
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. 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 knowledge, skills and/or experience, which a trainee has obtained before commencing in the training program.
- 2.2. The RPL assessment process assesses a trainee’s abilities and experience 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 knowledge and skills 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, but not prior to commencing clinical training. 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 email to 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:
- The application is incomplete
 - 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. ENTRUSTABLE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 4.1.** RPL will not be granted for clinical experience gained in unaccredited registrar positions.
- 4.2.** RPL may be granted for workplace based assessments (WBAs) and clinical experience equivalent to the completion of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs).
- 4.3.** Trainees who voluntarily withdraw from the PRS SET program, and are in good standing, then resume the PRS SET program within three (3) years may apply for RPL of:
- Entrustable Professional Activities that had previously been completed in full, as defined by the Board.
 - Minimum accredited time spent in training equivalent to the number of satisfactory rotations completed before withdrawing, less one term;
- 4.4.** Trainees commencing clinical training in 2022, or later, may apply for RPL for any two of the four mandated Early SET EPAs. Applications for RPL may be considered provided that:
- Formally assessed clinical training was completed in an accredited PRS or other relevant specialty training post for a continuous period of not less than six months and within the last two years;
 - The application is supported by the volume and variety of workplace based assessment (WBA) forms defined by the Board for a particular Early SET EPA and a verified logbook.
- 4.5.** When applying for RPL for an Entrustable Professional Activity, the onus is on the trainee to demonstrate how any clinical experience and WBAs completed are equivalent to those

required for completion of that EPA in the PRS SET Program.

4.6. The Board may defer a decision on an application for RPL for Entrustable Professional Activities 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.

4.7. RPL granted for an Entrustable Professional Activity will not exempt trainees from completing all other requirements in the PRS SET Program.

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 Regulation “Reconsideration Review and Appeal”, available to download from www.surgeons.org.

9. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

RACS Policy: Recognition of Prior Learning

RACS Regulation: Reconsideration, Review and Appeal