

TRAINEE HANDBOOK 2017



Administrative Requirements

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INTRODUCTION

Each year the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) conducts education, training and assessment to qualify medical graduates to become Fellows of the College on the approval of the College Board. Graduates in Medicine or Dentistry may also undertake training and examinations for Fellowship of the Faculty of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology. Specialist international medical graduates who have been assessed by the College and have entered a training program are subject to the same policies and procedures as other trainees. In 2011 the College established a Faculty of Science and has developed training programs in disciplines which mirror the pathology disciplines. Faculty of Science Trainees are not required to have a medical or dental degree. In 2014 the College established a Faculty of Clinical Forensic Medicine and a training program is currently under development.

Training is accredited and examinations are conducted by the College's Board of Education and Assessment.

To ensure adequate education and training, the Board offers discipline-specific Handbooks (curricula), advice, mentoring and training accreditation to help graduates and their supervisors cover the large amount of work needed to prepare for examinations and acceptance as a Fellow.

This booklet provides College Trainees and supervisors, with information on education and training, assessments and qualification requirements.

ABOUT THE COLLEGE

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) was formed in 1956 and was originally known as the College of Pathologists of Australia. It has undergone two title changes since then, with "Royal" added in 1971 following permission from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and "Australasia" in 1980 to recognise its New Zealand and South-east Asian component.

The College's primary focus is educational. It is involved in the education, examination and certification of pathologists within Australasia in addition to its Faculty Fellows and Trainees. The ongoing professional development of all Fellows is integral to the College's work. It also provides professional leadership, including the setting of professional practice standards, and is heavily involved in government relations and negotiations concerned with maintaining the role of pathology in clinical practice.

The College is a not-for-profit organisation established under the NSW Companies Act, with a Board of Directors.

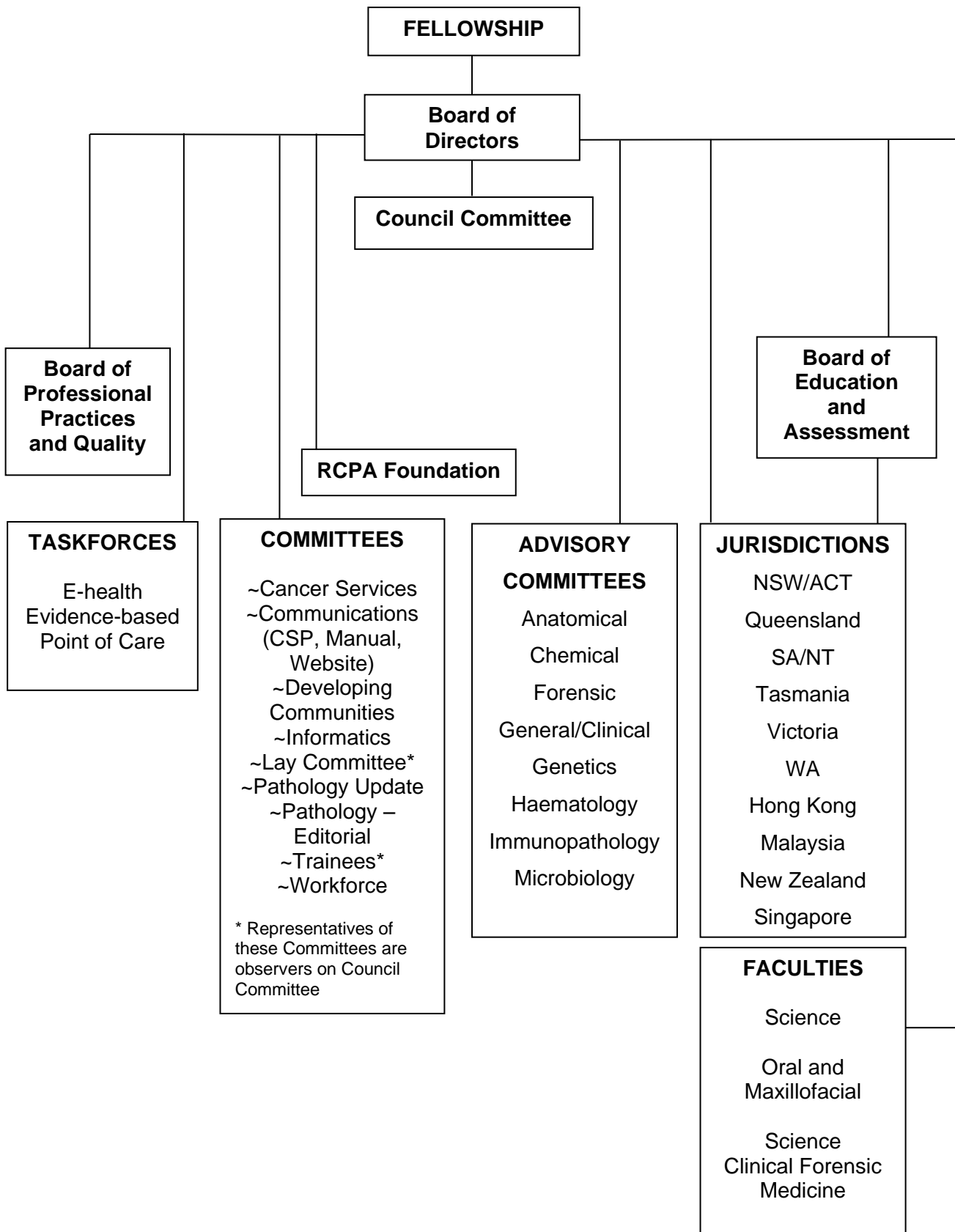
In understanding the role of the College and its place in Australian and New Zealand medical training and qualification systems, please note the following excerpt from the College's Constitution:

- (1) to promote the study of the science and practice of pathology in relation to medicine;
- (2) to promote the highest quality medical care and patient safety through education, training and assessment;
- (3) to encourage research in pathology and related sciences;
- (4) to bring together pathologists for their common benefit and for scientific discussions and demonstrations;
- (5) to educate and train the future generations of pathologists;
- (6) to maintain professional standards and ethics among pathologists through continuing professional development and other activities;
- (7) to seek improved health for all people by developing and advocating health policy in partnership with health consumers;
- (8) to support and develop pathologists as clinicians, public health practitioners, teachers and researchers;

- (9) to increase the evidence and knowledge on which the practice of pathology is based through research and dissemination of new knowledge and innovation to the profession and the community;
- (10) to disseminate knowledge of the principles and practice of pathology in relation to medicine by such means as may be thought fit (including any technological means);
- (11) to consider and advise as to any course of study and technical training and to disseminate any information, and to offer training programs in recognised areas of pathology within accredited laboratories as well as other agreed pathways, to promote and ensure the fitness of persons desirous of qualifying for Fellowship of the Company;
- (12) to institute and provide lectures, seminars, symposia and demonstrations upon sciences pertinent to the practice of pathology for the benefit of Fellows of the Company and to invite to and admit to such lectures, seminars, symposia and demonstrations persons who are not Fellows of the Company on such occasions and on such conditions as shall be deemed expedient by the Company;”

The following ongoing activities underpin the objectives of the College; an annual *Pathology Update* meeting of the College and local scientific meetings arranged from time to time; the publication of the journal *Pathology* and the *Manual of Use and Interpretation of Pathology Tests*; the arrangement of workshops, seminars and various other educational activities; quality assurance programs; the establishment of a Continuing Professional Development Program; the approval, monitoring and investigation of training programs proposed by Trainees and their supervisors; and the conduct of appropriate written, practical and oral examinations for admission to Fellowship and for obtaining postgraduate diplomas.

