



P021 - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

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1. Purpose

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process undertaken to determine whether the education and experience of the applicant meets the learning outcomes of the Training Program offered by the College. The RPL process assesses previously completed structured learning and professional experience and may result in exemption from one or more components within the ACSEP Training Program.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure clarity of expectations of all parties as well as provision of an adequately documented process to be followed in the application for and granting of RPL. This policy defines who may apply for RPL and what categories of learning may be eligible. It describes the principles to be addressed when making an application for RPL and in assessing applications for RPL,



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as well as possible outcomes after assessment of an application. This policy also outlines a framework for Registrars of ACSEP to be recognised in a specialty field of professional experience related to the ACSEP Training Program.

A key tenet of ACSEP education is that all training should be prospectively approved. This is based on the educational rationale that learning should be planned to ensure it is educationally robust and meets rigorous ACSEP standards. However, ACSEP also recognises that there are exceptional circumstances where prospective approval of training is not possible and gives Registrars the opportunity to apply for RPL to avoid unnecessary duplication of learning. The areas which are eligible for RPL are:

- a) Management of Sports Trauma (MOST) Course
- b) ACSEP Academic Modules
- c) ACSEP Research-Based Activities
- d) Recognition of Specialty Experience

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Registrars of the ACSEP Training Program in Australia and New Zealand.

This policy is limited to ACSEP Recognition of Prior Learning. Specialty recognition for medical registration purposes is the responsibility of the relevant regulatory bodies in Australia and in New Zealand. The *P021 - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy* does not apply for entry onto the ACSEP Training Program and all entry requirements to become an ACSEP Registrar must be fulfilled as per the eligibility criteria outlined in *P013 - Training Program Interview and Selection Policy* and associated documentation found on the ACSEP website.

3. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for RPL:

- a) The applicant must be accepted onto the ACSEP Training Program as a Registrar.
- b) Applications for RPL must be received within three months of entry to the relevant Training Program.



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- c) The application must meet the principles of RPL specified in Section 4.
- d) The experience outlined in the RPL application must have been commenced and completed prior to entry to the relevant ACSEP Training Program, unless otherwise specified in Section 5.
- e) Time limitations for the different areas that are eligible for RPL are adhered to, as specified in Section 5.
- f) The application must meet any other eligibility requirements specified in Section 5.

4. Application

Applications for RPL must be made using the ACSEP RPL Application form. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all supporting evidence and documentation required to support their request for RPL. An application fee may be payable at the time of application and details for the application process and associated fees for each of the areas where RPL will be considered are outlined in Section 6. Each application will be assessed to determine if the completed prior learning is deemed equivalent to that of the relevant ACSEP Training Program Requirement at that point in time. The applicant is advised to seek assistance from the relevant committee prior to completing the alternate course to determine the likelihood/eligibility of that course for RPL.

Not all Masters/PhDs/alternate courses/projects will be equivalent to ACSEP Training Program Requirements. The applicant must research relevant course information and policies to determine the equivalence of their experience in building their evidence portfolio. Applicants should consult the current ACSEP Training Program Manual, ACSEP Curriculum and ACSEP website for the latest Training Program requirements.

Once an RPL application has been approved and the applicant has been advised, the applicant remains subject to all ACSEP Training Program requirements relating to other training from when they commenced the Training Program and all subsequent years until Fellowship has been obtained.

5. Principles of RPL

- 1) **Validity** - The learning experience should be relevant to the Training Program. Validity of the learning experience is assessed through alignment with the learning objectives as set in ACSEP



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Training Program, and consideration of content, level of training and clinical/medical experience.

- 2) **Authenticity** - The learning experience must have been undertaken by the applicant, and the information in the application must be true and accurate.
- 3) **Currency** - The learning experience should indicate up-to-date knowledge and skills in relation to the intended area of training. The experience must have been completed not more than five years prior to entry to the Training Program.
- 4) **Reliability** - Reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of the competency. The assessment tools used to provide evidence of competency should be reliable and comparable to that of the ACSEP Training Program.
- 5) **Comparability** - Comparability ensures that the learning experience undertaken has similar value to that of the ACSEP Training Program. The learning experience should be comparable in terms of content, breadth of experience, level of responsibility, rigor of training requirements, assessment process, supervision, and credibility of training setting.
- 6) **Continuity** - To ensure the learning experience was focused, effective and valuable, all applications must outline experience undertaken over a sustained time period unless a minimum approvable training period is otherwise stipulated in the relevant Training Program handbook.
- 7) **Timeliness** - Applications for RPL must be received within three months of entry to the relevant Training Program. Applications received outside this timeframe will not be accepted.
- 8) **Evidence-based** - The applicant must provide sufficient evidence that the experience demonstrates the learning outcomes that have been achieved to consider its applicability and relevance.



