

Policy

Subject:	Continuing Professional Development Program
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The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (the College) has a mandatory requirement for Fellows, Fellows of Faculties and Affiliates of the College in active practice in Australia or New Zealand to participate in the RCPA Continuing Professional Development Program (CPDP) and for international members, to participate in the RCPA CPDP or an equivalent formally structured program in their country of domicile. Trainees and Overseas Trained Specialists (OTS)/Area of Need (AON) doctors undertaking additional training, examinations or assessment to attain Fellowship may also participate. The College's CPD Program has recently been strengthened in response to changes planned by medical registration authorities in Australia, New Zealand and many other countries with respect to the 'Revalidation' of medical practitioners to ensure ongoing competency to practice. Many of these changes relate to peer review, quality activities and scope and recency of practice.

Essential elements of the College's CPD program are described below. All details, forms and the Information Manual are available in the CPDP section of the College website <http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Education/Fellows-CPDP>

- The CPDP is developed, promoted, monitored and evaluated by the Board of Education and Assessment (BEA). Significant changes to the Program are endorsed by the Board of Directors.
- Activities undertaken for CPDP should reflect the participant's recent scope of practice.
- The CPDP requirement is for 500 hours over a 5 year cycle, commencing from the Fellow's first submission with a maximum of 200 hours accumulated in any one year.
- Participants working part time are required to complete the full number of hours for the Program.
- Fellows who are not up to date with respect to CPDP will not be given a Certificate of Good Standing if requested.
- Participants are required to maintain a suitable record of their CPDP activities.
- A summary of CPDP hours is to be submitted no later than 31 March of each year for activities undertaken in the previous calendar year.
- A Certificate of Participation, stating the number of hours of continuing professional development undertaken can be printed from the website for electronic submissions or will be provided for manual submissions received by the due date.

- A random audit of 10 % of all New Zealand Fellows (Medical Council of New Zealand requirement) and 5% of all other Fellows CPDP returns will be undertaken each year, requiring the individual submission of documentation as determined by the substantiation requirements set out in the RCPA CPDP Information Manual.
- Category A (Group Activities/Meetings) and Category B (Personal Study) elements of the CPDP both have a minimum requirement of 20 hours per annum with activities required from at least 2 of the codes in each Category in the Information Manual. Category C (Quality Activities), has a minimum requirement of 10 hours per annum with activities coming from at least 2 of the codes in the Information Manual, with the additional requirements for peer review as set out below.
- Commencing in 2016 (for returns in 2017), anatomical pathologists are required to complete 20 hours per annum in Category C, of which 10 hours must be peer review activities. This requirement will commence for other disciplines in 2017 (for returns in 2018). Suitable examples of peer review activities can be found in the Internal Quality Assurance Frameworks developed for each discipline available on the IQA section of the College website.
- Commencing in 2016 (for returns in 2017) all Fellows and Medical and Dental Faculty Fellows must individually participate in External Quality Assurance activities where appropriate activities/ programs exist for that Fellow's or Faculty Fellow's scope of practice. Individual enrolment in such programs is not required. Examples of some such programs for reference will be placed on the College website and participation in EQA qualifies under Category C activities.
- If a Fellow is unable to meet the requirements of RCPA CPDP, they currently may continue to be members and receive benefits of College membership, however it is the responsibility of each individual Fellow to report their CPDP non-participation and their recency of practice to the Australian Health Practitioner Registration Authority Medical Council of New Zealand or other regulatory authority at the time of renewing their annual registration and this may impact on their registration status.

CPDP and Joint/Dual Fellows in Australia and New Zealand

Commencing in the 2016 CPDP year (for returns in 2017) submissions by Joint/Dual Fellows regarding participation in a program with another College/organisation will not be accepted as complying with RCPA requirements. All joint/dual Fellows must submit RCPA CPDP returns if they wish to continue to receive Participation Certificates or Certificates of Good Standing.

CPDP and international practitioners

To further clarify the requirements for practitioners outside Australia and New Zealand:

Fellows and Faculty Fellows who live in countries other than Australia and New Zealand and **are not** registered to practice medicine in Australia and/or New Zealand may participate in their country of domicile Pathology College/Organisation CPD Program and be compliant with the RCPA CPDP requirements. All such programs must be approved by the BEA. If however they wish to apply for Medical Registration in Australia or New Zealand, the College will only support this application if they can demonstrate at least 12 months of compliance with RCPA CPDP requirements.

Fellows or Faculty Fellows who live in countries other than Australia and New Zealand and **are** registered to practice medicine in Australia and or New Zealand must participate in the

RCPA CPD program or apply to the BEA for possible special dispensation.

CPDP and recency of practice

Absence from active practice for this purpose is defined as a continuous period during which no or minimal practice in the relevant scope of practice is undertaken. In Australia, qualification as actively practicing with respect to the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) standard, consists of practice (within scope of practice) for a minimum total of four weeks full-time equivalent (38 hours/week max, part-time permissible) in one registration period or 12 weeks full-time equivalent over three consecutive registration periods.

From the College CPDP perspective, an allowable absence from practice may occur across two calendar years and CPDP hours can be accrued on return to active practice provided the absence does not exceed 12 months duration. Examples include parental leave, sick leave and long service leave.

The College expectation with respect to CPDP aligns with the MBA Recency of Practice Standard which further specifies the following requirements to be met prior to return to work according to certain circumstances (for Australian practitioners there are also requirements regarding current registration status; for details see the MBA website):

- For medical practitioners absent from practice for up to 12 months, there are no additional requirements prior to recommencing practice
- Medical practitioners with at least two years' experience who are absent from practice for up to three years are required to complete the equivalent of one year's pro rata CPDP activities relevant to their scope of practice prior to commencement
- Medical practitioners with at least two years' experience who are absent from practice for more than three years are required to submit to the BEA, prior to return to work, a prospective program of activities to demonstrate that their knowledge and skills will be maintained at a satisfactory standard. This may include working under supervision and completing specific education and/or assessment (see Policy 1/1997: Retraining). For Australian practitioners this plan must also be submitted to the MBA. For medical practitioners with less than two years' experience in their field of practice prior to a leave of absence of 12 months or more, the practitioner must work under supervision in a training position approved by the BEA. For Australian practitioners this plan must also be approved by the MBA.

Note for Australian practitioners, other new MBA Recency of Practice conditions apply for medical practitioners with limited or restricted registration and for medical practitioners intending to change their scope of practice.

Other CPDP Recommendations

Participation in training in the prevention and management of Bullying, Harassment, Sexual harassment and Discrimination is mandatory for all supervisors and examiners of the College (see Policy 12/1999 Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying) and it is recommended that this form part of all Fellows' CPDP.

Participation in education in Cultural Competency is a high priority for medical practitioners in Australia and New Zealand. The College provides an online module as an adjunct or alternative to employer-provided instruction and it is recommended that such education forms part of all Fellows' CPDP.