RCPA Governance Structure



Terms in Use

The following terms are referred to throughout the document. For ease of reference they are outlined below:

RCPA	Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
The College	Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
Fellows	Qualified pathologists, Fellows of the Faculties and official RCPA Members
Trainees	Medical, dental and science graduates within College programs.
Board	RCPA Board of Directors.
Council	RCPA Council will be responsible for the review and development of policies and strategies.
State or Regional Councillor	Each Australian state has a Fellow elected to the RCPA Council. These are known as State Councillors. In addition, there are Regional Councillors elected to Council for Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. To represent New Zealand, a Vice President is elected to Council, although training matters are overseen by the Board of Education and Assessment Representative for NZ.
Councillors	State or Regional Councillors, also Chairmen of State or Regional Committees. The Chairmen of the Board of Education and Assessment and other major committees are also members of Council.
Board of Education and Assessment	RCPA Board of Education and Assessment: the RCPA board set up to oversee training, examinations and applications for Fellowship, Continuing Professional Development and education activities.
Registrar	The Registrar of the Board of Education and Assessment: a Fellow of the College responsible for ensuring that policies of the College are met with regard to training, assessment and application for Fellowship. The Registrar is the point of contact with the College for Trainees and the person to whom all enquiries about training and assessment should be addressed.
State Committee	An RCPA committee that oversees educational issues relating to Fellows and Trainees within a particular state. The State Committee monitors and acts on issues arising in and exclusive to that State, which affects the interests of Fellows and Trainees.
RACP	Royal Australasian College of Physicians
CJCT	Committee for Joint College Training: a joint committee between the RCPA and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP), which oversees joint training programs (currently in Endocrinology/ Chemical Pathology, Infectious Diseases/Microbiology, Haematology and Immunology and Allergy).
NATA/RCPA	Collaboration between the National Association of Testing Authorities and the College to audit standards and accredit Australian pathology laboratories.
AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
IANZ	International Accreditation New Zealand, the body which accredits NZ laboratories.
Overseas Trained Specialist	(OTS) A medical practitioner qualified as a pathologist in another country, seeking recognition as a specialist in Australia through the Australian Medical Council process, or in New Zealand through the Medical Council of New Zealand process.

Training Programs Provided by the College

Training, examination and fellowship applications are controlled by the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia's Board of Education and Assessment. The Board is made up of Fellows appointed by Council to the position for two year terms, up to a maximum of six years.

The College allows training for the RCPA Fellowship examination in the following pathology disciplines:

- Anatomical Pathology
- Chemical Pathology
- Clinical Pathology
- Forensic Pathology
- General Pathology
- Genetic Pathology
- Haematology
- Immunopathology
- Microbiology

In addition the College offers Post-Fellowship diplomas in:

- Cytopathology
- Forensic Pathology
- Neuropathology
- Paediatric Pathology

The College allows training for Fellowship in the Faculty of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology in:

- Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
- Forensic Odontology

The College allows training in the Faculty of Science in the following disciplines:

- Anatomical Pathology
- Chemical Pathology
- Forensic Science
- Haematology
- Immunopathology
- Microbiology

A Fellowship of the Faculty of Clinical Forensic Medicine is currently under development.

A Certificate in Forensic Medicine for non-Fellows is also available.

Details of the training and assessment requirements for Fellowship in each discipline and for the Post-Fellowship Diplomas are set out in [individual Handbooks](#).

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Prospective pathology Trainees are strongly advised to consult the relevant State Training Network coordinator before applying to train. Training Network Coordinators provide information and advice on pathology as a career, and will be a continual contact throughout the training period.

<http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Trainees/Training-with-the-RCPA/Training-Positions>

State or Regional Councillors are located in each Australian State, and in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. Training enquiries for New Zealand should be directed to the NZ Representative of the Board of Education and Assessment and for Saudi Arabia to the Corresponding Fellow. Contact can be made through the College.

Before being accepted for training in the pathology disciplines, prospective trainees must provide evidence that they are registered medical (or dental for Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology) practitioners in Australia or New Zealand, or are entitled to practise medicine in their country of domicile. Prospective trainees are

required to undertake not less than 24 months in general clinical work following completion of their undergraduate medical degree to be registered with the College. In Australia, the College will only accept prospective trainees who have full general registration or, for those who have gone through the overseas trained specialist (OTS) pathway, have limited registration and have been issued with an AMC Report 1 or have limited registration under the Medical Board's Competent Authority Pathway.

Please visit the [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency \(AHPRA\)](http://www.ahpra.gov.au) for information regarding medical registration.

Prospective Trainees for the Faculties (Science, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Clinical Forensic Medicine) should contact the College. They will be directed to the relevant Faculty members for further information and advice.

Any personal information provided by Trainees is strictly confidential to the College staff, members of relevant College committees, examiners and supervisors. Trainees are therefore asked on registration forms for their consent to the RCPA providing relevant and necessary information as above.

The College will manage personal information in accordance with its Privacy Policy. If you wish to access any information we hold on you or obtain a copy of the College's Privacy Policy please contact the Privacy Officer on +61 2 8356 5858.

Registration

Before applying for training with the College, the prospective Trainee must be employed in a training position in a laboratory accredited by the College for training. Trainees will not be accredited with training undertaken whilst in an observer position.

A list of accredited laboratories is available on the RCPA website at <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Trainees/Training-with-the-RCPA/Laboratory-Accreditation-for-Training>. A supervisor is normally allocated by the Head of Department in negotiation with the Trainee. The supervisor will work with the Trainee to design and monitor their individual training program in compliance with the relevant RCPA discipline handbook, within the framework of the training program supplied to the College with laboratory accreditation documentation.

Once employment and supervision have been secured, the prospective Trainee must submit an [Initial Registration Form](#) to the College and a copy of their prospective training program. Payment of the required initial registration and annual training fee is required within two months of commencing training.

Thereafter, Trainees must submit an annual registration form and a prospective training program for the coming year. Trainees who have not re-registered by 30 April will be considered "incomplete Trainees" and will be removed from the mailing list and web access will be cancelled. A fee will be incurred for reinstatement.

Once registered, a Member ID number will be allocated, which will continue throughout training and beyond, into Fellowship. This number must be quoted on all correspondence with the College and will be used as the candidate number in examinations.

Trainees receive the College newsletter, *Pathology Today*, the journal *Pathology*, notice of scientific meetings and other information. Access is also provided to the password protected area of the RCPA website, which holds curriculum documents, past examination papers, course notes, electronic pathology resources, discussion forums etc.

Any proposed changes in training, including extended leave, must be notified to the Registrar of the Board of Education and Assessment **in writing**, by mail fax or email. Address changes can be made via the website at <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/User-Navigation/My-Details>.

Registration for Joint Training with the Royal College of Physicians

Those applying for training programs overseen by a Committee for Joint College Training in Endocrinology/Chemical Pathology, Infectious Diseases/Microbiology, Haematology or Immunology and Allergy with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) are advised to visit the RACP website at <https://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/advanced-training/advanced-training-programs>

New joint Trainees are required to complete the Initial Registration form for the RCPA in addition to the online RACP Joint College Training Application for Approval of Advanced Training. **In subsequent years, only the RACP form needs be completed; however the RCPA must receive payment authorisation for the annual training fee.**

The forms for joint training are available from the Royal Australasian College of Physicians website. Note that the RACP has different forms for Australia and New Zealand.

The form must be submitted to the Royal Australasian College of Physicians by the advertised closing date, with a copy and payment to the RCPA.

For Australian Trainees, please send to: The Royal Australasian College of Physicians
145 Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

For New Zealand Trainees, please send to: Royal Australasian College of Physicians
PO Box 10 601
Wellington 6143
NEW ZEALAND

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

All training, be it full or part-time, must be approved by the College's Board of Education and Assessment early in the first and each subsequent year of training. To gain approval, applicants must send a prospective training program with their initial and annual training registration forms.

Training is normally full-time. A minimum of five full-time equivalent years of certified training in laboratories accredited by the Board of Education and Assessment must be completed before admission to Fellowship. For joint training with the RACP in Chemical Pathology/Endocrinology, Haematology and Immunology and Allergy, one year is retrospectively accredited for the completion of Basic Physician Training. (Please refer to College Policy: [Training Limitation 15/2001](#))

Part-time training (in an accredited training program) may be acceptable in certain instances. Part-time training must average at least 8 hours per week for RCPA training programs and at least 16 hours per week for Joint RACP/RCPA training programs. (Please refer to College Policy: [Interrupted and Part-Time Training 2/2004](#))

In order to specialise in a single pathology discipline, four of the five years of approved laboratory training must be in that discipline. Trainees may elect to spend at least one aggregate year of their training in one or more branches of pathology other than their chosen discipline.

Research Training

Time spent in research or project work is encouraged and up to one year in relevant work may be approved. Please check under each discipline Handbook for more detailed training requirements. Applications for accreditation of research training must be prospectively submitted for approval.

Training Limitation for Pathology Trainees

Training limitation is enforced for pathology Trainees to ensure that Trainees are exposed to more than one style and philosophy of pathology practice. Several States/regions have coordinated training programs with rotations between institutions.

