Curriculum/Training Handbook.

The current Curriculum/Training Handbook is on the public access part of the RCPA website <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Careers/Training.htm>

Scroll down to and select **Click Here** for the Curriculum/Training Handbook (PDF) document and download if required

For an application form as a word document please go to the public access part of the RCPA website <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Careers/LabAccreditation.htm>

Scroll down and select the relevant discipline you require, download to complete and send to the TSA with a comprehensive training program.

Please complete the application form, sign and send to Heidi Nelson, Training & Support Administrator (TSA) at the College by email heidin@rcpa.edu.au, fax +61 2 8356 5828 or post

The Board of Censors have full business meetings in March, July and November of each year. The dates for 2010 are Monday 1 March 2010, Monday 12 July 2010 and Monday 22 November 2010.

TIME: *This generally takes a month or two to complete depending on when the next Board of Censors Meeting is due.*

STEP 2 FINAL DETERMINATION FROM THE CHIEF EXAMINER

- The TSA posts the application to a website Forum
- The appropriate Chief Examiner drafts a Decision Form and sends to the TSA by posting to the website Forum, email, fax or post.

TIME: *This can take up to two or more months as there may be a requirement to research conditions of training and Chief Examiners volunteer their time to the College.*

STEP 3 THE DETAILS OF THE APPLICATION AND THE CHIEF EXAMINER'S DECISION IS PRESENTED TO THE NEXT BOARD OF CENSORS MEETING FOR FORMAL APPROVAL

- The application details and the Chief Examiner's decision is presented to the next Board of Censors meeting by the TSA

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TIME: *This step depends on length of time before next meeting.*

STEP 4 FORMAL LETTER TO LABORATORIES

- The TSA drafts a formal letter to inform you as to what length of time your laboratory is accredited for training that has been approved by the Board of Censors
- If the training program is not sufficient a request will be made to submit another one and there maybe other comments from the Chief Examiner to supply other information
- Ordinarily every laboratory is accredited for five years and the maximum a laboratory can be accredited for a single trainee for single discipline training is four years
- The letter and entire application is then checked and signed by the Registrar of the College and the formal letter posted in hardcopy to the laboratory contact at the address on the application form.
- Please note that you must inform the College in writing if there are any changes to the laboratory that may affect training

TIME: After the Board of Censors Meeting it can take up to three weeks to a month for the letter to be drafted, checked, formally approved and posted in hardcopy to all concerned as there are often a number to process

STEP 5 UPDATING OF ACCREDITED LABORATORIES ON WEBSITE

- The TSA enters the laboratory accreditation details into the RCPA IMIS database including the comments and/or recommendations from the Chief Examiner
- The TSA posts a spreadsheet of the current accredited laboratories onto the website so potential trainees can apply to your laboratory to be a Registrar trainee

If you want to check on your current accreditation status a current list of accredited laboratories is available on the public access part of the RCPA website
<http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Careers/LabAccreditation.htm>

Scroll down to

To find laboratories that are accredited with the RCPA for training, please download the Accredited Labs Excel spreadsheet by clicking [here](#). If you wish to sort the contents of the spreadsheet by location and discipline to find the combination you require, first save it to your computer, then reopen using your spreadsheet application.

TIME: This can take a couple of months to finalise the decision forms with the Chief Examiners, complete the letters and post to website.

STEP 6 ANNUAL LABORATORY AUDIT

- In May of each year the TSA sends a formal letter and a hardcopy Laboratory Audit Form to every laboratory that is currently accredited.
- Can you please complete and return to the College by email, fax or post by the 30 June
- This is the way to update details of your laboratory

For an annual laboratory audit form as a word document please go to the public access part of the RCPA website <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Careers/LabAccreditation.htm>

Scroll down to

For laboratories already accredited who have had a change in staffing or caseload, or who wish to obtain copy of Annual Audit form [click here](#)

Please complete the Laboratory Audit Form and send to Heidi Nelson, Training & Support Administrator (TSA) at the College by email heidin@rcpa.edu.au, fax +61 2 8356 5828 or post

