

<b>Authorising Committee/ Department:</b>	Education Committee
<b>Responsible Committee/ Department:</b>	Scholarly Project Subcommittee
<b>Document Code:</b>	<b>POL PRC EDT-TRN Scholarly Project Exemption Pathway Policy and Procedure</b>

### Scholarly Project Assessment Pathways

The requirements of the Scholarly Project Assessment can be completed through either of the following avenues:

- By submission of a Scholarly Project undertaken as part of the RANZCP Fellowship Program.
- By applying for an exemption if trainees can demonstrate that they have achieved the necessary assessment requirements through a different scholarly activity.
- This policy on 'Scholarly Project Exemption Pathway' only makes reference to the requirements of the exemption pathway avenue.

The 'Scholarly Project' pathway that requires trainees to undertake a Scholarly Project as part of their RANZCP Training is covered in a separate policy.

### Contents

#### 1. Policy on the Scholarly Project Exemption Pathway

This policy sets out the requirements of the Scholarly Project Exemption Pathway, an alternative pathway to meet Scholarly Project requirements, which is a centrally administered assessment component of the RANZCP Fellowship Program that trainees must successfully complete in order to be eligible for RANZCP Fellowship.

#### 2. Policy statement

The Scholarly Project has been designed to help trainees meet the Fellowship Competencies, particularly in the CanMEDS Framework role of Scholar.

The objective of the Scholarly Project assessment task is for trainees to be able to demonstrate their ability to contribute to the development of knowledge in the area of psychiatry or mental health through the submission of a Scholarly Project that has been completed using an appropriate research methodology and investigative approach.

For a Scholarly Project exemption application to be successful, trainees will need to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes related to the role of the Scholar to the standard required of the Scholarly Project submission. These include, but are not limited to:

- Describe principles of critical appraisal and research methodology and critically evaluate academic material (mapped to Stage 1).
- Demonstrate knowledge of research methodologies and applies principles of critical appraisal and research methodology (mapped to Stage 2).
- Contribute to the development of knowledge in the area of mental health via scholarly activities (mapped to Stage 3).

### 3. Purpose

The successful completion of a RANZCP approved Scholarly Project is a requirement of the RANZCP Fellowship Program.

Alternatively, trainees can submit prior scholarly work for assessment. This document sets out the policy for meeting the requirements of Scholarly Project through the alternative 'Exemption pathway'. This policy ensures transparency in the expectation and assessment of the Scholarly Project assessment completed through the exemption pathway.

### 4. Policy and procedure details

The purpose of this document is to outline the policy and procedure of the Scholarly Project Exemption Pathway and its expectations under the RANZCP Fellowship Regulations 2012.

#### 4.1 Requirements of the Exemption Pathway

This is an additional avenue for completing the Scholarly Project requirement that can be accessed during training.

Trainees may be exempt from undertaking a Scholarly Project if they have:

- completed a doctoral thesis, Masters thesis or Honours thesis in a field relevant to psychiatry or mental health within the past 10 years (with respect to the submission closing date)
- had an article of which they were a major author (see definition in point 6.4) published in a recognised peer-reviewed English-language journal relevant to psychiatry or mental health within the past 10 years (with respect to the submission closing date).

##### 4.1.1 Standard

The standard of performance required for the Exemption pathway is that expected from the Scholarly Project submission. The Scholarly Project submissions are assessed at the standard expected at the end of Stage 3, which is operationalised as that of a formal scientific report (see section 4.1.1 of *Scholarly Project Policy and Procedure*).

Trainees must pass the Scholarly Project assessment to be eligible for Fellowship. See the [Progression through Training Policy \(6.1\)](#) for more information on submission deadlines.

##### 4.1.2 Learning Outcomes

Scholarly Project submissions for the exemption pathway will need to demonstrate that the learning outcomes of the RANZCP Fellowship program as given in Section 2 above have been met. Submitted work must include a critical appraisal of the literature, formulation of a scholarly question or hypothesis, hypothesis testing, appropriate research methodology, presentation and discussion of results.

### 5. Types of exemption submissions

Trainees can apply for the exemption pathway in order to complete the Scholarly Project assessment requirement of the Fellowship Program if, within the past 10 years:

- They have completed a Doctoral thesis, Masters thesis or Honours thesis in a field relevant to psychiatry or mental health. If the thesis has been submitted in a different academic discipline, a decision will be made about the relevance of the topic to

psychiatry or mental health, and if deemed sufficiently relevant, it will be assessed for possible exemption.

A project completed in an undergraduate medical degree (including postgraduate entry degrees) will not be accepted for exemption, unless it can be demonstrated it was completed as a part of a separate research-specific year.