Candidates for RCPA pathology qualifications will not be accredited with more than 4 years training in any one laboratory. Where the same members of a pathology service/practice supervise geographically separate laboratories this may be viewed as training undertaken in a single laboratory and may not fulfil the requirements for a laboratory rotation unless significant differences in practice and supervision can be demonstrated. Training undertaken in a different discipline within that service/practice may be acceptable.

RCPA Trainees who are also registered with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians in a joint specialist training program may not complete both their clinical and laboratory training entirely within the clinical and laboratory service of one institution. Rotation may occur either in the laboratory or the clinical component of joint training. Change of supervisor to another member of an integrated clinical/laboratory service will not qualify as rotation; nor will change to a different geographical site of an integrated service.

Any short term rotation undertaken must be for a **minimum of 2 months** and must be consecutive weeks. This does not include secondment to another institution for training in a specific technique or method.

Under exceptional circumstances, and then only at the discretion of the Board of Education and Assessment, special dispensation from the 4 year rule may be granted. However, this should never be assumed; it must normally be applied for **at the start of training**. (Please refer to College Policy:

[Training Limitation 15/2001](#))

Retrospective Accreditation of Training

Some training may be approved retrospectively. Retrospective accreditation must be sought from the Board of Education and Assessment on initial registration as a Trainee. Applications should include full supporting documentation such as training and examination results, laboratory and supervisor information, projects and work history. The training details are to be accompanied by a statement from the supervisor for each period, verifying the claim.

Retrospective accreditation is considered on an individual basis by the relevant Chief or Principal Examiner; however training undertaken in an undergraduate program would not generally be recognised.

If retrospective training is approved, the Trainee will be required to pay a fee based on the **current** annual trainee fee for each year of retrospective accreditation granted. (Please refer to College Policy: [Fees for Training and Examination for General Fellowship and Fellowship of Faculties 4/2008](#))

Temporary Suspension of Training

Trainees who intend to take extended leave or suspend training for any reason, must notify the Registrar **in writing**, by mail, fax or email providing details of the anticipated duration of leave or suspension. A training deferment fee is payable. This allows continued receipt of College communications, including the journal and access to the members' section of the website.

Training Records

Trainees are expected to maintain comprehensive records of their training and examinations, including copies of initial and annual registration forms, examination application forms, supervisors' reports, examination results and correspondence with the College. Please refer to individual Trainee handbooks for specific portfolio requirements.

Supervision of training

All training must be supervised. Subject to departmental constraints, Trainees may nominate their own supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for endorsing the initial and annual registration forms.

The supervisor of laboratory training will normally be a Fellow of the College; however another supervisor may be accepted if there is no Fellow available to offer appropriate supervision. Supervisors who do not hold RCPA qualifications would ordinarily have their role approved as part of the laboratory site accreditation process. Supervisors who do not hold RCPA qualifications will be requested to send in their CV for approval by the relevant Chief Examiner/Principal Examiner.

Significant periods of delegated supervision will result in training not being accredited.

Normally, only one supervisor is nominated, however Joint College Trainees require **two** supervisors. If the Trainee spends significant periods working in an area where the supervisor has no personal involvement, the supervisor must certify that suitable supervision is being provided. The supervisor must also ensure that adequate supervision is arranged in their absence. Supervision of pathology Trainees should not be delegated largely to a non-pathologist. Significant periods of delegated supervision will result in training not being accredited.

In some circumstances shared supervision may be necessary, but there must be a nominated primary supervisor. For Trainees working towards higher academic degrees (eg. PhD), the research project supervisor may not be suitable for nomination as an RCPA supervisor.

Supervisors are asked to provide:

- a prospective training (or research) program, on initial registration and annually
- an annual supervisor's report or, for rotations within a year, reports which cover the period of training

See the [Summary of Forms and Submission Requirements](#) section of this Handbook (page 17) for further details of these requirements.

Supervisors are expected to assist Trainees to develop their individual training objectives and to provide structured feedback on performance on a regular basis. For this reason, the College recommends that any one supervisor be responsible for no more than two Trainees.

The *Supervisor Manual* and *Supervisor Modules* can be found through the RCPA Education Portal (member only access) at: <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Fellows/Supervisors/Supervisor-Resources>

Leave

8 weeks leave per annum, including recreational, personal leave and study leave is allowed. If more than 8 weeks' leave is taken in a training year, the Trainee should notify the Registrar and the Trainee and Assessment Support Administrator. The Trainee will be required to undertake additional training time up to the period of additional leave.

Accredited Laboratories

Training for RCPA Trainees, must be undertaken in a laboratory accredited for training by the Board of Education and Assessment.

A current list of laboratories accredited for training is available on the RCPA website at: <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Trainees/Training-with-the-RCPA/Laboratory-Accreditation-for-Training>

Laboratory accreditation is based on the range and quantity of work performed, space, equipment, hospital affiliations, level of staffing, library facilities, laboratory equipment, experience available, and the adequacy of supervision. Accreditation may be granted to provide a maximum of 4 years of training for an individual candidate. Laboratories which offer limited or very specialised experience will be accredited for a shorter duration of training.

Training in other laboratories such as overseas or research laboratories is considered on its merits. If approval is required for a period in an overseas laboratory, full details of the laboratory and supervisor must be sent to the Board of Education and Assessment with the initial or annual registration form prior to commencement of the training period. A maximum of 2 years training may be accredited in a laboratory outside the College's sphere of activity. See College Policy [Candidates in Training and Sitting Examinations in Countries without College Representation 17/2001](#)

As part of the laboratory accreditation process, site visits of laboratories will be undertaken periodically by representatives of the Board of Education and Assessment or as part of the NATA/RCPA or IANZ/RCPA laboratory accreditation process. The visit will include consultation with Trainees, and a review of training facilities and adequacy of supervision. (Please refer to College Policy: [Laboratory Accreditation for Training Programs 10/2000](#))

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The College website includes a large number of education resources. Please refer to the Education section of the College website at: <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Library/Education>.

Several meetings suitable for Trainees are organised annually. Details of educational programs are notified in *Pathology Today* and on the RCPA website under the Events section at <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Events>.

Other educational programs may be organised by the State and New Zealand Education Committees or by training institutions. For further details, Trainees are advised to contact their State or Regional Councillor or visit the College's website.

Pathology Update

Pathology Update, held annually, is the College's Scientific meeting. The Update program has streams for each discipline and components specifically for Trainees, including sessions in which the Chief Examiner/Principal Examiners in each discipline discuss their approaches to the examination process and review the previous year's exams.

Trainees are invited to submit abstracts for poster or oral presentation prizes. Details are in the Pathology Update registration brochure and website. In some disciplines, poster and oral presentations at Pathology Update can be included in the training portfolio which counts towards Fellowship Assessment.

Trainee Induction Day

New Trainees are strongly encouraged to attend either their training network arranged Induction programs or the Trainee Induction session at Pathology Update. Induction programs outline the RCPA education programs and requirements. Induction programs also provide an opportunity to meet College officials and staff and to network with other Trainees. Essential topics such as laboratory safety and risk management and the College's policy in respect of anti-discrimination, harassment and bullying are included in the induction programmes, along with advice on educational and employment opportunities and career planning. Trainees will be informed of local induction sessions in their discipline.

Trainee Grants and Awards

A number of grants and awards are available for registered Trainees, including the RCPA Research Award, Travel and Research Grants, the DS Nelson Trainee Prize and the RCPA QAP Pty Ltd Prize. Please refer to the [Awards, Grants & Scholarships](#) section of the College website for further details.

EXAMINATIONS

Pathology Examinations

Trainees may sit examinations in a single pathology discipline, i.e. Anatomical Pathology, Chemical Pathology, Forensic Pathology, Genetic Pathology, Haematology, Immunopathology, or Microbiology. The single discipline examinations are designed for those who wish to specialise in one branch of pathology. Alternatively, Trainees wanting all-round experience may sit examinations in General Pathology or Clinical Pathology, which cover several of the major disciplines.

For the single Pathology disciplines, there are three parts to the examination process:

1. Basic Pathological Sciences Examination:

The examination may be taken before commencement of training. The examination is open to medical or dental students, interns and resident medical officers as well as registered Trainees.

A pass in Basic Pathological Sciences is not a prerequisite for Part I or General Pathology examinations, but a pass or exemption must be achieved before proceeding to sit **any component of Part II examination in any discipline.**

2. Discipline specialty Part I:

This is taken after a requisite period of accredited training - see [Discipline Trainee Handbooks](#) for details.

