

Deferment, Taking Leave and Withdrawal/Resignation from Fellowship Training Program

POLICY

Policy for Deferment, Taking Leave and Withdrawal/Resignation from Fellowship Training Program

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Approved By: Education and Training Committee and RACMA Board

1. Purpose

The College recognises there may be circumstances when a Candidate is required to seek interrupted training and apply for Leave or to defer from the RACMA Fellowship Training Program. It is assumed such interruption from training is temporary and the Candidate will return to their studies.

The policy is supported by procedures which will be implemented in all cases where a Candidate applies for interrupted leave from the RACMA training program. The Policy sets out conditions for applications for and taking Leave.

2. Scope and Definitions

The Policy applies to all Candidates in the RACMA Fellowship Training Program. The Policy refers to three categories of Leave:

2.1 Deferment

Applicants who have been accepted into the Fellowship Training Program, but have not yet commenced their training, must apply in writing to the College to defer the commencement of their training for a maximum period of up to a 24 months' cumulative period. Application for a deferment from the training program will 'reserve' a place in Candidacy for commencement in the following year.

An application for Deferment requires payment of a Fee. Special circumstances may be considered for an exemption from a deferral fees and such requests should be addressed in writing to the Chief Executive. Deferral Fee is aligned to the College fee structure for the financial year (as displayed on RACMA website).

2.2 Applying for Leave from the Fellowship Training Program Training

Candidates who commenced with RACMA and are already undertaking the RACMA Fellowship Training Program (FTP) may apply for Leave from the program due to specific reasons (illness, family commitments, work relocations, loss of a training post, military service etc).

RACMA's academic year is aligned to AHPRA's definition of the academic year, of 47 weeks in duration. This excludes annual leave and sick leave but includes 2 weeks of professional development time.

Under sections 5.5 and 9.3 of the RACMA Constitution, Candidates applying for Leave must continue to pay their annual membership fees.

Under the Regulation for Eligibility for RACMA Pre-Fellowship Exams, Candidates may take Leave from their training for a maximum cumulative period of TWO years, after which time they will be required to recommence training and complete their training program within the specified maximum period of 8 years. Those who wish to discontinue from the FTP, will need to withdraw from the training with RACMA.

Note: As long as Candidates remain in the Fellowship Training Program and are not placed on Leave, Candidacy and College Fees will be incurred. As Candidates will pay College membership fees those who are applying for Leave from their training will not be charged Leave Fees.

2.3 Withdrawal or resignation from the Fellowship Training Program

Those Candidates wishing to withdraw/resign from the RACMA training will need to advise the College in writing. Payment of any outstanding Candidacy Fees is required prior to confirmation of withdrawal from the FTP by the College.

Candidates wishing to withdraw from the FTP will resign from the College as members and will no longer maintain membership status. Candidates may consider applying to AFRACMA membership status, subject to them meeting the eligibility criteria to transfer to and receive the award of AFRACMA (see Regulation for Candidate Transfer to AFRACMA). Candidates should seek further advice from the National Office.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Candidates

Candidates are to notify the College in writing (hard and soft copies are acceptable) of the request for deferral, Leave and withdrawal. Applications for Leave should be submitted within 28 days prior to going on leave to the FTP Coordinator at the National Office using the relevant application form (available on RACMA website or seek assistance from the National Office).

Candidates have a responsibility to advise their supervisor and preceptor that they will be taking Leave from RACMA Candidacy for the period of time they are applying for. As the time towards training will not be counted while on deferment or Leave, Candidates will not be able to:

- Participate in any FTP training activities provided by the College or by Jurisdictions
- Submit any assessment tasks as part of the FTP requirements during this period
- Count the period of medical management practice or time in training in supervision
- Participate in the Preceptorship

Candidates returning to RACMA training before the expiration of their approved Leave period will be required to provide the following:

- A written request to the National Office at least ONE month before the return date
- Supporting documentation outlining the reasons for the request (this may be associated with securing a new training post/change of employment or a change in family circumstances enabling earlier return to the candidacy training)

3.2 The College

Applications for Leave should be signed off by Supervisor and Preceptor. The National Office will acknowledge the request for Deferral or Leave in writing within 2 – 5 working days after receiving the request, and advise the College stakeholders as required (Preceptors, Jurisdictional Coordinators of Training (JCT) and the Candidates Advisory Committee).

