

## **Guidelines for the preparation of Specialist Training Program funded activities and resources for the RCPA Education portal**

### **Background**

RCPA Education is a new web based portal, which was developed to support rural trainees and training network groups by providing access to online learning activities and resources.

Educational activities and resources for RCPA Education must be of a high standard that will provide a significant learning benefit to users and participants. The following guidelines are to assist in designing suitable activities and preparing submissions for funding of projects through the Specialist Training Program (STP).

Funding for developing support projects under the STP falls under two categories – Rural Support and Training Network Development Support projects. Projects must be strategic and sustainable to ensure the infrastructure of network training settings is robust, and pathology is supported in rural areas. The criteria for application is set out in the Expressions of Interest for each grant category and all applicants must ensure they comply with these when submitting their applications.

### **General principles:**

- Learning activities and resources must be of sound educational design, consistent with principles of adult learning. For example, they should provide clearly defined learning objectives and learning outcomes. They should challenge learners to think critically and reflect on information before committing to decisions and receiving contextual/adaptive feedback.
- Learning activities and resources should supplement and expand, rather than duplicate existing learning opportunities
- Learning resources must be compatible and/or integrate with the RCPA Education platform. They may be hosted on the RCPA platform or elsewhere, but in the latter case they must be accessible via a link from the RCPA site. Please contact the RCPA Education Designer if further information is required.
- User groups, any access restrictions and level of suitability (see below) must be defined.
- They must not include any material that could compromise patient privacy.
- Original material created must provide unrestricted, commons and/or transferable copyright. Material without copyright or intellectual property restrictions are preferred. If any apply, this must be explicitly stated. Sources of non-original material must be acknowledged and copyright clearance for educational use must be obtained from the copyright owner before use.
- Project plans must clearly outline the methods to be used in preparing and presenting materials, detailing practical steps and requirements needed to complete the project, and providing a realistic timeframe.
- Projects plans must include costing for all resources required including hardware and software; human resources including project officers, developers, presenters and consultants; travel and incidental expenses, catering and venue costs where applicable; and administrative and stationery costs. Training of project officers to construct resources is available but must be accounted for in funding proposals.

## Levels of suitability:

- Tier 1
  - Participants with little prior knowledge or experience of the subject
  - RCPA Trainees who have not yet passed part 1 examinations
  - Scientists who are preparing for Masters level qualification
  - Post part 1 Trainees, pathologists or senior scientists from a discipline that is not the primary subject matter of the activity.
  
- Tier 2
  - Post part 1 RCPA Trainees
  - Senior scientists preparing for Fellowship or doctorate level qualifications
  - Fellows and postdoctoral scientists updating their knowledge and skills
  
- Tier 3
  - Fellows and post doctoral scientists undertaking continuing professional development in an area of expertise

Highest priority is currently being given to Tier 1 projects

## Types of resources and activities

- Mock examinations and formative assessments
  - As far as possible, mock exams should mimic the actual RCPA exam format.
  - For practical examinations, slides or other materials must be of sufficient quality to reasonably mimic exam conditions
  - Multiple choice questions should provide not only correct answers, but an explanation of the rationale.
  - Short answer questions should provide model answers with explanatory notes.
  - Users must commit to an answer before being offered feedback.
  
- Case studies
  - These should be structured to reflect sequential clinical decision-making processes. RCPA software allows for sophisticated logic models with interactivity and progressive revelation of results and adaptive feedback, which is the answer you provide can branch in many directions.
  - Any patient-related material must be de-identified.
  - Images must be of high quality and free of copyright restrictions.
  - References, documents and web links for further information should be included where possible.
  
- Interactive learning modules
  - They must be as interactive as possible
  - Learning objectives must be clearly specified
  - Modules should be structured to require reflection and decision-making before revelation of further information and adaptive feedback.
  - A variety of embedded media is strongly encouraged. This may include text, images, audio and/or video, web links, reference material, self-assessment quizzes, and suggested practical activities. The RCPA Education Designer can advise on suitable formats.
  - Any patient-related material must be de-identified.
  - Images must be of high quality and free of copyright restrictions.
  
- Web conferences
  - The RCPA can offer web-conference facilities through Redback Conferencing, or other services may be used
  - There must be a nominated moderator to facilitate all sessions
  - Audio and video may be captured and used as a permanent online resource, though material that may identify patients must be edited out.
  
- Blended learning (combination of face-to-face and online activities)
  - This is particularly suited to network groups participating in combinations of online and offline activities.
  - Activities are sequenced over time and users must register to participate in a structured program.
  - There must be a designated coordinator.

- Face-to-face workshops
  - Workshops should be as interactive as possible, with hands-on and group activities, rather than a series of didactic lectures.
  - Presentations may be recorded and used as a permanent online resource.
  - A program with clear learning objectives must be circulated in advance.
  - A post-workshop evaluation must be completed and a report given to the RCPA.
  - An accessible venue with comfortable facilities is essential.
  - Costs of venue hire, catering and speaker travel costs must be included in project budget with a clear outline of costs.

## Topics

Subject matter may relate to any discipline of pathology, however priority is given to:

- Topics relevant to multiple disciplines and across a wide geographical area.
- Topics that are under-represented by currently available resources.
- Topics that can be optimally addressed by the proposed resources and activities.

There is currently a particular need for resources relating to:

- Research skills
- Informatics
- Laboratory management
- Legal and ethical issues
- Communication skills
- Molecular pathology

**Examples of well-structured activities may be viewed via the following links:**

### RCPAQAP Cases

[RCPA Anatomical Pathology QAP Case 001](#)

[RCPA Anatomical Pathology QAP Case 002](#)

Autopsy and Forensic Histopathology Cases

[Case 001](#)