- They have had an article relevant to psychiatry or mental health of which they were a major author published in a recognised peer-reviewed English-language journal.
- They have demonstrated competency with a substantially comparable project relevant to psychiatry or mental health.

In addition to meeting the above basic eligibility criteria for applying for the exemption pathway, the submitted work must demonstrate that the standard set for the Scholarly Project exemption has been met (*see Sections 4.1.1 and 7.1*) in order to successfully complete the Scholarly Project assessment: thus, submissions under the categories above will not automatically qualify for exemption.

## 6. Application for exemptions

Trainees are required to submit the Application for Exemption Form via email to [Scholarly.Exemption@ranzcp.org](mailto:Scholarly.Exemption@ranzcp.org) with all the relevant required electronic versions of documentation and exemption fee.

A Trainee cannot submit an application for exemption if they have submitted a Scholarly Project for marking and are yet to receive a result (e.g. only one assessment pathway can be utilised at any one time).

Trainees who decide to apply for the exemption pathway after obtaining approval for their Scholarly Project proposal for that project, must formally withdraw their Scholarly Project proposal before they can apply for the exemption pathway.

- Candidates must write to the BTC to officially withdraw the proposal and state their intention to proceed with the exemption pathway.
- Once formally approved, the BTC should inform the College about the withdrawal, so that the College can progress the trainee's exemption application.

If an article has previously been assessed for an exemption, the article cannot be resubmitted for exemption by the same or a different trainee. If multiple trainees co-authored an article, and wish to seek exemption for the same article, they must submit a joint application contemporaneously.

In instances where any trainee subsequently joining the training program requests exemption at a later date, based on a particular published article, the Scholarly Project subcommittee will consider the circumstances of the second submission on case-by-case basis. The usual co-authorship requirements as stated above regarding individual contributions of co-authors will apply.

Trainees may not submit more than four items for consideration per application form.

Applications for exemption are valid for 12 months from the date of submission.

### 6.1 Applications based on prior study

Trainees are required to submit electronic versions of certified copies of their academic record (or alternative official correspondence from the institution) certifying successful completion of the degree.

In line with section 5 above, a project completed in an undergraduate medical degree (including postgraduate entry degrees) will not be accepted for exemption, unless it can be demonstrated it was completed as a part of a separate research-specific year.

Trainees are required to submit an electronic copy of their full thesis.

If submitting prior study that was completed in a language other than English, the required documentation must be submitted with English translations prepared and signed by the translator. The translator's identification number or seal, printed name, address, telephone number and signature must appear on each translated page.

- If the translation is made in Australia, the translator must be accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).
- If the translation is made in New Zealand, the translator must be a member of the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI).
- If the translation is made outside Australia or New Zealand, the translator must be approved by an authority in the country where the translation is made.

## 6.2 Applications based on previous publications

Trainees are required to submit an electronic copy of their article. If not already published, a certified copy of the letter of acceptance for publication.

If a trainee was not the **sole author**, they must submit a signed statement which provides comprehensive detail about their contribution to each domain of the project, as per the authorship requirements specified. This statement must be co-signed by another author.

In addition, if a trainee was not the **first author**, they will need to submit a letter from the first author which confirms and details the trainee's contribution to each domain of the project.

The trainee must submit a declaration statement that this project has not been submitted to the College before; this is inclusive of exemption applications with multiple authors.

## 6.3 Applications based on substantially comparable projects

Exemption may be granted where the trainee has demonstrated competency with a substantially comparable project. These submissions must also demonstrate that the standard set for Scholarly Project exemption has been met. Trainees should also provide a brief statement as to the reasons why they consider the project to be substantially comparable to scholarly project.

The project must be relevant to psychiatry or mental health and must have been completed within the past 10 years in order to be eligible for exemption.

## 7. Submission and Assessment of the Scholarly Project submissions via the exemption pathway

Trainees must submit their Scholarly Project submissions for the exemption pathway via the Examinations Department at the RANZCP head office, which will delegate the review and assessment of individual submissions to suitably experienced Fellows.

Fellows cannot adjudicate an exemption submission where they have a conflict of interest.

Scholarly Project exemption application may be submitted for assessment at any time; however, the Scholarly Project Subcommittee will assess the application and release results in designated time periods as specified on the RANZCP website. For trainees to have their

projects assessed in a designated marking period, applications must be received by the Examinations Department by 5.00 pm (Melbourne time) on the relevant submission cut-off date.