TIME: Laboratories get a couple of months to return a single page form preferably by fax

STEP 7 MAJOR ISSUES RAISED BY FORMAL LETTER TO THE COLLEGE, ON A LABORATORY AUDIT FORM OR FROM ANOTHER SOURCE

- If there are any changes to the supervision, training program, management of laboratory and any other aspect of the training environment the RCPA must be informed in writing
- So if there are any changes made known to the College by the laboratory, State Councillor, trainee(s), laboratory audit form etc the TSA brings this to the attention of the Registrar and the relevant Chief Examiner
- This usually leads to an Formal Site Visit so that a report can go to the Board of Censors
- Please go to Steps 11 to 16 for Formal Site Visit details

STEP 8 ROUTINE SITE VISITS IN AUSTRALIA TO BE HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH NATA LABORATORY ACCREDITATION VISITS

Site visits are required at least once in the five year laboratory accreditation period. Please note that these routine site visits in conjunction with NATA are only occurring in Australia. Similar programs in Hong Kong, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia are yet to be developed.

- NATA will inform the College as to the list of laboratories they will be visiting in the following six months
- The TSA will inform NATA which laboratories on their list are currently accredited for training by the RCPA
- For the laboratories that are accredited for training with the College, NATA will inform the laboratory that a Fellow of the College will be reviewing their supervised training on behalf of the College during the NATA visit
- NATA will forward onto the accredited laboratories a discipline specific *NATA Site Visit to Training Facilities in Pathology* for completion by the laboratory that is to be returned to NATA with other pre survey data
- NATA will forward onto the College the completed discipline specific *NATA Site Visit to Training Facilities in Pathology*
- The Fellow who is participating on the NATA visit will be sent by the TSA
 - Laboratory Accreditation for Training Programs policy document
 - Fellows as Assessors for NATA/RCPA Accreditation guideline document
 - completed discipline specific *NATA Site Visit to Training Facilities in Pathology*
 - *Checklist for NATA/RCPA Assessors in Relation to Training for Fellowship including details of accreditation status*
 - This Step Guide
 - Current supervisors module
 - Training handbook
 - Laboratory IMIS printout
 - Supervisor's and Head of Department IMIS printout
 - Trainees' IMIS printout including IMGs
 - Current laboratory accreditation application form
 - Current laboratory accreditation approval letter
 - Completed discipline specific *Site Visit Proforma*

The current Curriculum/Training Handbook is on the public access part of the RCPA website <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Careers/Training.htm>

Scroll down to and select **Click Here** for the Curriculum/Training Handbook (PDF) document and download if required

Please liaise with Heidi Nelson, Training & Support Administrator (TSA) at the College by email heidin@rcpa.edu.au, fax +61 2 8356 5828 or post

TIME: The Fellow should send the completed discipline specific NATA Site Visit to Training Facilities in Pathology within a fortnight of the NATA site visit

STEP 9 ROUTINE SITE VISITS IN AUSTRALIA TO BE HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH NATA SITE VISIT REPORT

- The Fellow will complete the discipline specific *Checklist for NATA/RCPA Assessors in Relation to Training for Fellowship* and return to the College via email, fax or post
- The outcome of the visit is to be sent to the Registrar of the Board of Censors and the relevant Chief Examiner for review and to determine if a formal Site Visit is required
- A summary of the outcomes of the Site Visits will be presented to the next Board of Censors meeting

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TIME: This generally takes a month or two to complete depending on when the next Board of Censors Meeting is due.

STEP 10 ROUTINE SITE VISITS IN AUSTRALIA TO BE HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH NATA SITE VISIT FOLLOW UP

If the Outcome of a Visit is that the training program is adequate

- The TSA drafts a formal letter to inform you of this outcome. Therefore another Site Visit should not be needed in the five year accreditation period
- The letter and *Checklist for NATA/RCPA Assessors in Relation to Training for Fellowship* is checked and signed by the Registrar of the College and the formal letter posted in hardcopy

If the Outcome of a Visit is that there are concerns with the training then a formal site visit is required

- The TSA drafts a formal letter to inform you as to this outcome and that a formal Site Visit is required
- The letter and *Checklist for NATA/RCPA Assessors in Relation to Training for Fellowship* is checked and signed by the Registrar of the College and the formal letter posted in hardcopy
- Please go to the next step for Formal Site Visits

TIME: This generally takes a month or two to complete depending on when the next Board of Censors Meeting is due.