- 9) **Maximum Time** - To ensure the integrity of the ACSEP Training Program, RPL will be granted for a maximum of 12 months of Training Time, or in exceptional circumstances up to 24 months may be considered.

6. Areas of RPL Application

6.1 Management of Sports Trauma (MOST) Course

6.1.1 Prior course details

In addition to eligibility criteria in Section 3, to be eligible to apply for RPL under the MOST Course area:

- a) The course must be equivalent to, or higher than, the ACSEP Advanced MOST Course Training Program requirement.
- b) The course must be completed up to two years prior to commencing the Training Program.

6.1.2 Application and assessment process

The applicant must complete the relevant ACSEP RPL Application Form and attach evidence to support the RPL application such as a certificate of course completion and email the application to registrars@acsep.org.au. The application will be assessed by the Training Committee and the applicant will be advised of the outcome via email.

If RPL is approved, the applicant will be deemed to have satisfied the Training Program requirement.

If RPL is not approved, the applicant must complete the Training Program requirement.

6.1.3 Fees for application

Not applicable.

6.2 Academic Modules

The ACSEP Academic Module topics are as follows:

- a) Research Methodology
- b) Sports Psychology
- c) Sports Nutrition



- d) Sports Pharmacology
- e) Sports Biomechanics

6.2.1 Prior course details

In addition to the eligibility criteria in Section 3, to be eligible to apply for RPL under the Academic Modules area:

- a) RPL for Academic Modules can be claimed for the following prior courses:
 - a. Completion of a Masters, PhD or a comparable prior subject which specifically relates to an ACSEP Academic Modules topic within Sport and Exercise Medicine.
 - b. Prior completion of an ACSEP Academic Module.
- b) The applicant must demonstrate competency in all learning outcomes of the relevant ACSEP Academic Module and a final grade of 70% or more must be attained.
- c) The application must not be for a partial exemption.
- d) The course must have been commenced up to three years prior to starting the Training Program and completed prior to the commencement of the Training Program in all cases except for a PhD related to the Research Methodology topic, whereby a PhD related to the Research Methodology topic can be started and completed any time prior to starting the Training Program.
- e) The course is not for an external e-learning module on a topic related to the ACSEP Academic Module topics.

6.2.2 Application and assessment process

The applicant must complete the relevant ACSEP RPL Application Form and attach evidence to support the RPL application such as an academic transcript, certificate of course completion and course syllabus, and email the application to registrars@acsep.org.au. The application will be assessed by the Training Committee and/or Research Committee and the applicant will be advised of the outcome via email.

If the application is approved, the applicant will be deemed to have satisfied the Training Program requirement. The ACSEP Academic Module will be allocated to the applicant in the ACSEP Learning Management System and marked as completed.

If the application is not approved, the applicant must complete the Training Program requirement.



6.2.3 Fees for application

If the RPL application is approved, the applicant must pay the fee listed in the latest ACSEP fee schedule.

6.3 Research-Based Activities

6.3.1 Prior course details

In addition to the eligibility criteria in Section 3, to be eligible to apply for RPL under the Research-Based Activities area:

