
The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons collaborate in the delivery of the Surgical Education and Training Program in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.

Training Regulation: Recognition of Prior Learning

I. OVERVIEW

The purpose and scope of this document is to outline the Australian Board of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (**“the Board”**) regulations to inform trainees in the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (**“PRS”**) Surgical Education and Training (**“SET”**) Program of Recognition of Prior Learning (**“RPL”**) and the process of applying for RPL.

It is recognised that trainees entering surgical training may have gained prior medical training or experience which is comparable to components of the SET program in terms of learning outcomes, competency outcomes and standards. The purpose of RPL is to avoid unnecessary duplication of training and experiences, which are equivalent to those delivered in the PRS SET Program. It is important to note that RPL is only available for the specific components identified within this regulation.

2. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

- 2.1. RPL is the formal recognition of the skills and knowledge, which a trainee has obtained before commencing in the training program.
- 2.2. The RPL assessment process assesses a trainee’s experiences and abilities to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required competencies toward completion of the PRS SET Program.
- 2.3. The evidence provided for RPL must address the currency of competencies being assessed, that is, whether the person can currently demonstrate the skills, knowledge and behaviours being assessed.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1.** Applications for RPL will only be accepted from trainees who have commenced the PRS SET Program.
- 3.2.** Applications must be made to the Board using the RPL application form, within 3 months of the date of commencement of the first training rotation in the training program. It is the responsibility of the trainee to provide all relevant documentation at the time of application.

Application and relevant documentation (evidence) in support of the application should be submitted via education@plasticsurgery.org.au
- 3.3.** The Board will assess each application on a case by case basis, and the outcome will be dependent on whether the evidence provided by the trainee can substantiate the achievement of competencies comparable to those required to be achieved in the PRS SET Program.
- 3.4.** At the discretion of the Board, the granting of RPL may be conditional upon the successful completion of the trainee's first year of training in the PRS SET Program.
- 3.5.** RPL will not be granted when:
 - a) The application is incomplete
 - b) The application is not made within the prescribed time
- 3.6.** Within 5 working days of the Board's decision, the trainee will be notified in writing whether their application was successful or unsuccessful.

4. CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

- 4.1.** RPL will not be granted for clinical experience gained in unaccredited registrar positions.
- 4.2.** Applications for RPL for clinical experience may be considered provided the experience was:
 - a) Formally assessed clinical training done in an accredited PRS or other relevant specialty training post;
 - b) for a continuous period of not less than six months;
 - c) within the last two years;
 - d) supported by satisfactory assessments of performance and progress conducted by a specialist supervisor in the relevant training program; and
 - e) supported by a verified logbook.
- 4.3.** When applying for RPL for clinical experience, the trainee is required to demonstrate how that experience has contributed to the acquisition of PRS SET Program competencies.
- 4.4.** The Board may defer a decision on an application for RPL of clinical experience for up to 12 months. This is to enable adequate formative and summative assessments within the PRS SET Program to confirm the claimed level of competency has been gained.
- 4.5.** RPL granted for clinical experience may lead to an overall reduction in the total duration of clinical training time in the PRS SET Program, but will not exempt trainees from completing all other requirements.

4.6. A maximum of up to 12 months RPL may be granted.

5. SKILLS COURSES

5.1. Applications for RPL for skills courses that are equivalent to the ASSET, CCrISP and EMST courses may be granted when supported by a certificate of completion of the equivalent course.

5.2. Applications for RPL for the Emergency Management of Severe Burns (EMSB) course may be considered. Such applications must be accompanied by a certificate displaying the trainee name and successful completion date.

6. EXAMINATIONS

As per RACS policy, RPL is not available for examinations.

7. RESEARCH

RPL is not available for research requirements of the PRS SET Program.

8. RECONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPEAL

Trainees have options available to them to challenge all decisions regarding their training. Challenges are governed by the RACS Policy “Reconsideration Review and Appeal”, available to download from www.plasticsurgery.org.au.

9. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

RACS Policy ETA-SET-006: Recognition of Prior Learning
RACS Policy: Reconsideration, Review and Appeal (ETA-SET-061)