Trainees must be actively training or on an approved break in training in order to be eligible to submit their exemption application. Trainees who have interrupted their training without approval for a break in training are considered to be not in training as per the Leave and Interruptions to Training Policy (23.1) and are not eligible to complete or submit their application during that time.

Trainees who are not in an approved break in training, will need to either re-enter active training or have an approved break in training before being eligible to submit a Scholarly Project exemption

A trainee's status will be assessed in line with the relevant final submission date as per the published examination timetable.

- Submissions received after the relevant cut-off date will be held over until the next submission date.
- Submissions will not be processed without the electronic copy, payment or signed Submission Form. In these instances, the Scholarly Project submission will be returned by the College unmarked.
- Trainees who have co-authored an article must submit only one copy of the project with one submission form listing the details of each co-author. Each trainee must pay the exemption fee in full; therefore, each co-author must include their own payment details as well as a copy of their current medical registration with the submission.

Exemption applications that are submitted without the required supporting documentation will be returned unmarked.

## 7.1 Assessment criteria

Publication of an article or successful completion of a thesis while necessary, is not sufficient to meet the assessment criteria for the exemption pathway.

- *Journal word limits:* some journals have low word limits and the published article may not satisfy the requirement for the Scholarly Project. An accompanying report can be submitted with the published article to address the Scholarly Project requirements that are not demonstrated in the published article such as explaining what role the trainee undertook personally in the project or a more substantial literature review or discussion to meet Scholarly Project requirements. The assessment criteria given below can assist in addressing the Scholarly Project exemption requirements in the accompanying report. In some cases, university theses may also not meet the Scholarly Project requirements and may need accompanying documentation as well.
- *Journal type:* some journals welcome a range of article types, including those which reflect opinion rather than formal or empirical research methodology. Such pieces generally will not include the elements required to demonstrate that the requirements of the scholarly project assessment have been met.

Adjudicating Fellows will consider each submission (published article or university thesis along with accompanying report if needed) according to the criteria below. The criteria are the same for all types of exemption submissions.

- a) The submission meets the basic requirements of the exemption application submission as given in section 5.0.
  - Relevant to the field of psychiatry or mental health

- Completed/published in the last ten (10) years (with respect to the submission closing date)
  - If a prior study is submitted, it must be completed in English or has been translated into English (see section 6.1 above)
  - A published journal article must have been published in an English-language journal.
- b) The presentation and content are clear and concise.
- The general layout is clear and professional
  - Professional English is used with appropriate spelling and grammar
- c) Sufficient evidence of significant contribution as major author is provided – see section 6.2.
- d) There is a clear statement of the objectives of the submission.
- Where appropriate, hypotheses are well formulated and appropriate to the methodology.
- e) The literature review is comprehensive, contemporary and critical.
- f) All references cited in the text of the accompanying report are listed in an accepted reference style, e.g. Vancouver style
- g) The submission uses a systematic methodology (and analysis) suitable to its format. In case of publications that are based on case histories or clinical vignettes, there must be a minimum of three cases that are described and which have a unifying theme, similar to the requirement for the Scholarly Project submission.
- h) Relevant results are presented appropriately including generalizability of research findings.
- i) The discussion provides a concise summary of the main findings including:
- critical review of the methodology and methods used
  - statement about how the project contributes to the field.
- j) Conclusions relate to the research question and are supported by the project results.

Trainees who have published article in a peer-reviewed journal will not automatically receive exemption unless they also meet the criteria specified above.

## **7.2 Unsuccessful Scholarly Project exemption submission**

An unsuccessful Scholarly Project exemption application does not count as a failed submission and is not considered towards the three failed attempts allowed before a training review application is required.

## **7.3 Submissions not acceptable for the exemption pathway**

Trainees should be aware that there are types of submissions that are not acceptable for the exemption pathway. These include:

- Published articles in non-peer reviewed journals.

- Letter to the editor, opinion pieces or Conference presentations.
- Text book chapters.
- Published articles or any thesis not relevant to psychiatry and mental health.
- Articles published in peer-reviewed journals that are intended for a general, non-specialist clinical audience, unless the Scholarly Project Subcommittee is satisfied that they demonstrate sufficient scholarly rigour. For example, a summary of a clinical problem for General Practitioners without any methodology described as to which papers are summarised and where no critical appraisal is undertaken will not be acceptable.

## 7.4 Authorship

The trainee must be a major author of any Scholarly Project exemption submission with any assistance provided by any third party acknowledged formally.

The trainee must have made a substantial contribution to each of the following areas of the project:

- project design
- data collection
- analysis and interpretation of data
- writing of the manuscript.