3. Discipline specialty Part II:

This is ordinarily taken in the final year of training – see [Discipline Trainee Handbooks](#) for details.

Part I and Part II examinations require Trainees to have sufficient knowledge of the work of other branches of pathology to be able to use and interpret their basic services intelligently. The Part I and Part II examinations have written, practical and oral components.

For General Pathology, examinations are taken in Pathological Sciences, Anatomical Pathology, Haematology, Microbiology and Chemical Pathology in addition to Clinical Pathology.

Faculty of Science Examinations

The Faculty of Science curricula consist of three standards: 1) Research, 2) Innovation, Development and Leadership, and 3) discipline-specific Laboratory standards. The examination process involves assessments related to all three standards. Part I examinations are ordinarily taken in the third year of training and Part II examinations are ordinarily taken in the final year of training. These formal examinations will test all three standards. Part II Trainees are required to complete case reports related to Laboratory standards in their discipline. Trainees are required to maintain a portfolio throughout their candidature. The portfolio will require workplace-based assessments (Direct Observation of Practical Skills and Case-based Discussions) on their Laboratory standards, as well as reports and learning activities related to Research and Innovation, Development and Leadership Standards. The research standards will also be tested through completion of research higher degrees and/or publications.

Please refer to discipline-specific Trainee Handbooks for more details on the training and examination requirements for each discipline at <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Trainees/Curriculum>

PPD, Dissertation, Cases, Projects

The individual discipline handbooks specify the requirements for evidence of personal professional development (PPD), dissertations, case reports, projects. Please note that any hard copy submissions to the College will not be returned to the Trainees.

Exemptions

The Board of Education and Assessment may grant exemptions from some examination components. Trainees seeking an exemption should submit full details with supporting evidence. Those with Australian or New Zealand qualifications in medical specialties other than Pathology may be eligible for some exemptions from the 5 year training period.

Because the form and content of examinations varies from time to time, exemption from a total examination (eg. Part I) is valid for five years. Exemption from a single examination component is normally only granted for the following examination cycle. In subsequent years, the exemption must be requested at the time of application for examination. Supporting documents must be attached to the examination application.

Prospective Trainees of the Faculties may submit an application for a Training Determination prior to their Initial Registration. This application should detail their prior learning and experience in relation to the learning outcomes in their discipline as detailed in the Trainee Handbooks, and provide supportive evidence. In the Determination made Trainees may be granted exemptions in training time and some assessment components.

There are no absolute indications for exemption and applications are treated on their merits, with relevant postgraduate qualifications, research, publications and experience taken into account.

(Please refer to College Policy: [Training Determinations, Examination Exemptions 8/2001](#))

Applications

To sit for examinations, apart from Basic Pathological Sciences, Trainees must be registered with the RCPA and in an accredited training program.

Examination forms are available for downloading from the College website. Reminders of the due date are advertised in *Pathology Today* towards the end of the preceding year.

An application form must be completed for each year's examinations. Application for exemption must also be completed on the Application for Examination form. The appropriate fee and all relevant documentation must accompany the form. Supporting documents must be attached to the examination application.

Applications for all Part I and Part II examinations and the Basic Pathological Sciences examination close at 1700 hours Sydney daylight saving time, 7 days before the last working day of February each year. The 2017 closing date is 17 February. The closing date is observed strictly.

Late Applications

There will be a 2 week period of grace for late applications received up to 1700 hours Sydney daylight saving time on 3 March 2017. A substantial late fee will be incurred.

No examination applications will be accepted after this period.

Examination Timetables

Examination timetables are published on the RCPA website. <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Trainees/Exams/Exam-Timetables>

Examination Venues

The Basic Pathological Sciences, Part I and Part II written and slide examinations are held in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney in Australia; Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin in New Zealand; and in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Saudi Arabia.

Trainees wishing to take an examination at a venue other than a designated examination centre must make the request when they lodge their examination application, nominating a suitable invigilator, who should be a Fellow of the College. Where special arrangements are made the candidate, may be charged for the total costs incurred. (Please refer to College Policy: [Candidates in Training and Sitting Examinations in Countries without a College Representative 17/2001](#)).

Trainees will be notified individually by email with details for May and June examinations. These details will include the list of examination components, local times, venues and invigilator contacts. This notification will be sent out in April.

Details for the August Practical and Oral Examinations will be emailed to eligible Trainees following publication of the May and June exam results.

Food and Drink in Examinations

Candidates are not permitted to take food or drink in any examination room. Water will be provided. Exceptions to this rule will only be granted under medical grounds.

Withdrawal from Examination and Failure to attend

A Trainee who wishes to withdraw from an examination must provide written notice to the Registrar of the Board of Education and Assessment. The following fees and conditions apply:

- Withdrawal more than eight (8) weeks prior to the date of the examination:
A cancellation fee of 10% of the examination fee plus GST will be charged.
- Withdrawal less than eight (8) weeks but more than four (4) weeks prior to the examination:
A cancellation fee of 50% of the examination fee plus GST will be charged.
- Withdrawal less than four (4) weeks prior to the date of the examination:
There will be no refund of any fees.
- Where candidates fail to attend a set of examinations without prior written notice of withdrawal, there will be no refund of any fees. A result of Failed to Attend will be recorded.
- Where candidates fail to attend one component of a set of examinations, a result of Failed to Attend will be recorded for that component. There will be no refund of any fees.
- (Please refer to College Policy [Fees for Training and Examination for General Fellowship and Fellowship 4/2008](#)).

Candidates in Need of Special Consideration

- The College recognises that some examination candidates have special needs and require special consideration and makes every effort to assist these candidates. Where relevant, the candidate must inform the College with their exam application in order to request special consideration. If circumstances arise after the submission of the application which may require special consideration, the candidate must request special consideration as soon as possible.
- If a candidate requests withdrawal from the examinations on medical or compassionate grounds, the fee will be refunded less a cancellation fee of 10% plus GST or held over until the next examination cycle only.
- Candidates who are unable to attend the examinations during the next cycle are required to pay the full fee when they next submit an exam application. These penalties may be waived where there are extenuating circumstances.

(Please refer to College Policy [Examination Candidates in Need of Consideration for Illness, Accident, Disability or Compassionate Grounds 3/2001](#)).

Candidates in Training and Sitting Examinations in Countries without College Representation

Registered Trainees of the College may be permitted to undertake training acceptable for eligibility for Fellowship in institutions in countries without College representation, ie. where there is no Regional Councillor or Corresponding Fellow for Training

(Please refer to College Policy: [Candidates in Training and Sitting Examinations in Countries without College Representation 17/2001](#))

Refusal of Examination

The Board of Education and Assessment may refuse to accept examination applications which do not meet the stated requirements.

The Board may also refuse to proceed with examination of a Trainee who infringes regulations or whose behaviour is considered to prejudice the proper management and conduct of the examination, or for any other sufficient reason. Such Trainees may also be refused permission to take future examinations.

Results

Results of Basic Pathological Sciences and the May discipline-specific examinations are made available on the RCPA website (by RCPA ID only) when released by the Chief Examiner/Principal Examiner. Results of the June, August and repeat examinations are usually available on the website normally within 2 weeks of the examination. Each Trainee receives written notification of examination results.

In some disciplines, progression from the initial (May) written and slide examinations to further (August) practical and oral examinations is dependent upon the Trainee's results. Trainees will be notified on the website whether or not they can proceed.

All enquiries regarding unsuccessful examination results must be directed to the Registrar of the Board of Education and Assessment.

Trainees or others acting on their behalf must not directly contact the Chief Examiner/Principal Examiner about examination results at any time. All communication must come via the College.

Appeals

The College process regarding appeals is detailed in the following regulation: [Regulations Governing Process for Review of Certain Decisions of the Company](#)

Repeat Examinations

A Part II Anatomical Pathology repeat slide examination will be offered to Part II candidates who in the May examinations in the same year have not met the specified minimum standard for a pass and were awarded a Borderline grade. Fail grade candidates will not be offered a repeat slide examination. At the discretion of the Board, this exam may be available to those who have withdrawn with extenuating circumstances.

In other disciplines, repeat examinations for Part II candidates may be held at the discretion of the relevant Chief Examiner/Principal Examiner. For disciplines with written examinations at Part II, candidates will only be invited to the repeat oral examination if they have passed the written component.

