

Policy and Procedure

Continuing Professional Development - Exemptions



Authorising Body:	Board
Responsible Committee:	Education Committee
Responsible Department:	Education and Training
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1.0 Introduction

The RANZCP Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program provides a pathway for participants to appraise and further develop professional practice, maintain knowledge, skills, and performance standards, and provide high quality, safe psychiatric care. It is an essential part of public assurance of the ongoing professionalism of members and the quality of their practice.

Effective January 2023, the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) registration standard requires all doctors registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to meet the CPD program requirements of their accredited CPD "Home". The RANZCP will continue to work with participants in Australia to meet current requirements of the MBA's Professional Performance Framework (PPF) and, participants in New Zealand, to meet the recertification requirements of the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ).

CPD is a mandatory, annual activity required to continue registration as a medical practitioner that is undertaken by RANZCP Fellows and Affiliates as required by the MBA and MCNZ. The RANZCP sets the recognised standard for CPD for psychiatrists in Australia and New Zealand as delegated by the MBA and the MCNZ.

From 1 January 2023, the RANZCP has been accredited by the Australian Medical Council (AMC) as a CPD Home in Australia for doctors practising in the scope of psychiatry.

Participants in the RANZCP CPD Program are expected to adhere to the [RANZCP Code of Conduct](#) and the [RANZCP Code of Ethics](#).

2.0 The CPD Program

The RANZCP CPD Program aims to facilitate and support activities that promote engagement, reflection on current practice, and the ongoing development of skills and knowledge. The program embraces adult and lifelong learning principles and aims to be:

- flexible and inclusive of a wide range of learning activities
- supportive of participants
- responsive to feedback, to audit of the program and to research in the evolving field of CPD.

The RANZCP requires that all Fellows and Affiliates undertake annual CPD and meet the requirements of the CPD program. As of 2023 the 50-hour RANZCP program includes minimum requirements of:

- Section 1 – the development of a professional development plan (PDP) which is deemed to be a 2 hour activity
- Section 2 – 10 hours of Formal Peer Review activities*
- Section 3 – 5 hours of Practice Improvement and Review / Quality Improvement activities*
- Section 4 – 12.5 hours of educational activities, or "Self guided learning"
- Section 5 – an additional 12.5 hours from sections 2, 3 or 4 to make up a total of 50 hours.

*Section 2 and 3 contribute to "reviewing performance and measuring outcomes" activities which together are required to total a minimum of 23 hours.

Completing at least 50-hours of CPD annually to meet the medical registration standard is a legal requirement for registration as a medical practitioner in both Australia and New Zealand. While the RANZCP assists its membership achieve registration by providing the CPD program, it is every individual member's obligation to ensure that they meet the required registration standard annually. Upon application in certain situations as outlined in this Policy, the RANZCP may defer participation in the RANZCP CPD program. However, the RANZCP cannot waive the regulators' requirements for registration as a medical practitioner. It is the individual's responsibility to be acquainted with any re-entry criteria required by the registration bodies for return to clinical practice. More guidance is available on the College website: [Guidance for leave and return to practice | RANZCP](#).