STEP 11 FORMAL SITE VISITS FOR NEW LABORATORIES OR IF ISSUES OF CONCERNS HAVE BEEN RAISED

Formal Site Visits are for new laboratories or if issues of concern have been raised via a laboratory audit, Routine Site Visits in Australia held in Conjunction with NATA Site Visit or Supervisor's Report.

- The TSA will usually email the Laboratory Contact to liaise about a suitable time and date
- The Panel need to meet with the trainee(s), supervisor(s), other pathologists and laboratory management personnel
- The TSA drafts a formal letter for the Registrar to sign to confirm the Site Visit panel, time and date
- The Site Visit Panel ordinarily consists of the
 - Chief Examiner or their nominee
 - State/Regional Councillor or their nominee
 - On occasion the College CEO, Education and Training Manager or the Assistant Education and Training Manager
 - At least one of the panel should be from a different State or Region
 - If the laboratory conducts JSAC training a representative of the Physicians College who is also on the JSAC Committee

TIME: This can take up to a month to get a suitable time and date agreed with all the panel members, laboratory personnel and trainees

STEP 12 FORMAL SITE VISIT DOCUMENTS PREPARATION

- The formal letter from the previous step will often request a schedule for the day and if necessary a *Site Visit Proforma* detailing the current situation of the laboratory as the current application on file could be four years old
- The TSA liaises with the laboratory contact for the documentation from the laboratory and prepares all the necessary background documents for the panel which would include:-
 - Schedule of site visits if more than one etc
 - Map information of laboratory
 - Website information of personnel
 - Schedule supplied by laboratory outlining the timetable for the day
 - Completed *Site Visit Proforma* from laboratory or a blank one for completion by the panel
 - Laboratory IMIS printout
 - Supervisor's and Head of Department IMIS printout
 - Trainees' IMIS printout including IMGs (check with schedule supplied by laboratory)
 - Formal letter or email confirming site visit and panel
 - Documents from current laboratory accreditation file
 - Laboratory audit form(s) up to current application form
 - Any correspondence and/or previous site visit documentation
 - Formal approval letter(s) from the College
 - Checklist for NATA/RCPA Assessors in Relation to Training For Fellowship
 - Current application form with training program.

TIME: This generally takes the time from the formal letter to a week before the Site Visit so the panel have the documents to read over

STEP 13 ACTUAL FORMAL SITE VISIT

- The Panel follow the supplied schedule and discuss the situation with the trainee(s), supervisor(s) and laboratory personnel taking notes for a written report

TIME: *This generally takes two to three hours to do a comprehensive appraisal of the training provided*

STEP 14 FORMAL SITE VISIT REPORT

- The Chief Examiner or nominee drafts a written report for the Board of Censors that is agreed to by the panel
- The draft is sent to the laboratory contact for comment by the Chief Examiner or TSA and the laboratory will have four weeks to comment
- A summary of the length of accreditation for training recommendations of the revised draft report is added to the agenda of the next Board of Censors by the TSA

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STEP 15 FORMAL SITE VISIT FOLLOW UP AFTER BOARD OF CENSORS MEETING

- The TSA drafts a formal letter to inform you as to what length of training time your laboratory is accredited for and attaches the Site Visit Report that has been approved by the Board of Censors
- Ordinarily every laboratory is accredited for five years and the maximum a laboratory can be accredited for single discipline training is four years
- The letter and site visit report is checked and signed by the Registrar of the College and the formal letter and site visit report is posted in hardcopy
- The TSA enters the laboratory accreditation details into the RCPA IMIS database
- The TSA posts a spreadsheet of the current accredited laboratories onto the website so potential trainees can apply to your laboratory to be a Registrar trainee and please see Step 5 on how to access this