Relevant Trainees will be informed of the closing date for applications for repeat examinations.

The fee for the repeat examination will be the same as the annual examination fee.

Plagiarism and Cheating

The College will not accept unprofessional or unethical behaviour from candidates for Fellowship.

Please refer to College Policy [Plagiarism-and-Cheating-in-Exams](#) (10/2002)

Communication between Candidates and Chief/Principal Examiners

In the interests of fairness and integrity of the examination process, Trainees or others acting on their behalf must not contact Chief/Principal Examiners directly at any time. Any enquiries should be directed to the College office at novitaq@rcpa.edu.au.

Where special circumstances concerning a Trainee's performance, such as illness, are known to exist, they should be communicated as soon as possible. Normally this should be by letter to the Registrar of the Board of Education and Assessment. In cases of emergency this could be by telephone to the College office or to the telephone number provided to examination candidates. Correspondence must not be sent directly to the Chief/Principal Examiners.

Lobbying, whether by Trainees, supervisors or other persons, to try to influence examination outcomes may result in disqualification of the Trainee.

Feedback Comments

For Trainees who have failed, individual reports on failed components will generally be provided following the August examinations.

Trainees are strongly advised to discuss these comments with their supervisors, with a view to remediation of any deficiencies.

Limitation of Exam Attempts and Validity of Examination Passes

A pass in the Basic Pathological Sciences examination is valid indefinitely. The College does not limit the number of attempts at the BPS examination.

If the Part II examination in a discipline is not completed within 5 years of passing or being granted exemption from Part I, the candidate will need to either pass Part I again or make special application to the Board of Education and Assessment to obtain an exemption.

In General Pathology, a pass in or exemption from a sub-discipline examination or practical assessment is valid for 5 years. If further relevant examinations are not completed within 5 years of passing this assessment, it will be necessary to either again pass, or obtain exemption from that assessment.

Examination exemptions are valid for one year.

(Please refer to College Policy: [Limitation of exam attempt and validity of Examination passes 2/1998](#))

Changes in Examinations

The examination and assessment system is under constant review. Ample notice of any proposed changes will be published in the College newsletters, on the website, circulated to Councillors and emailed to Trainees and Supervisors. At least 12 months' notice will normally be given of significant changes to examination requirements. In all cases there will be a realistic transition period to allow those already in training to complete their examinations under pre-existing rules or to accept the change.

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO FELLOWSHIP

Following successful completion of the required training and examinations, Trainees may apply for Fellowship of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia.

Please refer to the College's [Constitution](#) and [Policy 1/2001 – Admission to Fellowship](#).

Stages in the Application Process

Trainees who are successful in Part II examinations and who have completed the required training time can access an [Application for Fellowship](#) form from the RCPA website. All applications must include a statement that the Trainee agrees to the College's [Constitution](#), which is published on the College website.

Trainees must also provide personal references to support their application. The College may seek additional information on current medical registration and training, including rotations between pathology laboratories or clinical postings in the case of Clinical Forensic Medicine.

The Board of Education and Assessment will then make an assessment of the applicant's training experience and examination results. If satisfied that the Trainee has met training requirements and achieved an acceptable examination result, the Board of Education and Assessment will recommend to the RCPA Board of Directors that the Trainee be admitted to Fellowship.

The RCPA Board of Directors then considers the application. It may admit the Trainee as a Fellow, reject his/her application, or suspend a final decision for a period it thinks fit or for further qualification evidence. The Board of Directors will truly and independently determine whether each applicant is considered to be a fit and proper person for admission and, if deemed so, approve the candidate's Admission to Fellowship.

In making the decision, the Board of Directors must ensure that the reason for declining the granting of rights and privileges offered by the College is based upon legitimate grounds of genuinely unsatisfactory qualification or safety.

The Chairman of the Board of Education and Assessment will not take part in the decision making process with respect to a candidate's admission to Fellowship.

In addition, in circumstances where there is a recommendation not to admit an applicant to Fellowship, only Board members not practising in the discipline of pathology in which the applicant is trained will be able to discuss and vote on this issue of that candidate's admission to Fellowship. The Board of Directors should at all times ensure that the principles of natural justice shall apply in its decision-making.

Fellowship admission and annual RCPA and Membership fees become payable following award of Fellowship.

Unsuccessful applicants for Fellowship are referred to the mechanism for Review of Decision of the Board of Directors in relation to Admission to Fellowship. See the [Regulations Governing Review of Directors' Decisions on Admission to Fellowship and Termination of Membership of a Fellow Under Rules 14.9 and 17.8](#) on the College website.

Fellowship of the Faculty of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology

The College offers a Fellowship of the Faculty of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology (FOMP) for dental graduates fulfilling similar criteria as those applicable to medical graduates, but applicable to dental practice. This is also offered to medical graduates and to Trainees and Fellows wishing to either gain recognition as an Oral and Maxillofacial Pathologist or to cross over into a career in Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology. It should be noted that to be recognised as a specialist by Dental Boards in Australia or New Zealand, dental practitioners must hold a dental qualification registrable by these Boards.

Fellowship of the Faculty of Science

The Faculty has 2 pathways to Fellowship; by Examination and by Published works. In the Fellowship by Examination pathway, the admission criteria on training time and examinations are similar to those applicable to pathology Trainees. Further information can be found on the College website: <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Trainees/Faculties/Faculty-of-Science>

Admission of New Fellows and Awards Ceremony

The annual ceremony takes place during Pathology Update and those awarded fellowship in the twelve months prior to the ceremony will be invited to attend the ceremony and receive their certificate and be admitted. Attendance at the ceremony may be deferred by one year only.

Employment Opportunities for New Fellows

Positions of which the College is aware are advertised in the 'Positions Vacant' area of the College website and the via the fortnightly 'Pathology Today' newsletter. Vacant positions are also advertised on the State and Territory Health Department websites.

SPECIALIST REGISTRATION FOR PATHOLOGY TRAINEES

Requirements for specialist registration following attainment of Fellowship of the RCPA (FRCPA) vary between countries. For example:

- Australia: FRCPA (and FFOMP in Oral Pathology) provides specialist registration with AHPRA.
- New Zealand: FRCPA provides vocational registration as a specialist pathologist with the Medical Council of New Zealand
- Hong Kong: FRCPA does not entitle the Fellow to inclusion on the Specialist Register of the Medical Council of Hong Kong.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia offers a Continuing Professional Development Program (CPDP) to its Fellows, Affiliates and Trainees and also the Medical Council of New Zealand.

Participation in the RCPA CPDP is mandatory for all Fellows. Proof of participation is a requirement for annual registration by AHPRA in Australia.

COLLEGE POLICIES

Trainees are required to familiarise themselves with the College's by-laws, policies, and roles and responsibilities at <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Library/College-Policies>

TRAINEES IN DIFFICULTY

Please refer to the College Policy: [Trainees in Difficulty Support 2/2013](#)

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The RCPA is committed to the principle that all stakeholders engaged in the activities of the College (including, but not limited to, employees, Trainees, Supervisors Associates, Affiliates and Associates of Faculties and Fellows) have the right to attend to College business, train and/or work within an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification, and victimisation.

For Trainees, if conduct within the scope of the Policy on Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying (set out at **Appendix I** of this Trainee Handbook) occurs in their place of work, complaints about that conduct will likely be most appropriately handled within the organisation for whom they work.

Trainees concerned about conduct they believe to be unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification, or victimisation, should refer to the:

- [Policy on Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying 12/1999](#) (**Appendix I**); and
- [Policy on Complaints Handling 13/1999](#).

COLLEGE OMBUDSMAN

An ombudsman is defined as someone who resolves disputes from a neutral, independent viewpoint. College ombudsmen are appointed for Australia and New Zealand.

The ombudsman is to be consulted only when a reasonable effort has been made to resolve the problem through normal processes and it still is not resolved. The ombudsman will not have the authority to reverse decisions but may recommend that a decision be reconsidered or that a course of action be taken to bring about changes that will help prevent future problems.

Trainees wishing to contact the ombudsman may do so through the State Councillor or College office on bea@rcpa.edu.au or phone +61 2 8356 5825.