3.0 Exemption from participation in the RANZCP Specialist CPD program

- 3.1** The RANZCP's requirement for annual CPD participation and completion aligns with those of the two regulatory bodies in Australia and New Zealand (i.e. the MBA and MCNZ) for the maintenance of specialist or vocational scope of practice registration.
- 3.2** RANZCP Fellows and Affiliates may apply to the CCPD for an exemption from participation in the CPD program under certain circumstances and for a maximum of twelve months of a CPD year.
- 3.3** Applications for deferral/exemption, withdrawal, or retirement from participation in the RANZCP CPD program must be made using the appropriate application form. This may be the deferral/withdrawal form, published on the RANZCP website via [CPD for RANZCP Members | RANZCP](#), or the [FRANZCP Declaration of Retirement Form](#).
- 3.4** Applications will be considered under the authority of the Committee for Continuing Professional Development (CCPD).
- 3.5** The applicant must submit a written application citing one of the grounds for exemption and the expected duration of non-participation, and provide evidence.
- 3.6** Where the exemption from CPD participation requested is for an extended period, RANZCP Fellows and Affiliates will need to be acquainted with any re-entry criteria required by the registration bodies for return to clinical practice.
- 3.7** Fellows and Affiliates who no longer hold a practising certificate and have formally advised the RANZCP of their retirement, through the completion of the [FRANZCP Declaration of Retirement Form](#) and its acceptance by the RANZCP Board, are not required to complete the annual CPD program.
 - 3.7.1** Continued participation of retired Fellows and Affiliates in CPD is optional. Continued access to My CPD and its PRG functions, and Learn*it*, requires continued active enrolment which will usually generate automated reminders to complete CPD. Such reminders can be disregarded if participation in the program is voluntary and not required for medical registration.
 - 3.7.2** Fellows and Affiliates whose retirement has been formally processed will be offered the option of remaining active in CPD.
 - 3.7.3** Fellows and Affiliates who choose not to remain active in CPD will continue to have access to the online resources, including Learn*it*, but will not have access to My CPD and its PRG functions.
 - 3.7.4** Fellows and Affiliates who have completed a Declaration of Retirement Form will remain enrolled in the CPD program until their status on the relevant Medical Register is listed as non-practising, or their name is no longer on the Register, Obligations for CPD remain while a medical practitioner remains on the relevant Medical Register and may be subject to pro rata arrangements as outlined in clause 5.4

3.8 Fellows who have non-practising specialist registration (in Australia) or do not hold a current practising certificate (in New Zealand) are not required to complete the CPD program but may choose to do so.

3.8.1 As per the [FRANZCP Declaration of Retirement Form \(cognitofrms.com\)](https://cognitofrms.com): “A Fellow participating in any of the activities outlined in the definition of Practice, irrespective of remuneration, frequency or duration, must remain a practising Fellow of the RANZCP and continue to complete full Continuing Professional Development requirements”. This includes Fellows who do not hold specialist medical registration but retain generalist medical registration.

4.0 Grounds for temporary exemption

4.1 Temporary exemptions from completing requirements of the CPD program may be provided by the RANZCP for extenuating circumstances including:

- 4.1.1 bereavement
- 4.1.2 illness
- 4.1.3 parental leave
- 4.1.4 supporting ill family members, including support as carers
- 4.1.5 full time study
- 4.1.6 Other special circumstances, including leave for cultural responsibilities

4.2 CPD deferral/exemption will only be granted in accordance with the Policy and with the expectation that the Fellow or Affiliate is not practising in any capacity during the period for which exemption is requested. There may be capacity for consideration of this clause, for example on compassionate grounds, however any variation should be discussed by the Fellow or Affiliate with their medical registration authority.

4.3 When considering applications for exemptions, the CCPD will consider the period of absence from practice and the time available for the completion of CPD requirements.

5.0 Duration of temporary exemptions

5.1 Temporary exemptions are typically granted for periods of up to 12 months duration. For CPD deferral for longer than 12 months, the CCPD will be formally consulted and the applicant is advised to also discuss their circumstances with their medical registration authority as prolonged absence from practice may impact on the applicant’s ability to meet the recency of practice registration standards.

5.2 Where an exemption for 12 months of a CPD (calendar) year is requested (and accompanied by no work as a specialist), an exemption from the full annual CPD requirements will generally be granted. Otherwise, generally, pro-rata completion of annual¹ activities will be required based on the quarterly outlines below:

From 2023:

Annual program requirement	<9 months CPD exemption = 25% program required	<6 months CPD exemption = 50% program required	<3 months CPD exemption = 75%
Section 1: PDP (max 2 hours)	2 hours	2 hours	2 hours

¹ per CPD (calendar) year.