For published papers submitted for Exemption the trainee, as a major author, should be the first author of the paper wherever possible or, if not the first author, should have their role in the piece of research referred to specifically in the body of the paper (e.g. authors AB and CD interviewed subjects and made DSM-5 diagnoses as per the study protocol) where the journal allows. Where there is inconsistency between any statements of co-authors tendered with Exemption submissions and the roles reported in the published article, the published version of the authors' role will be taken as the version of record.

### 7.4.1 Co-authorship and Co-research

Trainees may submit an exemption application where they have collaborated with other co-researchers on a shared project. Co-research typically involves major research projects or being part of other large projects.

Trainees may co-research a Scholarly Project with a person from another or the same discipline; however, the trainee must substantially contribute to all areas of the project as per the requirements in the section 6.4 above, and the trainee's role must be clearly articulated and detailed in the Scholarly Project Exemption publication proposal and exemption submission application.

If multiple trainees co-authored an article and wish to seek exemption for the same article, they must submit a joint exemption application contemporaneously. In instances where any trainee subsequently joining the training program requests exemption at a later date, based on a particular published article, the Scholarly Project subcommittee will consider the circumstances of the second submission on a case-by-case basis. The usual co-authorship requirements as stated above regarding individual contributions of co-authors will apply.

Trainees who co-author a shared Scholarly project exemption submission will be awarded the same result.

### **7.4.2 Signed Statement**

In the case of trainees being co-authors on a Scholarly Project exemption submission, the trainees must submit a signed joint statement detailing their respective contributions to the project.

Similarly, if a trainee works with other co-researchers, a signed statement from the principal researcher must be submitted detailing the trainee's contribution to the project.

## **8. Recognition of Prior Learning**

Trainees who have completed a project that they believe to be equivalent, in addition to the completion of other prior training, may apply for recognition of prior learning (RPL) in relation to the Scholarly Project no more than 6 months after the date on which they commence training in the RANZCP Fellowship Program (i.e. the day they start accruing accredited training time or start a break in training), in accordance with the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (14.1). As stated in that policy, RPL may be granted where it is confirmed that there is equivalency.

The Scholarly Project component of RPL applications submitted to the Committee for Training (CFT) will be reviewed by the Committee for Examinations to assess and advise whether the Scholarly Project component meets the exemption criteria and standard in accordance with this policy on Scholarly Project Exemption Pathway, before a final decision is reached on the RPL application.

## **9. Deadline**

The deadline for successfully completing the Scholarly Project is detailed in the Policy on Progression through Training (6.1). A brief reference to the requirements of the Policy on Progression through Training (6.1) and the Policy and Procedure on Failure to Progress (19.1) follow; however, trainees are responsible for knowing the requirements of these and other policies in full.

The Scholarly Project is expected to be attempted and passed by the time the trainee has completed 60 months' full-time equivalent (FTE) accredited training.

- Failure to do so will result in a requirement for the trainee to complete a targeted learning plan. Failure to complete the Scholarly Project by 72 FTE months will result in the requirement for the trainee to submit an application to the Committee for Training (CFT) for a training review as to why they should be able to continue towards Fellowship. Further detail, including information on exceptional cases, can be found in the Policy and Procedure on Failure to Progress (19.1).

## **10. Review of Decisions**

Any request by trainees for review of a decision in relation to an application for exemption should follow the formal education review process.

## **11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Education Committee (EC) shall implement, monitor and review this policy and report on anomalies and issues as these arise.

This policy will be reviewed biennially and updated as required.



## Associated Documents

1. Regulation: 13.1 Scholarly Project Education Training Regulation
2. Policy: 6.1 Progression through Training Education Training Policy  
19.1 Failure to Progress Education Training Policy and Procedure  
6.2 Targeted Learning Plans Education Training Policy and Procedure  
14.1 Recognition of Prior Learning Education Training Policy and Procedure  
18.2 Special Consideration Education Training Policy  
2.1 Reviews and Appeals Education Training Policy
3. Policy and Procedure: 13.1 Scholarly Project Policy and Procedure
4. Forms : Scholarly Project Proposal Forms  
Scholarly Project Submission Form  
Scholarly Project Assessment Framework  
Application for Exemption Form
5. Other: [‘Research in psychiatry’](#) page of the College website  
Examination timetable

## Revision Record

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27/3/2024	1.0	B2024/3 R20	New document Note this new document was developed from extracts from 13.1 Scholarly Project Policy V3.6 (approved 11/3/2020) and 13.1 Scholarly Project Procedure V4.4 (approved 29/11/2022). Both documents rescinded as of 27/3/2024.
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