- a) RPL for Research-Based Activities can be claimed for the following prior courses or projects:
 - i. Completion of a PhD in a topic that is relevant to Sport and Exercise Medicine as per the ACSEP Curriculum and satisfies similar criteria for attainment of Training Program Research-Based Activity requirements.
 - ii. Completion of a Masters degree by research in a topic that is relevant to Sport and Exercise Medicine as per the ACSEP Curriculum, which satisfies similar criteria for attainment of Training Program Research-Based Activity requirements and results in publication of the research meeting the requirements of Research-Based Activity *RS5.1 – Original Research Publication – Scimago Q1/Q2 Journal* prior to the commencement of the Training Program.
 - iii. Completion of a research project external to a PhD or Masters degree by research in a topic that is relevant to Sport and Exercise Medicine as per the ACSEP Curriculum, which satisfies similar criteria for attainment of Training Program Research-Based Activity requirements and results in the publication of the research meeting the requirements of Research-Based Activity *RS5.1 – Original Research Publication – Scimago Q1/Q2 Journal, RS5.2 - Original Research Publication - Lower Rank/Peer Reviewed Journal, or RS5.5 – First Author in Non-Peer Reviewed Publication* prior to the commencement of the Training Program.
- b) The course or project must have been commenced up to three years prior to starting the Training Program and completed prior to the Training Program in all cases except for a PhD. A PhD can be started and completed any time prior to starting the Training Program.



6.3.2 Application and assessment process

RPL for Research-Based Activities can be claimed for the following Research-Based Activities only:

- a) Research Methodology Academic Module (as per Section 6.2)
- b) Research Proposal
- c) RS5.1 – Original Research Publication – Scimago Q1/Q2 Journal
- d) RS5.2 – Original Research Publication – Lower Rank/Peer Reviewed Journal
- e) RS5.5 – First Author in Non-Peer Reviewed Publication

The applicant must complete the relevant ACSEP RPL Application Form and attach evidence to support the RPL application such as a published paper, academic transcript, certificate of course completion and course syllabus, and email the application to research@acsep.org.au. The application will be assessed by the Research Committee. The recommendation will require approving authority from the Training Committee. The applicant will be advised of the outcome via email.

If the application is approved for a PhD, the applicant will be deemed to have completed all Training Program Research-Based Activity requirements except presentation of completed research at the ACSEP Annual Scientific Conference. The applicant will be deemed to have completed the Research Methodology Academic Module.

If the application is approved for a Masters degree by research, the applicant will be deemed to have completed all Training Program Research-Based Activity requirements except completion of the Research Methodology Academic Module and presentation of completed research at the ACSEP Annual Scientific Conference. The applicant is still required to complete the Research Methodology Academic Module and present completed research at the ACSEP Annual Scientific Conference.

If the application is approved for a research project external to a PhD or Masters degree by research, the applicant will be deemed to have completed Training Program Research-Based Activity requirements as per the following for the following Research Based Activities:

- a) *RS5.1 – Original Research Publication – Scimago Q1/Q2 Journal*: The applicant will be deemed to have completed all Training Program Research-Based Activity requirements except completion of the Research Methodology Academic Module and presentation of completed research at the ACSEP Annual Scientific Conference. The applicant is still required



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to complete the Research Methodology Academic Module and present completed research at the ACSEP Annual Scientific Conference.

- b) *RS5.2 – Original Research Publication – Lower Rank/Peer Reviewed Journal*: The applicant will be deemed to have completed Research-Based Activity RS5.2 only. All other Research-Based Activity requirements must be completed.
- c) *RS5.5 – First Author in Non-Peer Reviewed Publication*: The applicant will be deemed to have completed Research-Based Activity RS5.2 only. All other Research-Based Activity requirements must be completed.

If the application is not approved, the applicant must complete the Training Program Research-Based Activity requirements.

6.3.3 Fees for application

No fees apply for applications for *RS5.2 – Original Research Publication – Lower Rank/Peer Reviewed Journal*, or *RS5.5 – First Author Non-Peer Reviewed Publication*. Fees apply for applications for a PhD, Masters degree by research, or research project meeting the requirements of *RS5.1 – Original Research Publication – Q1/Q2 Journal*. Applicants should consult the latest ACSEP fee schedule for fees. If the application is approved for a PhD, the applicant must be the Academic Module application fee for the Research Methodology Academic Module as per section 6.2.3 of this policy.

6.4 Recognition of Specialty Experience

6.4.1 Prior experience details

In addition to the eligibility criteria in Section 3, to be eligible to apply for RPL under Recognition of Specialty Experience:

- a) The specialty experience must have been completed in a specialist medical education training program in which the College it has been completed in has responsibility for specialist training, or after receiving Fellowship from a specialist medical education training program in which the College it has been completed in has responsibility for specialist training.
- b) The experience must meet equivalency of Training Program requirements, including location, responsibility and supervision requirements, and adhere to the principles of RPL under Section 4.