RECOGNITION OF OVERSEAS TRAINED SPECIALISTS

Australia

Medical practitioners qualified as specialist pathologists in a country other than Australia or New Zealand, and who are not Fellows of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia may apply for specialist pathologist recognition in Australia. Please refer to the Overseas Trained Specialist Step Guide on the College website at <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Trainees/Overseas-Trained-Specialists/Step-Guides>.

New Zealand

The Medical Council of New Zealand will assess the eligibility of doctors who have qualified and practised as specialists overseas for vocational registration in recognised branches. The procedures include individual consideration of applications via a pre-assessment and formal assessment stage, which includes a face-to-face or videoconference interview with the Overseas Trained Specialist Sub-Committee of the RCPA.

Applicants must apply initially to the Medical Council of New Zealand. Information and application forms are available from the MCNZ website: www.mcnz.org.nz

SUMMARY OF FORMS AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Following is a list of the forms and documents Trainees are required to submit at various stages of training. All forms can be downloaded from the [Training with the RCPA](#) section of the RCPA website from the College. On completion they should be sent to:

Board of Education and Assessment Office
Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
207 Albion St
Surry Hills NSW 2010
AUSTRALIA

Telephone: +61 2 8356 5858
Facsimile: +61 2 8356 5828
E-mail: bea@rcpa.edu.au

List of Forms and Submission Dates

- Initial Registration Form – All first-year Trainees within 2 months of commencing training
- Annual Registration Form – RCPA Trainees in subsequent years of training – 15 February
- Application for Approval of Advanced Training – Joint College trainees (start/continue training in February) - 15 February
- Application for Approval of Advanced Training – Joint College trainees (start/continue training in August) - 31 August
- Basic Pathological Sciences exam application — 19 February
- Exam application form Part I and Part II - Exam candidates –19 February
- Pre Exam Supervisor's Report. Part I & II Exam candidates sitting an August exam - 15 July
- Supervisor's Report. RCPA trainees – at end of rotation or with Annual Registration
- Supervisor's Report. **Joint College** Trainees Mid-Year Progress Report – 15 July
- Supervisor's Report. **Joint College** Trainees End of Year Report - 29 January* (12 month term) or at end of term

Note: ***Apart from the pre exam supervisors' report which is obligatory for all trainees sitting exams, Joint College trainees are only required to submit copies of their RACP supervisors' reports. They are not required to complete an RCPA one.***

For more information, please refer to the Key Dates available on the College website under Training with the RCPA.

* Joint College Trainees, in their final training year, should submit their Final Year Supervisors Report by 15 October

Links to Information for Joint RACP/RCPA Trainees

RCPA Joint Trainees Webpage:

<http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Trainees/Training-with-the-RCPA/Joint-Trainee-with-RCPA>

RACP Haematology page

<https://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/advanced-training/advanced-training-programs/haematology-rcpa-racp-joint-training>

RACP Immunopathology/Immunology and Allergy:

<https://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/advanced-training/advanced-training-programs/immunology-and-allergy>

RACP Chemical Pathology/Endocrinology

<https://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/advanced-training/advanced-training-programs/endocrinology-and-chemical-pathology>

Microbiology/Infectious Diseases

<https://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/advanced-training/advanced-training-programs/infectious-diseases-and-microbiology>

Initial Registration Form

Applications for initial registration **must** be submitted early in the first year of training. This includes joint Trainees whose first year may be in a clinical position. An initial registration fee and the first year's annual training fee will be applicable. If retrospective accreditation of training is required, a fee equivalent to or part of the annual training fee for the period may be payable.

The completed form must be accompanied by:

- documentation confirming medical registration in country of domicile
- **certified copies** of medical degrees and other relevant qualifications
- evidence of clinical experience as an Intern or Resident Medical Officer
- for Australian citizens/permanent residents whose basic medical qualification was not gained in Australia or New Zealand, proof of having passed all the AMC examination assessments to work as a doctor in Australia eg. full AMC Certificate (or AMC Report 1 for OTS applicants)
- the prospective training program
- signed acceptance by the supervisor of the proposed program
- payment authorisation for the initial registration and annual training fee
- if relevant, application for retrospective accreditation of previous training with supporting documentation.
- Joint College Trainees must include a copy of their RACP annual application.

Certified copies are those signed by a Justice of the Peace or other authorised person that states that the original document has been sighted by the signatory and that the copy supplied is a true copy.

The College does not accept responsibility for the safekeeping or return of original documents.

Annual Registration Form

Registration must be renewed each year by 15 February. A late fee is charged for late applications.

The completed form must be accompanied by:

- payment authorisation for the annual training fee (and any late fee payable)
- the current year's prospective training program
- Supervisor Report for previous year (if not previously submitted) plus summary of workplace activities as required by each discipline

Trainees are advised to submit this application as early as possible, so that any problems or inadequacies in the prospective training program can be remedied in advance. Trainees who have not re-registered by 30 April will be taken off the mailing and web access list. A fee will be charged for reinstatement.

Joint College Training Annual Application Form for Approval of Advanced Training

Joint College Trainees must complete the RACP Annual Application Form for Approval of Advanced Training at the beginning of each training year/term and pay annual training fees to both Colleges. Submission should follow guidelines on the RACP website. **The RCPA does not require a separate form.**

Examination Application Forms

All examination application forms must be submitted by 1700 hours Sydney daylight saving time seven days before the last working day of February in each year in which the candidate wishes to present for examination. This date is advertised on the College website and in *Pathology Today*.

The completed form must be accompanied by:

- full examination fee
- comprehensive supporting documentation for any exemption sought. If you have received a letter from the College granting exemption, this must be attached.

Forms must be signed by the candidate. Incomplete applications will not be processed and no responsibility will be taken for subsequent delays.

There will be a period of 2 weeks grace for late applications, however a substantial fee (50% of the examination fee) must be paid for any late application. No application will be accepted after this 2 week period.

Supervisor Report Form

This form is to be completed by the supervisor, detailing the Trainee's progress during the year. Supervisor Report forms for each discipline can be downloaded from the RCPA website. **Joint trainees with the RACP**

may submit a copy of their RACP supervisor form. They are not required to submit a separate RCPA form except if they are sitting an RCPA examination. See below.

A separate Supervisor report form is required for each training rotation.

If not submitted earlier Trainees should submit their previous year's Supervisor report(s) with their annual registration.

If the Trainee is sitting a Part I or Part II examination in August an additional pre-exam Supervisor report is required by 15 July of the year of the examination. These reports are held for review by the Chief Examiner/Principal Examiner during August assessment period.

If Trainees do not submit their Supervisor reports in accordance with the above requirements their training time will not be accredited.

It is the Trainee's responsibility to:

- obtain the report form, which is available for each discipline on the College website
- request the supervisor to complete the form, well in advance of the due date
- ensure that the exact dates for the beginning and end of the training period have been entered on the front of the form. These periods are totalled on application for Fellowship.
- discuss the completed report with the supervisor
- submit the form to the College by the due date.

When more than one supervisor is involved, additional reports may be required and Trainees need to check with the Registrar about this. It is the Trainee's responsibility to request reports from supervisors involved in training other than the one nominated on the Annual Registration form.

Prospective Training Program

A Prospective Training Program must be submitted on initial registration and with the Trainee's Annual Registration form each year. **Please note that inadequate training programs will be returned for revision.**

In order to gain a full understanding of the intended outcomes of the education and training program and a commitment to the process, it is vital that the supervisor and the Trainee spend some time together in developing the program. A new supervisor should be certain to elicit from the Trainee any previous difficulties with specific skill areas, examination failures (and perceived reasons), and omissions or deficiencies in education and training experience.

The Program should be devised by the supervisor in conjunction with the Trainee, with reference to the requirements in the relevant discipline-specific Trainee Handbook. The prospective training program should include the following elements:

- A very brief overview of the laboratory or training site and its networks
This provides the context for the Trainee, their stage of training and the resolution of any previous difficulties or deficiencies in training.
- Planned exposure to relevant experience
This should include the major aspects of the discipline, or test groups, that the Trainee is expected to experience in the ensuing year. It should also specify any standard rotations that the Trainee will be undertaking to other laboratories within a group.
- In the case of previous difficulties, specific outcomes or achievements should be determined. For example, the Trainee may have identified goals for the development of a specific skill set.
- Specific responsibilities of the Trainee
What specific responsibilities will the Trainee be given, relevant to their level of skill and experience. For example: checking laboratory reports; liaising with clinicians; quality control of assays; trialling of new methods.
- Additional external experience required
Are there specific services which are not provided by the laboratory or training site.
If so, what arrangements are being made for the Trainee to receive this experience elsewhere.