Annual program requirement		<9 months CPD exemption = 25% program required		<6 months CPD exemption = 50% program required		<3 months CPD exemption = 75%	
Section 2: Formal Peer Review "Reviewing Performance" (min 10 hours)	Total 23hrs	2.5 hours	Total 6 hrs	5 hours	Total 12 hrs	7.5 hours	Total 18 hrs
Section 3: Practice Improvement "Measuring Outcomes" (min 5 hours)		1.5 hours		2.5 hours		4 hours	
Section 4: Self-guided Learning "Educational Activities" (12.5 hours)		3 hours		7 hours		9 hours	
Section 5: Additional section 2, 3 or 4 (12.5 hours)		1.5 hours		4 hours		8.5 hours	
Total hours (50)		12.5 hours		25 hours		37.5 hours	

Prior to 2023 (for reference):

Minimum annual program requirement	<9 months CPD exemption = 25% program required	<6 months CPD exemption = 50% program required	<3 months ² CPD exemption = 75%
Section 1: PDP (hour hours)	5 hours	5 hours	5 hours
Section 2: Formal Peer Review (10 hours)	2.5 hours	5 hours	7.5 hours
Section 3: Practice Improvement (5 hours)	1.5 hours	2.5 hours	4 hours
Section 4: Self-guided Learning (25 hours)	5 hours	12.5 hours	19-20 hours
Section 5: Additional section 2, 3 or 4 (5 hours)	0 hours	0 hours	1-2 hours
Total hours (50)	14 hours	25 hours	37.5 hours

5.3 Pro rata requirements will be applied to new Fellows, according to the date on which they are admitted to the Fellowship. Refer Clause 6.4..

5.4 Members who are intending to retire during a calendar year are required to complete CPD activities until the time that they are retired and no longer hold practising medical registration. It would be expected that this would result in an appropriately tailored pro rata program for that year.

² Exemption for less than six months would usually only be granted under certain circumstances, for example if maternity leave spanned across two CPD years.

6.0 Special exemptions from part or whole of the CPD program

6.1 Dual College membership

- 6.1.1 RANZCP Fellows who hold dual Fellowship with another College, and are not working in the field of psychiatry in any capacity, may be eligible for exemption from the full program.
- 6.1.2 Exemption from the full CPD program is granted only whilst the RANZCP Fellow holds non-practising specialist registration (in Australia) or does not have a current practising certificate in the vocational scope of psychiatry (in New Zealand).
- 6.1.3 Fellows exempt under this clause will need to provide evidence of completion of the CPD program of their other College annually to meet the CPD requirements of the RANZCP.
- 6.1.4 On return to practice as a psychiatrist, the Fellow must be aware of the requirements of the regulatory bodies and the RANZCP for recency of practice and CPD. The RANZCP has a refresher program to support safe return to specialist work in psychiatry ([Refresher and remediation programs | RANZCP](#)).
- 6.1.5 Fellows with dual College membership who continue to work in any capacity in the field of psychiatry must adhere to all annual requirements of the RANZCP program.
- 6.1.6 Some CPD activities undertaken by dual Fellows may be reportable for both College's programs and guidance regarding this should be sought from the CPD team.

6.2 Fellows working overseas

- 6.2.1 Fellows working overseas (i.e. Overseas Fellows) participating in a local and equivalent CPD program overseas, who do not hold a current practising certificate for the specialty of psychiatry in New Zealand, or do not hold practising specialist registration in Australia, are not required to complete the RANZCP CPD program.
 - 6.2.1.1 Evidence of CPD registration and completion of the requirements of the overseas program must be provided to the RANZCP CCPD annually for College membership purposes.
- 6.2.2 Fellows residing overseas who retain specialist practising registration in Australia, or a current practising certificate for New Zealand in the vocational scope of psychiatry, must meet the requirements of the RANZCP CPD program, including completion of their online My CPD Record.
 - 6.2.2.1 For a Fellow's participation in overseas CPD programs to be recognised as fulfilling the requirements of the RANZCP program, evidence of CPD activity, mapped to the RANZCP program and logged in My CPD, must be provided.
- 6.2.3 Certificates of completion of the CPD programs of international Colleges of Psychiatry, for example the Royal College of Psychiatrists (United Kingdom) or the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, are not automatically recognised as fulfilling the requirements of the RANZCP program.
- 6.2.4 To ensure Peer Review requirements are met, an Overseas Fellow who is required to complete the RANZCP CPD program, and who intends to achieve Section 2 via 2.1 (Peer Review Groups), should liaise with the CPD team for the recognition of any local Peer Review Group/s (PRGs) and the logging of that activity in My CPD.