If Candidates who are taking leave require remediation, the JCT will address these via discussions of support mechanisms with the National Education and Training Manager and Candidates' Preceptors or Executive Coach and/or Supervisor.

If there are exceptional circumstances (medical illness, family illness, tragedy), such application(s) may be escalated to the CEO or the Board, and the College may request more supporting information for the Leave application.

4. Policy

- The maximum period of Leave is two (2) years cumulative, but only twelve (12) months' of Leave can be approved at any one time. Only in exceptional circumstances will a Candidate who has already been granted 2 years cumulative leave will be allowed to request further extension. This is to be approved by the CEO and Jurisdictional Coordinator of Training.
- Candidates have an option to appeal such decisions (see section 6). However, the College view is that training should not be interrupted for more than 12-24 months as it will significantly affect the Candidate's learning process.
- Candidates applying for Leave due to medical reasons (illness, carer or family leave) may do so at any time if supported by appropriate paperwork (medical certificates). Candidates must inform the College in writing and complete the Leave application form accompanied by relevant fees.
- A Candidate re-commencing training following a period of Leave is required to complete whatever training requirements are/were applicable or outstanding at the time of the commencement of training and will not have this time accredited nor be subject to Recognition of Prior Learning and experience (RPLE).
- The College's approval of Leave from RACMA Candidacy does not compel an employer to grant leave from their position. Candidates should liaise with their employer regarding leave from their employment. RACMA may request a letter of support from Candidate's employer if the reason for wishing to take leave is due to work reasons.

- Candidates taking Leave will be required to take up additional training time upon return to the FTP in order to meet the minimum of three (47 weeks x 3) full time equivalent years of time in training in Medical Management Practice under supervision as a pre-requisite for election for Fellowship.
- Candidates who exceed the permitted maximum of TWO cumulative years' Leave period or deferred allowance from the FTP without notification to and authorisation from the College will be in breach of candidacy status. Candidates may be suspended from the FTP and will be required to submit a new Application for Candidacy should they wish to return to the FTP with RACMA.
- If there are special circumstances where Leave needs to be extended beyond the 2 year maximum requirement, due to illness, parental or emergent Leave, the College may come to some arrangement with the Candidate and/or his employer to allow for any extenuating circumstances around extended Leave period. This will need to be supported by relevant certificates, documentation and/or evidence from the Candidate and/or employer.

5. Privacy

Candidates may be taking leave from their workplace and their application for Leave may need to be supported by the employer. It may be necessary for RACMA to collect personal information from Candidates applying for Leave. In accordance with the Privacy Act 198 (Cth) (Australia) and the privacy Act 1993 (NZ), RACMA will not disclose personal information about the Candidate except for the purpose authorised by this policy.

6. Appeals

An appeals process is available to Candidates should they wish to apply for reconsideration, review and/or appeal of the decisions relating to requests for Leave from the FTP. These may be reconsidered, reviewed or appealed in accordance with the Policy for Reconsideration, Review and Appeal of Decisions of the College Committees and Officers.

The request for reconsideration, review or appeal must be made in writing directly to the CEO within 14 days of the decision, outlining the reasons for disagreement, if applicable, or reasons for needing to take further Leave/Deferral that exceeds a two year cumulative period. On undertaking a review, the College may request or seek additional information.

7. Relevant Documents

Regulation for Definition of a College Academic Year

Eligibility to sit the RACMA Pre-Fellowship Oral Examinations

Policy for Supervised Practice in the RACMA Fellowship Training Program

Policy for Reconsideration, Review and Appeal of Decisions of the College Committees and Officers

Regulation for Candidate Transfer to AFRACMA

The National Employment Standards (Fair Work Act 2009) - www.fairwork.gov.au

RACMA Constitution

