NZCSRH RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

Purpose

This policy sets out a transparent, equitable, and evidence-based framework for evaluating prior clinical training, postgraduate academic qualifications, and verified procedural experience presented by applicants or newly enrolled trainees in the New Zealand College of Sexual and Reproductive Health (NZCSRH) Fellowship Training Programme.

The primary objective is to grant appropriate training time credit or module exemptions where prior learning strictly aligns with the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Curriculum, without compromising clinical safety or specialty standards.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Prospective applicants to the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Programme;
- Newly enrolled Fellowship trainees;
- The Educational Advisory Committee (EAC); and
- NZCSRH administrative and training support staff.

This policy does not apply to the NZCSRH Recertification Programme for Fellows.

Definitions

- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** An assessment process that evaluates an individual's formal learning, clinical training, and procedural experience to determine the extent to which they meet the required competencies of the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Curriculum.
- **Advanced Standing / Time Credit:** Reduction in the total required duration of the Fellowship Training Programme granted on the basis of approved RPL.
- **Module Exemption:** Exemption from completing specific curriculum topics, clinical placements, or formal learning modules based on verified equivalent prior attainment.
- **Currency:** Demonstration that prior learning, skills, and clinical competencies have been acquired or actively practiced within a recent, defined timeframe.

Detail

Core Principles and Limits

1. Equivalence and Rigour

Prior learning is assessed against the learning outcomes, clinical volumes, and competency standards defined in the NZCSRH Fellowship Training Curriculum, the Skills and Knowledge Guide, and the New Fellow Competencies. Credit is awarded only where prior attainment is demonstrated to be equivalent in depth, scope, and level of supervision.

2. Recognised Credit

To ensure all graduates acquire sufficient exposure to the specialty environment and College assessment processes:

- The maximum training time credit that may be granted through RPL shall usually be up to 50% of the total required Fellowship training duration, unless exceptional circumstances are approved by the EAC.
- Regardless of prior experience, all trainees are expected to complete:
    i. a final Regular Practice Review (RPR)
    ii. the NZCSRH Cultural Safety Advanced Training Programme
    iii. Mandatory summative assessments (which may include key DOPS/mini-CEX requirements specified by the EAC) OR an individualised training and assessment plan as developed and approved by the EAC

3. Currency Requirement

To be eligible for RPL consideration, prior qualifications, clinical training, or procedural experience must have been completed within the five (5) years immediately preceding the RPL application date, and the applicant must demonstrate continuous clinical practice in the relevant domain.

Eligible Categories of Prior Learning

Applicants may apply for RPL across three main categories:

Category	Eligible Prior Learning	Supporting Documentation Required
1. Formal Academic Qualifications	Postgraduate degrees, diplomas, or certificates in relevant fields (e.g., DRANZCOG, Postgraduate Diploma in Women's Health, Master of Sexual Health).	Certified copies of official academic transcripts, degree certificates, and detailed course syllabus/curriculum documents.
2. Supervised Vocational Training	Accredited registrar/specialist training completed under another recognized medical college (e.g., RANZCOG, RNZCGP, RACP) or an approved overseas equivalent.	Official statements of completed training, supervisor assessment reports, accredited training site details, and logbooks

Category	Eligible Prior Learning	Supporting Documentation Required
3. Verified Procedural Competencies	Documented procedural experience (e.g., LARC insertions/removals, surgical abortion, vasectomy, complex contraception).	Anonymized clinical logbooks verifying caseload volume, DOPS sign-offs, and formal supervisor attestations.

Application Process and Timelines

- Step 1: Application Submission - Submit RPL form & portfolio at entry or within 60 calendar days of enrolment.
- Step 2: Completeness & Currency Verification - EAC verifies portfolio integrity and evidence standards.
- Step 3: EAC Formal Assessment - EAC evaluates evidence against the Curriculum and Skills & Knowledge Guide.
- Step 4: Outcome Determination - EAC issues written decision (Credit Granted, Conditional Credit, or Declined).
- Step 5: Recording & Trainee Notification - Approved credit logged in Record of Learning; Training Plan adjusted accordingly.

Mandatory Application Window

RPL applications must be submitted prior to commencing training or within sixty (60) calendar days of formal enrolment in the Fellowship Training Programme. Retrospective applications submitted midway through training will not be accepted.

Evidence Portfolio Submission

Applicants must submit a completed NZCSRH RPL Application Form accompanied by a comprehensive evidence portfolio containing:

- Certified copies of academic qualifications and detailed syllabus outlines;
- Anonymized clinical logbooks verifying case volume and procedural mix;
- Official supervisor reports and formative/summative assessment records from previous training providers; and
- Contact details of previous accredited training supervisors for verification purposes.

Application Fee

A non-refundable administrative fee may apply to cover the cost of portfolio assessment, as set out in the College fee schedule.

Governance and Decision-Making Framework

The Educational Advisory Committee (EAC) holds delegated responsibility for assessing and determining RPL applications.

Assessment Criteria

The EAC evaluates each application against four criteria:

1. Authenticity: Verification that the evidence relates directly to the applicant and is certified.
2. Equivalence: Direct mapping of prior learning outcomes against the NZCSRH Curriculum.
3. Volume & Exposure: Sufficiency of documented clinical caseload and supervised lists.
4. Currency: Active clinical practice and recency of attainment (within 5 years).

Possible Outcomes

Following review, the EAC will issue one of the following determinations:

- Approved (Full Credit): Specified time credit (in 3- or 6-month blocks) and/or specific module exemptions are granted unconditionally.
- Approved (Conditional Credit): Provisional credit or module exemption is granted, subject to the trainee demonstrating satisfactory performance during their first six-monthly summative assessment block.
- Declined: The evidence provided is insufficient, not current, or fails to demonstrate equivalence to the required standard. The trainee must complete full standard programme requirements.

The EAC's written decision, including detailed reasons for the outcome, will be provided to the trainee within thirty (30) calendar days of the review meeting and recorded in the trainee's record of learning.

Quality Assurance and Monitoring

All RPL decisions are logged in a central register maintained by EAC. The EAC reviews RPL outcomes annually to ensure consistency, fairness, and assessment validity across cohorts. Summary data on RPL applications and outcomes is reported to the NZCSRH Board as part of the annual Quality Assurance cycle.

Disputes

Concerns regarding administrative delays or processing errors during an RPL evaluation will be managed under the NZCSRH Complaints Policy.

Applicants or trainees who wish to appeal an RPL decision made by the EAC may do so in accordance with the NZCSRH Appeals Policy.

Policy Owner	NZCSRH Educational Advisory Committee
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