6.3 Fellows and Affiliates involved only in specific, non-clinical areas of practice

- 6.3.1 Non-clinical areas of practice include, for example, education, research, administration, and leadership positions with no direct patient contact or potential to influence direct patient care.
- 6.3.2 Fellows and Affiliates who do not undertake any direct or indirect clinical work (e.g. supervision of another clinician), or provision of advice regarding ongoing patient care, may apply for partial exemption from the RANZCP CPD Program.
- 6.3.3 Fellows and Affiliates exempted under this clause are expected to develop a PDP and complete sections 4 and 5. (A total of 35 hours annually).
- 6.3.4 All Fellows and Affiliates applying for this category must submit a written application outlining their current non-clinical role and provide evidence, for example a letter from their employer.

6.4 New Fellows

- 6.4.1 New Fellows admitted to the Fellowship will be enrolled in the CPD Program, but may not have to meet the annual requirements for that year.
- 6.4.2 Participation will be pro rata for the number of months remaining in the CPD year of admission to Fellowship.

Fellowship Round	The actual period of CPD enrolment	CPD program
January	11 months	Full program
February	10 months	Full program
March	9 months	75% program
April	8 months	66% program
May	7 months	66% program
June	6 months	50% program
July	5 months	50% program
August	4 months	33% program
September	3 months	25% program
October	2 months	Exemption with encouragement to record any relevant activity
November	1 months	Exemption with encouragement to record any relevant activity
December	-	

6.5 Affiliates or non-members (individuals), joining the program part way through the year

- 6.5.1 Affiliates or non-RANZCP members (individuals), joining the program part way through the calendar year will be expected to complete pro rata requirements of the annual program for that year.
- 6.5.2 Participation will be pro rata for the number of months remaining in the CPD year of enrolment.

6.6 Other requests for a variation to the full program will be considered by the CCPD according to individual circumstances

- 6.6.1 Requests for variation to the full RANZCP CPD program may be made by individuals, for example those who have had a period of leave, or groups of psychiatrists.

6.7 Associates (Trainees) who are not actively training who are participating in the RANZCP CPD program

- 6.7.1 Trainees who are not actively training and are enrolled in the RANZCP CPD program are covered by the provisions of this exemption policy during the time they are enrolled in the CPD program.

7.0 Special Consideration

- 7.1 The CCPD may grant special temporary exemptions for other circumstances not previously outlined in this policy.
- 7.2 Any exemptions made under this clause should not compromise the medical registration of the member, who will be advised to seek advice from the relevant regulator where the CCPD has concerns that registration standards may not be met.
- 7.3 Any exemptions made under this clause will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the CCPD.
- 7.4 Application for consideration of an exemption under this clause must be made in writing to the CCPD with appropriate evidence provided.

8.0 Applications for Exemption

- 8.1 Applications should be made in advance of the period of exemption requested.
- 8.2 Retrospective requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.3 Additional information may be requested by the CCPD to support an application.
- 8.4 Possible outcomes for requests for exemptions will be:
 - Approved
 - Declined
 - Deferred pending further information.
- 8.5 Notification of outcomes will be given in writing.

9.0 Definitions:

- 9.1 Peer: for the purposes of the peer review component of the RANZCP CPD Program (including peer review groups, practice visits and supervision), a peer is a specialist psychiatrist in practice.

