

Statement of Intent

Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) and Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators (RACMA)

June 2022

RACS and RACMA have a shared commitment to providing high quality training, education and experience in the practice of surgery and leadership and management of the health system. This commitment is underpinned by our shared objective of ensuring patient safety and delivery of quality frontline services. RACMA as a specialist medical college in medical leadership and management has a shared interest with RACS in promoting healthcare cultures of safety and respect, and effectively managing issues of unprofessional conduct including discrimination, bullying, racism and sexual harassment.

The parties intend to:

- A. Explore methods to mutually support each other in activities that promote respect, and counter unprofessional conduct including discrimination, bullying, racism and sexual harassment in the practice of surgery and improve patient safety. This includes support of the goals of RACS Building Respect, Improving Patient Safety Action Plan (2022). These are shown at Attachment 1.
- B. Encourage an approach to advancing professionalism in healthcare such as the Vanderbilt Principles (shown at Attachment 2), as a basis for promoting respectful behaviour and dealing with unprofessional conduct such as discrimination, bullying, racism and sexual harassment in healthcare workplaces.
- C. Share information regarding the education and training available in the respective institutions in relation to promoting respect, and countering unprofessional conduct, including discrimination, bullying, racism and sexual harassment in workplaces and training environments.
- D. Collaborate on the development of programs and processes to deal with unprofessional conduct including discrimination, bullying, racism and sexual harassment in the workplace, in surgery and in the health sector generally, to the extent appropriate.
- E. Work together to support standards for accreditation of training posts in health facilities, to ensure that they appropriately facilitate health care cultures of safety and respect and address unprofessional conduct including discrimination, bullying, racism and sexual harassment in the workplace, in order to provide a safe training and educational environment for trainees.
- F. Facilitate greater diversity within the medical profession by building cultural competence and safety, whilst continuing to strive for gender equity in our respective workforces.
- G. Advocate that employers demonstrate a commitment to enabling flexible (less-than-full-time) training options for Trainees.

- H. Support arrangements to ensure that medical leaders, managers, doctors and trainees are able to undertake required training and education in relation to promoting respect, and addressing unprofessional conduct, including discrimination, bullying, racism and sexual harassment including in relation to clinical training supervision, skills courses and general courses.
- I. Work together to ensure that medical leadership, managers, supervisors and surgical supervisors have the necessary skills and attributes and are supported to provide training, assessment, feedback and support to RACS and RACMA Trainees and Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) in culturally safe ways and which are free of discrimination, bullying, racism and sexual harassment.

This Statement of Intent does not create legally binding obligations, unless the parties explicitly agree otherwise.

Signed for and on behalf of RACS by:

Sally Langley
.....
Signature of authorised representative

Sally Langley
.....
Full Name of authorised representative

President
.....
Position of authorised representative

Date: *17 JUNE 2022*
.....

Signed for and on behalf of RACMA by:

H Parson
.....
Signature of authorised representative

Helen Parsons
.....
Full Name of authorised representative

President
.....
Position of authorised representative

Date: *17 June 2022*
.....

Attachment 1

Goals: RACS Building Respect, Improving Patient Safety Action Plan: from Awareness to Action, 2022

This report of RACS' Expert Advisory Group (DBSH) 2022 outlines 9 goals arranged under 3 strategic pillars. as follows.

Cultural Change and Leadership

1. Enrich the culture of surgery through professionalism, respect and civility, applied in all professional roles, including within the College.
2. Advance system-wide cultural change by strengthening relationships of trust, confidence and cooperation with employers, medical colleges, governments and their agencies.
3. Foster cultural safety and diversity, striving for gender equity and the identification and elimination of racism and other forms of discrimination.
4. Develop and apply compassionate and collaborative leadership in surgery consistent with RACS values, to advance culture change.
5. Contemporise RACS governance.

Surgical Education

6. Build and consolidate professionalism and civility and embed a culture of respect and collaboration in surgical education.
7. Improve the capability and effectiveness of all surgeons involved in surgical education and training, through a continued focus on professionalism, civility and respect.

Accountability and Complaints Management

8. Normalise constructive feedback and speaking up as cornerstones of continuous improvement, to help build a culture of respect.
9. Build trust and confidence in RACS revised complaints and feedback process for end stage issue resolution.

Attachment 2

An approach to promoting professionalism in healthcare: The Vanderbilt Principles

The Vanderbilt Principles are summarised as follows:

- Making a commitment by leadership of the organisation
- Aligning the mission, goals and values of organisations to support respectful workplace behaviours
- Providing surveillance tools to monitor and provide reports on behaviours in clinical and educational areas
- Putting processes in place to review these reports and monitor progress
- Establishing a graduated scale of interventions where discrimination, bullying, or sexual harassment occurs
- Making leadership training and education available to all involved
- Providing resources to address inappropriate behaviour, and
- Providing resources to support those affected by discrimination, bullying, and sexual harassment.

This summary of the Vanderbilt Principles is taken from Hickson GB, Pichert JW, Webb LE, Gabbe SG. A complementary approach to promoting professionalism: identifying, measuring and addressing unprofessional behaviours. Acad Med 2007 Nov (82) 11: 1040 – 8.