- Intended participation in projects or research
To what extent will the Trainee be developing core skills or gaining additional skills through participation in projects and research throughout the year. NB: a research year can only be undertaken after successful completion of Part I and requires prospective approval.
- Educational program
List any regular activities in which the Trainee will be participating, eg. weekly journal club, departmental administrative or patient care meetings, as well as planned attendance at conferences or seminars.
- Teaching and presentation activities
Identify the responsibilities the Trainee will have for, eg., tutorials to medical students, in-service sessions for staff. Are any conference papers anticipated?

The Prospective Training Program submitted to the College need only be 2-3 pages. The Trainee is encouraged to relate this program to the specific learning outcomes, suggested learning activities and portfolio requirements listed in the discipline-specific Handbook, with a time line for the achievement of specific skills. This will allow more comprehensive monitoring of progress and enable both Trainee and supervisor to determine whether the Trainee is encountering difficulties.

The supervisor should meet with the Trainee at least every 3 months, to provide structured feedback on their performance and review progress of the education and training program.

TRAINING AND EXAMINATION FEES

Training and examination fees are set by the Board of Directors each year. Fee schedules are published on the College website at <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Trainees/Exams/Training-Fees>.

- All fees are to be paid in Australian dollars.
- Trainees in Australia only are required to pay GST on the annual training fee and associated administration fees.
- Continuing Trainees are required to pay their annual training fee by 15 February each year. After that date a late fee is payable.
- Late fees will be applicable for the late submission of annual registration and examination applications (where late application is allowable). Late fees attract GST.
- Joint trainees with the RACP are required to pay fees to both Colleges
- Trainees who do not pay their annual training fee by 30 April will be considered “Incomplete Trainees” and a fee will be required for reinstatement.
- Trainees wishing to defer their training are advised to continue to receive College mailings and access to the members’ section of the College website by paying a mailing fee.
- Examination fees are GST exempt. The fee for all repeat examinations is the same as for the initial attempt.
- Trainees who withdraw from an examination may receive a partial refund of their fee, depending on the time of notification of withdrawal. Please refer to *Withdrawal from Examination* (page 12) in this Handbook and to RCPA Policy [Fees for Training and Examination for General Fellowship and Fellowship](#) available on the website.

COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS

Trainee Handbooks:

The current discipline-specific Trainee Handbooks are to be used as a guide for training requirements. These are updated every year and the Trainees are advised to check the College website for the current version at the beginning of each year. Trainees will always be advised at least 12 months in advance of significant changes in training and assessment requirements.

Pathology Today:

The College communicates with Trainees through the fortnightly College newsletter, *Pathology Today*. Changes in College policy or in the structure and content of training requirements will always be advised through *Pathology Today* as well as to individual Trainees.

The RCPA website www.rcpa.edu.au has a Trainee section, which can be accessed from the home page.

Training and Education:

Please refer to the “[Trainee](#)” and “[Education](#)” sections of the College website.

Email correspondence:

The College keeps Trainees informed by email and communicates using their preferred email address. Details will be circulated regularly or contact the office on bea@rcpa.edu.au.

- If you need general information or clarification of any procedures outlined above, please contact the Coordinator Operations, Board of Education and Assessment, email awok@rcpa.edu.au, or phone +61 2 8356 5892.
- For specific requests regarding training accreditation and examinations, contact the Registrar of the Board of Education and Assessment registrar@rcpa.edu.au.
- Trainees are asked not to contact Chief/Principal Examiners directly on training or examination matters. All correspondence must come through the College BEA Office via bea@rcpa.edu.au.
- For matters relating to their individual education and training, Trainees may contact Dr Kathy Robinson, Education Advisor kathyr@rcpa.edu.au

TRAINEES’ COMMITTEE

The Trainees’ Committee is a channel for registered Trainees to provide input to the training, education and professional activities of the College. Please see the [Trainees’ Committee Terms of Reference](#) on the College website.

CONTACTS

Prospective Trainees should seek initial information from the College website at <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Prospective-Trainees>

For further information on the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia’s training, examinations and admission to Fellowship contact:

The Registrar, Board of Education and Assessment
Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
207 Albion Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010
AUSTRALIA

Phone: +61 2 8356 5858
Fax: +61 2 8356 5828
Email: registrar@rcpa.edu.au

APPENDIX I

POLICY

Subject: **Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying**
Approval Date: 17 March 2000, Reviewed March 2005, March 2008,
March 2011, May 2011, November 2013, January 2015,
February 2016
Review Date: January 2019
Review Committee: Board of Directors
Number: 12/1999

1 Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this Policy is to give effect to the commitment of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (hereafter, the “**College**”) to establish and maintain a harmonious environment free from unlawful harassment, discrimination, vilification, victimisation and bullying, for those with whom it interacts.
- 1.2. This Policy describes the behaviour expected of all Stakeholders (as defined below) within the various College workplaces and training environments in which they are located.
- 1.3. This Policy can be updated or amended from time to time by the College at its absolute discretion.

2 Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to:
 - (a) Fellows, Associates, Members, Affiliates, and Associates of Faculties (in respect of activities undertaken in connection with the College);
 - (b) Registered Trainees of the College and its Faculties (in respect of activities involving a Supervisor or other person appointed by the College or otherwise in connection with the College); and
 - (c) Other individuals who are not employees of the College but who are involved in the activities of the College.
- 2.2. In the balance of this Policy, the abovementioned individuals are referred to as “**Stakeholders**”.
- 2.3. The College recognises that for Trainees, most instances of conduct falling within the scope of this Policy will occur in their place of work and complaints will likely be most appropriately handled within that organisation for whom they work. Thus, for Trainees, this Policy relates primarily to issues which may involve a Supervisor or other person appointed by the College.

3 References

- 3.1. The College has established this Policy in recognition of its obligations under work health and safety, equal opportunity, anti-bullying, anti-discrimination and vilification laws applicable in Australia and New Zealand.

4 Anti-Discrimination

- 4.1. Stakeholders must not unlawfully discriminate against any individual, including other Stakeholders and/or employees of the College.
- 4.2. Discrimination can either be direct or indirect. Generally, direct unlawful discrimination occurs when an individual (or group) is treated less favourably than another person in the same or similar circumstances as a result of direct reference to one or more attributes protected by anti-discrimination legislation (see below example at paragraph 4.5).
- 4.3. Indirect unlawful discrimination occurs when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed on an individual (or group) with a protected attribute (see below example at paragraph 4.5) and the individual or group is unable to comply with the condition or practice, compared with a greater proportion of persons without the protected attribute. For example, requiring meetings to commence outside of normal business hours may indirectly disadvantage those individuals who have family responsibilities.
- 4.4. Stakeholders must not treat anyone less favourably, or subject them to any detriment or adverse action on the basis of any protected attribute (implied or actual) which is protected under anti-discrimination legislation. Stakeholders must also take reasonable care to avoid indirect unlawful discrimination. Discrimination does not have to be calculated, intentional or even conscious in order for it to be unlawful.
- 4.5. Examples of attributes which are usually protected by anti-discrimination legislation include, but are not limited to:
 - gender;
 - pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breastfeeding;
 - religious/ethical belief;
 - political opinion;
 - race;
 - ethnic or national origins;
 - age;
 - marital status/family status or responsibilities;
 - sexual orientation or status including transgender;
 - disability; and/or
 - employment status/industrial activity (i.e. union membership).

Examples of some types of situations in which an individual or group is not to be treated less favourably or subject to any detriment on the basis of a given attribute include but are not limited to:

- access to interviews;
- job or traineeship offers;
- terms and conditions of employment or traineeship;
- access to promotion, training and transfer opportunities;
- access to benefits relating to employment or traineeship;
- job descriptions and specifications;
- dismissal;
- recruitment advertising; and/or
- retrenchment.