- 9.2** Fellow: qualified psychiatrists who have successfully completed the RANZCP training program or otherwise have met the requirements for Fellowship of the RANZCP and who have maintained membership of the RANZCP by payment of the appropriate annual membership fee.
- 9.3** Affiliate: overseas-trained psychiatrists (OTPs) currently working in psychiatry in Australia or New Zealand and who have maintained membership of the RANZCP by payment of the appropriate annual membership fee.
- 9.4** Individual: registered medical practitioners who are neither Fellows nor Affiliates who choose to participate in the RANZCP CPD Program and who have paid the appropriate fee. These medical practitioners may have specialist psychiatry training but are not a Fellow or Affiliate of the RANZCP. (Individual participation in CPD does not indicate membership of the RANZCP).
- 9.5** Associate: a trainee currently completing the RANZCP training program in psychiatry. Associates who are actively training are not required to complete the CPD program.
- 9.6** Active Training: for the purposes of this policy Active training is defined as 3 months of training plus the submission of an In Training Assessment. Note that the ITA does not have to have been passed.
- 9.7** Member: members of the RANZCP including Fellows, Affiliates and Associates.
- 9.8** Participant: Fellows, Affiliates, and Individuals who are enrolled in the RANZCP CPD Program.
- 9.9** Fellow Exempt: any Fellow who has completed 30 years of membership and has reached the age of 65 who has been granted by the Board an exemption from further fees.
- 9.10** CME: continuing medical education. This term is used to refer to educational activities that focus on medical knowledge
- 9.11** CPD: Continuing professional development. This term is used to refer to a process of lifelong learning that enables psychiatrists to maintain their ability to practice. It is broader than the acquisition of medical knowledge and recognises that health care is delivered in the context of a system involving many parts, including patients
- 9.12** CCPD: Committee for Continuing Professional Development, which is the Committee of the RANZCP that oversees the CPD program
- 9.13** MBA: Medical Board of Australia – the registration board for medical doctors
- 9.14** AHPRA: Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency – the body supporting the 15 national health practitioner registration boards, including the MBA
- 9.15** AMC: Australian Medical Council – the independent national standards body in Australia for medical education and training.
- 9.16** MCNZ: Medical Council of New Zealand –the registration authority for New Zealand and the independent standards body for New Zealand for medical education and training.
- 9.17** PPF: Professional Performance Framework – the framework being introduced by the MBA outlining the requirements for maintaining registration in Australia.
- 9.18** Bpac NZ Best practice Advocacy Centre New Zealand – an independent organisation with the role of delivering educational and continuing professional development programmes to medical and other health practitioners in New Zealand.

Associated Documents:

[Policy for CPD](#)

[Policy-and-procedure-for-cpd-claims \(ranzcp.org\)](#) [Policy and Procedure for CPD Audit \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[Policy and Procedure for CPD Peer Review Activities \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[CPD Program Guide 2022 \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[cpd-program_section-3_faq.aspx \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[Medical Board of Australia - New Professional Performance Framework for patient safety](#)

[Recertification and professional development | Medical Council \(mcnz.org.nz\)](#)

[Committee for Continuing Professional Development Regulations \(ranzcp.org\)](#)

[Policy - Application for Retired Fellow Status March 2021 \(ranzcp.org\)](#) [Exit and re-entry Policy and Procedure \(ranzcp.org\)](#) [Application for CPD deferral / exemption](#)

[FRANZCP Declaration of Retirement Form](#)

Revision Record

Contact:	Manager, Accreditation, CPD and Reporting		
Date	Version	Approver	Description
17/11/20	1.0	B2020/16 R9	New Document.
27/05/22	2.0	EC Chair	Reviewed and updated to describe pro rata requirements.
19/05/2024	3.0	B2024/4 R10	Revised to clarify practising registration implications, address 2023 registration standard changes, pro rata for New Fellows and trainees on break-in-training.
Next Review: 2026			