

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This Early Resolution Policy and Procedure outlines the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) early resolution process, and the manner by which it facilitates resolution of complaints or challenges to education and training decisions.
- 1.2. The RANZCP is committed to fair and transparent decisions making, and efficiently resolving complaints by focusing on achieving practical and feasible outcomes and resolving matters in a timely manner, through prompt discussion, to ensure an expedient and efficient use of resources.

2. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION OF POLICY

- 2.1. Through this Policy and Procedure, the RANZCP strives for a supportive and transparent process for its members to ensure our educational processes are accountable and fair.
- 2.2. This Policy and Procedure applies to educational and training decisions as they relate to current and prospective trainees, specialist international medical graduates (SIMGs) and Fellows, and provides the opportunity to resolve complaints prior to accessing more formal review mechanisms.
- 2.3. Early resolution describes an approach which prioritises identifying and treating clear and simple complaints at an early stage. The RANZCP has adopted an early resolution assessment practice as it supports us to promptly and effectively deal with complaints.

3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. Our guiding principles when taking an early resolution approach are:
 - 3.1.1. Flexibility and timeliness.

Different approaches may be necessary for different types of complaint, and if a timely outcome is unlikely to be achieved through this early resolution process, it should not be used.
 - 3.1.2. Collaboration to informally pursue timely and practical outcomes.
 - 3.1.3. Opportunity to resolve a person's concerns. The RANZCP is committed to resolving matters to prevent the need to undertake more formal processes.

4. WHEN IS EARLY RESOLUTION APPLICABLE?

- 4.1. Early resolution will be available to trainees, SIMGs and fellows of the RANZCP, defined and referred to as 'Persons' throughout this Policy and Procedure.
- 4.2. An early resolution will occur if the:
 - 4.2.1. person has provided the complaint to the RANZCP in the prescribed manner (see section 5) and provided clearly identifiable reasons as to why an early resolution should occur; or
 - 4.2.2. complaint, or the matter it relates to, has been referred by an external organisation; or
 - 4.2.3. person is seeking a response from the RANZCP related to delay of a decision.

- 4.3. An early resolution will not occur if the:
 - 4.3.1. person is currently accessing, or has previously accessed the RANZCP *Review, Reconsideration and Appeals Policy and Procedure* in relation to the complaint or decision; and
 - 4.3.2. the complaint is not genuine, or is vexatious, frivolous and/or unreasonable.
- 4.4. Having regard to all the circumstances, the RANZCP may determine that a complaint has been made vexatiously or frivolously. When this determination is made, the RANZCP will notify the person that their complaint will not be eligible for early resolution on this basis.

5. HOW TO DISPUTE A DECISION

- 5.1. Persons unhappy with the outcome of a decision relating to training or assessment, or who wish to raise a complaint in relation to a training related matter, are encouraged to raise these issues at first instance with their supervisor, Director of Training or other relevant person.
- 5.2. Should the matter or complaint not be resolved, persons should raise the matter as soon as practicable with the relevant RANZCP Education Committee.
- 5.3. Early Resolution may be sought in relation to decisions made by Branch Training Committees (BTCs) and the New Zealand Training Committee, and committees that report directly to the Education Committee, including:
 - 5.3.1. The Committee for Specialist International Medical Graduate Education (CSIMGE);
 - 5.3.2. The Committee for Training (CFT);
 - 5.3.3. The Committee for Examinations (CFE);
 - 5.3.4. The Committee for Continuing Professional Development (CCPD);
 - 5.3.5. The Certificate of Postgraduate Training in Clinical Psychiatry Committee (Certificate of Psychiatry Committee).
- 5.4. Complaints relating to decisions made by RANZCP Education Committees must be lodged to the relevant RANZCP committee within **14 days** of receiving the decision.
- 5.5. Complaints should be raised by completing the prescribed *Request for Early Resolution Form* to assist the relevant RANZCP Committee in considering the request.

6. RESOLUTION PROCESS

- 6.1. Once a request for an early resolution is received:
 - 6.1.1. The relevant RANZCP Committee will consider appropriate information about the complaint, in a fair and impartial manner, having regard to the merits of the request, and any specific actions that are being requested or recommended that the RANZCP is to take.
 - 6.1.2. The complaint will remain open while the relevant College committee responds to it. The College will acknowledge receipt within 7 business days after the date it receives the complaint to acknowledge receipt.
 - 6.1.3. The RANZCP will endeavour to respond in full to the complaint within 28 business days to accommodate for Committee meeting schedules.
 - 6.1.4. If the RANZCP is unable to meet these time requirements, it will communicate with the person to notify and advise of an alternative deadline.

- 6.1.5. The relevant RANZCP Committee will consider the complaint and any relevant information as guided by the Early Resolution Policy and Procedure, in a fair and impartial manner, having regard to the merits of the request.
- 6.1.6. The response will outline the reasonable steps that have been taken to resolve the matter and rationale for the outcome.

7. POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

- 7.1. The outcomes of an early resolution process will depend on the individual circumstances of the matter. These may include:
 - 7.1.1. remedy for the complainant (for example, an update about the status of a matter or further explanation of a decision);
 - 7.1.2. agreed arrangements to progress the matter;
 - 7.1.3. improvements to the RANZCP’s processes.
- 7.2. A response or outcome by the relevant RANZCP Committee in relation to a complaint lodged under the Early Resolution Policy and Procedure is final.
- 7.3. Should a person continue to be dissatisfied with an outcome, they may access the RANZCP *Review, Reconsideration and Appeal Policy and Procedure*, which provides formal mechanisms of review for persons dissatisfied with decisions of the RANZCP.
- 7.4. The RANZCP will endeavour to identify recurring themes or issues that may warrant further consideration as a result of outcomes from Early Resolution applications.
- 7.5. Decision making bodies established pursuant to the RANZCP *Review, Reconsideration and Appeal Policy and Procedure*, may view and rely upon information or documents provided by a person who accessed this Policy and Procedure.

8. DEFINITIONS

‘Person’ means a:

- Member of the RANZCP;
- Trainee on the RANZCP Fellowship Program;
- Fellow enrolled in a Certificate of Advanced Training;
- Candidate on the RANZCP Specialist Pathway to Fellowship; or
- Person who is not a trainee or a candidate but who has applied to the RANZCP:
 - to participate in the RANZCP Continuing Professional Development Program; or
 - to join the RANZCP Fellowship Program or RANZCP Specialist Pathway.

9. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- RANZCP Constitution
- Review, Reconsideration & Appeal Policy and Procedure
- RANZCP Privacy Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL AND REVISION RECORD

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Contact: | Executive General Manager, Education and Operations |
| Authorising Body: | Director, Policy and General Counsel |
| Responsible Committee: | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Document Code: | POL PRC EO Early Resolution | | |
| Date | Version | Approver | Description |
| 19 July 2023 | 1.0 | Presidents Meeting | New document. |
| 23 April 2025 | 2.0 | Director, Policy and General Counsel | Minor updates to document to increase transparency of process, prior to Early Resolution implementation. |