

Subspecialties Scholarly Elective Policy

Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG/ College) policy and procedures for the Scholarly Elective requirement for RANZCOG Subspecialty trainees. This policy applies to trainees on the pathway to certification in a Subspecialty of RANZCOG.

Policy

The scholarly elective is the research component of the subspecialty training programs. Every subspecialty trainee must complete a scholarly elective by either the research or non-research stream option.

1. Eligibility for research or non-research streams

Gynaecological Oncology (CGO), and Urogynaecology (CU) subspecialty trainees are only eligible to apply for the research stream. Maternal Fetal Medicine (CMFM), Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility (CREI) and Obstetric and Gynaecological Ultrasound (COGU) subspecialty trainees are eligible to apply for either the research or non-research stream option.

2. Research Stream

Trainees who commenced their training prior to 1 December 2018 are required to submit a research project for assessment within two (2) years of completion of the clinical component of subspecialty training and obtain a satisfactory assessment of the research project within three (3) years of completion of the clinical component of subspecialty training. Failure to achieve a satisfactory assessment of a research project will result in a recommendation for removal from the training program.

Trainees who commenced their training after 1 December 2018 are required to submit a research project for assessment within one (1) year of completion of the clinical component of subspecialty training and obtain a satisfactory assessment of the research project within three (3) years of completion of the clinical component of subspecialty training. Failure to achieve a satisfactory assessment of a research project will result in a recommendation for removal from the training program.

2.1 Prospective Approval of a Research Proposal

Trainees must submit a research proposal with the first Six-monthly Summative Assessment Report and, if necessary, a detailed proposal with ethics approval. This must be submitted at the end of 46 weeks of full-time equivalent subspecialty training within the approved timeframe for submission of training documents.

Trainees must nominate a research supervisor, who may be their training supervisor; the relevant Subspecialty Committee must approve this appointment. Progress reports must be submitted with

training documentation at the end of each relevant six-monthly training period and every six (6) months following completion of the clinical component of subspecialty training.

Following approval, any amendments to the research proposal must be submitted on the appropriate form for approval by the relevant Subspecialty Committee.

2.2 Assessment of Research

The assessment will be conducted by at least two (2) independent assessors; at least one (1) of the assessors must be located in a state other than the trainees.

2.2.1 Published Research

A Research Stream Proposal prospectively approved by the trainee's relevant Subspecialty Committee, which has been published or accepted for publication in ANZJOG or any other journal (with an impact factor of ≥ 2) will not need further assessment. However, it must still be submitted to the relevant Subspecialty Committee.

2.2.2. Conflicting Assessor Outcomes

If the study is assessed as '*not satisfactory but suitable for resubmission*' by both assessors, the Trainee's nominated research supervisor will assist the candidate in revising the paper. The revised paper must be resubmitted within six (6) calendar months of notification of the result. The resubmitted study will be assessed by the original assessors.

If the assessors submit differing assessments a third assessor will be appointed by the relevant subspecialty Chair, who will assess the study without seeing the comments of the original assessors. The assessment of the third assessor will be the final assessment for the Research Stream Proposal.

2.2.2.1. Minor Revisions

If the assessors submit differing assessments with *minor revisions*, the Trainee's nominated research supervisor will assist the candidate in revising the paper. The revised paper must be resubmitted within six (6) calendar months of notification of the result. The resubmitted study will be assessed by the original assessors.

2.2.2.2. Major Revisions

If the assessors submit differing assessments with *major revisions*, the relevant Subspecialty Committee Research Lead will appoint a third assessor who will assess the study without seeing the comments of the original assessors. The assessment of the third assessor will be the final assessment for the Research Stream Proposal.

If the assessors submit differing assessments for a resubmitted study, a third assessor will be appointed by the relevant Subspecialty Committee Chair. The third assessor will assess the study without seeing the comments of the original assessors. The assessment of the third assessor will be taken as the final assessment for the Research Stream proposal.

2.2.3. Second Unsatisfactory Submission

If the study is assessed as unsatisfactory for a second time, the relevant Subspecialty Committee will review the result. The relevant Chair will provide a report on the Study and its assessments for the full Subspecialties Committee.

A recommendation will be forwarded to the Chair of the Examination and Assessment Committee about an appropriate course of action. The final decision on the most appropriate course of action

will be made by the Chair of the Examination and Assessment Committee in consultation with the Chair of the relevant Subspecialty Committee.

Appeals against decisions of the relevant subspecialty committee shall be heard according to the current College Appeals Procedures.

2.3. Completion of Research Stream

The scholarly elective will be judged to have been satisfactorily completed when the Research Stream paper that reports on the research is assessed as having satisfactorily met the criteria listed on the assessment form. In all cases, the assessment of satisfactory completion rests with the relevant Subspecialty Committee.

2.4. Recognition of Prior Research

A formal higher research degree qualification in an area relevant to the subspecialty may be approved as meeting the requirement for satisfactory completion of the Research Stream of the scholarly elective. However, trainees to whom this applies must be actively involved in ongoing clinical research within their training unit.

3. Non- Research stream

3.1. Prospective Approval for Non-Research stream

Trainees must submit an application with the first Six-monthly Summative Assessment Report of their intended Non-Research Stream option to be approved by the relevant subspecialty committee. Progress reports must be submitted with training documentation at the end of each relevant six-monthly training period and every six (6) months following completion of the clinical component of subspecialty training. Amendments to the proposed course must be submitted on the appropriate form for approval by the relevant Subspecialty Committee.

To be considered for Prospective Approval, the minimum requirements for the Non-Research Stream option must meet the following requirements:

- The course must progressively build on any previous RANZCOG training and have future vocational relevance
- There must be no repetition of previous content and/or training
- Limited to one course of study (not a combination of several courses)
- The course submitted must be recognised at a Tertiary Institute or Professional College in Australia or New Zealand.

3.2. Assessment

All trainees who have elected the Non-Research scholarly elective must complete their course/study within three (3) years of completion of the clinical component of subspecialty training. Trainees are required to submit progress reports at six (6) month intervals until successful completion of the course. If the Non-Research stream course/study is not completed satisfactorily within the required timeframe, the relevant Subspecialty Committee will review the result, and provide a recommendation on the trainee's progress for the full Subspecialties Committee and the trainee may be recommended for removal from the training program.

To satisfactorily complete the Non-Research Stream training requirement, all trainees must submit evidence of completion of the prospectively approved course. Evidence of completion will be approved by the relevant Subspecialty Committee. In all cases, the assessment of satisfactory completion rests with the relevant Subspecialty Committee.

All assessment related components of the Non-Research Stream will be independent of RANZCOG and will rest solely with the institution with whom the training is conducted.

3.3. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Where a course equivalent to that required in the non-research stream has been completed prior to commencing Subspeciality Training, it may be recognised and approved as meeting the requirement for satisfactory completion of the Non-Research Stream of the scholarly elective.

To be considered for Recognition, the course must meet the following criteria:

- The course must have future vocational relevance
- Limited to one course of study (not a combination of several courses)
- The course of study must be recognised at a Tertiary Institute or Professional College.
- Assessments for all RPL in the non-research stream will be sanctioned by the relevant Subspecialty Committee.

4. Related RANZCOG documents

- RANZCOG Regulations
- Exceptional Circumstances and Special Consideration Policy and Procedure
- Code of Conduct
- Reconsideration, Review and Appeal of Decisions Policy

Version	Date of Version	Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision
Version 1	November 2024	extract from regulation

Policy Version:	Version 1
Policy Owner:	Education Directorate
Policy Approved by:	RANZCOG Board
Review of Policy:	November 2024