5 Anti-Harassment

- 5.1. Stakeholders must not engage in harassment of any kind (including sexual harassment and/or racial harassment detailed further below) against anyone, including other Stakeholders and/or employees of the College.
- 5.2. Harassment is any uninvited, unwelcomed or unreciprocated behaviour that offends, humiliates or embarrasses another person where a reasonable person would expect this to be the effect of the behaviour. Harassment may be physical, verbal or visual in nature and may occur in a single incident or repeatedly over time. It can include words or statements that are transmitted by post, fax, phone, video, email, computer servers or screen savers.
- 5.3. Harassment can be the result of behaviour that is not intended to offend or harm, such as jokes or unwanted attention. The fact that harassment is not intended does not mean that it is not unlawful. Harassment may also be a form of unlawful discrimination if associated with one or more of the protected attributes set out above.
- 5.4. Harassment can take direct forms such as abuse, threats, name-calling and sexual advances (see below from paragraph 5.5); or less direct forms, such as where a hostile work environment is created but no direct attacks are made on an individual.

Sexual Harassment

- 5.5. Sexual harassment is a specific form of harassment and therefore all of the above-noted considerations are equally relevant in relation to sexual harassment.
- 5.6. Sexual harassment is any unwanted, unwelcomed or uninvited behaviour of a sexual nature that makes a person feel intimidated, insulted, humiliated, embarrassed, or offended, where a reasonable person would expect this to be the effect of the behaviour. Sexual harassment can occur regardless of whether the behaviour was not intended to offend or harm. Sexual harassment can be experienced by both men and women.
- 5.7. Sexual harassment can occur in the College workplace, or another location that has a connection with the College, for example, at a College work function outside of work hours. The fact that the conduct may have occurred away from College premises is irrelevant.
- 5.8. Depending on the circumstances, examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - representations and/or displays of erotic or graphic material of a sexual nature including on posters, pictures, calendars, cartoons, graffiti or in email messages, voice mail messages or screen savers;
 - deliberate and unnecessary physical contact;
 - offensive jokes, comments, innuendoes, suggestions or telephone calls of a sexual nature;
 - reference to a person's sexuality, sexual identity (such as transgender); or physical appearance;
 - a persistent staring or leering at a person or at parts of his/her body; and/or
 - constant requests for drinks or dates, especially after prior refusal.

Racial Harassment

- 5.9. Racial harassment is a specific form of harassment and therefore all of the above-noted considerations regarding harassment are equally relevant in relation to racial harassment.
- 5.10. Racial harassment generally consists of derogatory remarks, racially explicit statements, graffiti, jokes or any action of a racist nature that is directed at an individual or group from a different ethnic background and which results in the individual(s) feeling intimidated, insulted, humiliated, embarrassed or threatened, where a reasonable person would expect this to be the effect of the behaviour.
- 5.11. Racial harassment can be non-verbal, verbal or physical. Examples include, but are not limited to:
- racially offensive gestures;
 - facial expressions or mimicry of accents;
 - racist publications, graffiti, letters or emails;
 - racist comments, abuse, jokes, ridicule or threats; and/or
 - derogatory nicknames.

6 Anti-Victimisation

- 6.1. Stakeholders must not victimise any other individual, including any employee of the College as a result of the individual making a complaint, or participating in an investigation.
- 6.2. Victimisation occurs when a person is subjected to a detriment because they made a complaint in good faith, or because they are involved in the investigation of a complaint of discrimination, harassment, violence, bullying, or vilification.

7 Anti-Vilification

- 7.1. Stakeholders must not vilify any other individual, including any other employee of the College.
- 7.2. Vilification occurs when a person, by a public act, incites hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person or a group of persons on the ground of that person's or the group's race, homosexuality, HIV/AIDS status or transgender.

8 Anti-Bullying

- 8.1. Stakeholders must not engage in workplace bullying against anyone, including other Stakeholders and employees of the College.
- 8.2. Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards an individual or group of individuals that creates a risk to health and safety. Repeated behaviour refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and can involve a range of behaviours over time.
- 8.3. Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances, would consider as unreasonable, including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.
- 8.4. Examples of behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, that may be considered to be bullying if they are repeated, unreasonable and create a risk to health and safety include, but are not limited, to:

- abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments;
 - unjustified criticism or complaints;
 - deliberately excluding someone from College/workplace activities;
 - withholding information that is vital for effective work performance;
 - setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines;
 - setting tasks that are unreasonably below or beyond individual's/group's skill level;
 - denying access to information, supervision, consultation or resources to the detriment of the individual/group;
 - spreading misinformation or malicious rumours; and/or
 - changing work arrangements such as rosters and leave to deliberately inconvenience a particular individual or group.
- 8.5. Bullying is a risk to health and safety, and engaging in workplace bullying may constitute a breach of the College's obligations under work health and safety laws. If bullying behaviour involves violence, for example physical assault or the threat of physical assault, it may also amount to a breach of criminal law and be reported to the police.
- 8.6. A single incident of unreasonable behaviour is not considered to be workplace bullying, however it may have the potential to escalate and, therefore should not be ignored.
- 8.7. Reasonable management action taken in a reasonable way is also not considered to be bullying and reasonable management action may be taken to direct and control the way work is carried out. It is reasonable for Stakeholders to allocate work and give feedback on an individual's performance, provided it is done in a reasonable manner.
- 8.8. The following are examples of types of actions that are not considered to be bullying if they are carried out lawfully and in a reasonable manner, taking the particular circumstances into account:
- setting reasonable performance goals, standards and deadlines;
 - rostering and allocating working hours where the requirements are reasonable;
 - transferring an individual for operational reasons;
 - deciding not to select an individual for promotion where a reasonable process is followed;
 - informing an individual about unsatisfactory work and/or performance in an honest, fair and constructive way (including with respect to trainees);
 - informing an individual about inappropriate behaviour in an objective and confidential way;
 - implementing organisational changes or restructuring; and/or
 - taking disciplinary action, including suspension, termination of employment or other arrangement.

9 Policy

- 9.1. The College is committed to the principle that all Stakeholders have the right to attend to College business, train and/or work within an environment free of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification or victimisation.
- 9.2. The College will use its best endeavours to ensure that all Stakeholders are informed of the existence of this Policy and are aware that any unlawful

discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification and victimisation will not be tolerated.

- 9.3. The College expects that the behaviour of Stakeholders will not fall below the standards set out in this Policy.
- 9.4. The College is committed to ensuring that all reported incidents are dealt with promptly and in a confidential manner (in accordance with paragraphs 9.5 and 9.6). The possibility of a complainant being disadvantaged or victimised will not be tolerated.
- 9.5. Confidentiality is an important part of this Policy. Everyone involved in a complaint under this Policy, such as an individual making a complaint or a person involved in an investigation process, is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required to ensure the integrity of any process undertaken in addressing a complaint made under this Policy.
- 9.6. That said, there may be circumstances in which full confidentiality cannot be maintained if the complaint is to be fully investigated and/or resolved. Details of the investigation and the names of the individuals making and responding to the complaint will be disclosed only on a "need to know" basis.
- 9.7. Stakeholders should be aware of the responsibilities of lodging a complaint and the seriousness of lodging a vexatious complaint.
- 9.8. The College acknowledges that any individual who believes they have been the victim of discrimination, harassment or bullying has the right to consult an external body, such as the Anti-Discrimination Board in NSW, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission throughout Australia, or if appropriate, the police.
- 9.9. This Policy will be included in the Information Booklet for Trainees, and the Guide for Supervisors.
- 9.10. The College will endeavour to provide training to Stakeholders (including Supervisors) in this Policy, and the topic will be covered in orientation sessions for new Trainees.
- 9.11. Counselling and disciplinary measures will be undertaken in accordance with the College Constitution and College Policies and Procedures.

10 Procedure

- 9.1. In the event a Stakeholder is concerned about conduct they believe contravenes this Policy, they are able to contact their local HR department.
- 9.2. If the conduct relates to another Stakeholder (i.e a Supervisor or other person acting on behalf of the College), then the Stakeholder should contact:
 - 1) State or Regional Councillor;
 - 2) RCPA Education Advisor;
 - 3) Registrar of Board of Education and Assessment;
 - 4) RCPA CEO (or RCPA DCEO); or
 - 5) College Ombudsman.
- 9.3. The Policy on Complaints Handling of the College addresses complaints arising from the College's internal or external relationships and may assist the College in determining:
 - (a) which dispute process is most appropriate to address the complaint; and

(b) whether any inappropriate conduct has occurred under this Policy; and
if so, taking appropriate action as necessary, including (but not limited to)
counselling and / or disciplinary measures.

9.4. The complaint will then be investigated using principles of natural justice and confidentiality. The CEO/Deputy CEO must be notified of any such complaints.

11 Related Policies and Procedures

- RCPA Policy on Complaints Handling