TIME: *This can take a couple of months to finalise the decision forms with the Chief Examiners, complete the letters and post to website.*

STEP 16 FORMAL SITE VISIT FOLLOW UP REPORT TO THE BOARD OF CENSORS

- On occasion the Board of Censors extends accreditation to the next meeting and requests a written report to be submitted for discussion
- Another possibility is that a follow up Site Visit may be required after a period of time

TIME: *This can take many months to complete depending on when the next Board of Censors Meeting is due and when the Board is satisfied with the current training arrangements.*

STEP 17 LABORATORY ACCREDITATION APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL LETTER

- In May/June of each year the TSA sends a formal letter and a hardcopy Laboratory Accreditation Form to every laboratory where your accreditation expires in December of that year.
- Can you please complete and return to the College by email, fax or post by the end of October to be able to go to the November Board of Censors meeting
- Please note that if you wish to apply for General Pathology as well as for Single Discipline training you need to send in two forms – the Single Discipline form as well as the General Pathology Application Form.
- The TSA processes the application and sends to the Chief Examiner to complete a formal decision form as to the number of years single discipline training they approve and for any comments and/or recommendations they wish to pass onto the laboratory

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TIME: *This application goes to the November Board of Censors Meeting*

STEP 18 LABORATORY ACCREDITATION RENEWAL PROCESS

- **Please go through Steps 2 to 10 for the rest of the renewal process**

COLLEGE POLICY DOCUMENTS

The formal College policy on this area *Laboratory Accreditation for Training Programs*. is also available on the public access part of the RCPA website

<http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Careers/LabAccreditation.htm>

Scroll down to

This accreditation process is separate to that carried out by NATA/RCPA or IANZ or other such bodies. To obtain a copy of the Laboratory Accreditation Policy including the Standards [click here](#)

Other College policies are available on the public access part of the RCPA website

<http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Publications/PolicyManualPublic/Policies.htm> and include

- Laboratory Accreditation Training Programs
- Supervision of Training
- Training in an Unpaid Position
- Training Limitation

COLLEGE GUIDELINE DOCUMENTS

Another useful resource is available on the public access part of the RCPA website

<http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Publications/PolicyManualPublic/Guidelines.htm>

Scroll down to

- Assessment of Training Programs for Accreditation of RCPA Training: Process for Assessment of Adequate Staffing Levels
- Fellows as Assessors for NATA/RCPA Accreditation

THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Headed by the CEO, Dr Debra Graves, the Team is available to assist you. Please do not hesitate to contact the Management Team for information, advice, guidance or support. Contact details for RCPA staff you will be dealing with most, are listed below.

Postal and Location Address

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
Durham Hall
207 Albion Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Australia

Phone

The Telephone number to contact reception is +61 2 8356 5858. Staff phone extensions are all 8356 5xxx (last 3 digits change).

Fax

The Fax number is 61 (02) 8356 5828

Website

www.rcpa.edu.au

Email

The general email address is rcpa@rcpa.edu.au.

Office Holder	Ext	E-mail	Title
Webster, Boyd	852	boydw@rcpa.edu.au	Registrar – Board of Censors
Staff Member	Ext	E-mail	Title
Graves, Debra	830	debrag@rcpa.edu.au	CEO (Mobile: 0417 218 528)
Waterhouse, Tamsin	813	tamsinw@rcpa.edu.au	Deputy CEO (Mobile: 0437 966 955)
Pryor, Wendy	851	wendyp@rcpa.edu.au	Director of Education
Underwood, Colin	821	colinu@rcpa.edu.au	Education and Training Manager
Position Vacant	833		Assistant Education and Training Manager
Nelson, Heidi	822	heidin@rcpa.edu.au	Training and Support Administrator
Todd, Helen	825	helent@rcpa.edu.au	Administrator Training and Exams
Morris, Kathy	850	kathym@rcpa.edu.au	Project Officer
Liu, Shu	849	shul@rcpa.edu.au	Workforce Administrator
Yannieh, Danielle	858	danielley@rcpa.edu.au	Receptionist

Flowchart of Laboratory Accreditation Process