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- c) The specialty experience must be completed no more than five years prior to commencement of the Training Program.

6.4.2 Application and assessment process

The applicant must complete the relevant ACSEP RPL Application Form and attach evidence to support the RPL application, including a completed curriculum mapping tool and email the application to registrars@acsep.org.au. The application will be assessed by the Training Committee and any other relevant committees on a case-by-case basis and the applicant will be advised of the outcome via email.

If the application is approved in its entirety, the applicant will be deemed to have satisfied the Training Program requirement. If the application is partially approved, the applicant will be deemed to have satisfied some of the Training Program requirements the RPL is request for and the applicant must complete any remaining Training Program requirements.

If the application is not approved, the applicant must complete the Training Program requirement.

6.4.3 Fees for application

An application fee applies. Applicants should consult the latest ACSEP fee schedule for fee information.

7. Policy Responsibilities

7.1 Exceptional or Special Circumstances

The ACSEP acknowledges that exceptional circumstances may arise which impact on an individual's ability to submit their application prior to due dates or otherwise comply with the principles or eligibility criteria of this policy. In an exceptional circumstance, an application for special consideration must be provided by the applicant (or delegate thereof) in writing to the relevant committee, as promptly as the circumstance permits. For further information please refer to *P023 - Special Consideration Policy*.



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7.2 Complaints and Appeals Process

It is the policy of the ACSEP that any adverse feedback (written or verbal) from membership or external personnel about college policy or procedures will be followed up on and investigated thoroughly as per the most current version of *P002 - Grievance Policy and Procedure*. There is a reconsideration, review and appeals process available should an applicant remain dissatisfied with an eligible decision, as outlined in *P019 - Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy*.

7.3 Reporting

No additional reporting outside of this policy is required.

7.4 Records Management

Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in a recognised ACSEP record keeping system as per *P012 - Records Management Policy* and associated procedures. The ACSEP complies to the principles of protecting the privacy of data and documents as set out in *P004 - Privacy Policy* and associated procedures. Any third-party providers are required to comply with the Australian Privacy Principles outlined in the Privacy Act 1988.

7.5 Related Legislation and Documents

- ASCEP Training Manual and Curriculum – the most current online version
- *P002 - Grievance Policy and Procedure*
- *P023 - Special Consideration Policy*
- *P019 - Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy*
- *P004 - Privacy Policy*
- *P012 - Records Management Policy*

7.6 Compliance, monitoring and review

The ACSEP Registrar and Training Coordinator, ASCEP Research Officer, ACSEP Training Committee, ACSEP Research Committee, ACSEP Zone Training Coordinators and ACSEP Clinical Training Supervisors are each responsible for ensuring that these procedures are followed, and this policy will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated regularly for changes by the National Office and ACSEP CEO and ACSEP Board.



7.7 Feedback

ACSEP staff may provide feedback about this document by emailing nationaloffice@acsep.org.au

8. Approval and Review Details

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	ACSEP CEO and ACSEP Board of Directors
Advisor or Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	ACSEP Education Committee, ACSEP Research Sub-Committee & ACSEP Training Sub-Committee
Policy Administrator	ACSEP Policy Officer
Next Review Date	February 2026

Approval and Amendment History	
Original Approval Authority	October 9 th 2018
Effective Date	November 21 st 2018
Amendment Authority and Date	19/2/24 – Updated by Training Program Manager & Policy Officer; redraft reviewed by Education Committee & Board 8/1/19 - Researched and redrafted by ACSEP Policy and Systems Administrator; Redraft reviewed by the ACSEP CEO and COO Amendment authority: Board Executive
Notes:	19/2/24 – Amendments were clarification of eligibility criteria, further specificity around Recognition of Specialty Experience and ensuring consistency with Training Program requirements (e.g., Research-Based Activity Training Program requirements). 8/1/19 - Amendment was the inclusion of Table 4 ‘Recognition of Specialty Experience’ and associated points throughout the policy as well as addition of the section <i>Principles of RPL</i> . 8/10/19 – Amendment to specialty training to include consideration of RPL for Sporting Teams or Sporting Events only.



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