



Royal Australasian
College of Surgeons

STP Private Infrastructure Clinical Supervision (PICS) Funding Guidelines

Specialist Training Program
(2022-2025)

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Introduction

The Specialist Training Program (STP) seeks to extend vocational training for specialist registrars into settings outside traditional metropolitan teaching hospitals, including private settings.

The PICS allowance supports delivery of the Specialist Training Program (STP) in private health settings. It recognises the cost of delivering training in the private sector and is a contribution to assist in the provision of a high-quality training environment for both trainees and supervisors.

PICS funds can be used by health settings for activities including:

- purchases related to infrastructure, where the infrastructure would remain the property of the training site; and
- clinical supervision to support the delivery of education and training linked to a specific STP training position.

The Department of Health has established a maximum PICS funding allocation of up to \$30,000 (GST exclusive) per annum per post and is paid pro-rata. For example, if 0.5 FTE of a post is located in a private setting, only 0.5 PICS for that post should be paid or if a post is not filled to the full FTE originally approved under the STP only a pro-rata amount of the PICS can be made.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF PICS FUNDING

Health settings receiving PICS funding must be able to demonstrate the following outcomes will be achieved in the private sector:

- increased capacity in the private sector to participate in specialty training through the Commonwealth's STP;
- increased clinical supervision support for trainees appropriate and improved infrastructure for training in STP posts;
- increased and improved support for specialist supervision in STP posts with access to education and training that matches the nature of demand and reflects health service delivery.

PICS ELIGIBILITY SUMMATION

1. Must be a Private health setting. The definition of "private health setting" relates to the facility and its ownership. A "private health setting" is not a publicly (State or Territory) owned facility treating private patients, nor a private health organisation under a public-private partnership providing public health services.
2. Position must be 0.5FTE or greater, and
3. Position must be filled for 3 months or greater to be eligible for claim

CONTACT RACS STP

If you are ever unsure if your claim is eligible, please send the invoice and/or detail to RACS STP and we will provide guidance for you.

Phone: 03 9249 1283

Email: stp.admin@surgeons.org

Claiming PICS Funds

To receive PICS funding the Participant's expenditure must be reported to RACS at the end of each surgical term through the Progress Reporting process. The Progress Report submission due dates can be found in Schedule 1 of your Funding Agreement.

Invoices, receipts and any other evidence are not required upon submission, however, all receipts and documentation relating to this claim must be held in the event of future audit or upon request.

Whilst the funding allocation is distributed per surgical term (\$15,000 term 1 for example) RACS provides flexibility to Participants to manage their PICS funding as required for each position providing the total funds expended for the full training year do not exceed the total allocation scheduled (as listed in Schedule 2 of your Funding Agreement) and is expended in compliance with the guidelines provided by the Department.

Should a Participant claim excess PICS funding in (for example) surgical term 1 and the post is then vacant in surgical term 2, RACS reserves the right to request a reimbursement of the excess funds paid. If a post that was vacant in surgical term 1 and filled in surgical term 2, the Participant is only eligible to claim the allocated funds for surgical term 2.

STP funds not claimed in the year will not be carried over into the next training year. Any funds not claimed in that training year by the due dates outlined in Schedule 2 of your Funding Agreement is deemed unclaimed and no longer available to the Participant.

Appropriate use of PICS Funds

The PICS allowance is intended to support the delivery of education and training linked to a specific STP training position. It does not represent a direct financial benefit to the supporting private health setting. The PICS allowance may be aggregated within training settings and across training networks. This includes aggregating funding where settings and networks support multiple STP posts.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Use of the PICS funding for **infrastructure activities**, must not be prioritised over the delivery of direct education and training support to trainees in STP.

Please seek approval from RACS STP in advance of the activity commencing, if the infrastructure expense is,

- Used for any minor renovations of existing facilities to accommodate specialty training, and/or
- The total expenditure cost for infrastructure exceeds 30% of the total allocated funding for that term.

COMING SOON - Please complete a **Planned Infrastructure Expenditure Form** and email to stp.admin@surgeons.org for review with any other supporting documentation or evidence. RACS STP will provide a response or seek more clarification within two business days.

Once each infrastructure project has been completed an **Infrastructure Completion Report** is required to be submitted with the Progress Reports (or agreed date), accompanied with evidence (invoices). RACS must be satisfied that the projects have been delivered in the manner and to the standard agreed, prior to funds being paid. The Planned Infrastructure Expenditure Forms are available on the RACS STP website or by request via stp.admin@surgeons.org.

CLINICAL SUPERVISION

The PICS allowance will be eligible for clinical supervision arrangements where direct or first-hand observation of teaching that involves face to face and other associated interactions between the trainee and the clinical supervisor is implemented. Generally clinical supervision will be provided by a senior practitioner (i.e. a college fellow). The role of the clinical supervisor is to ensure that trainees are supported to achieve the established goals or tasks contained in the training curriculum and program.

Health settings must be able to demonstrate that if PICS supports clinical supervision, funding is allocated towards maintaining and/or enhancing the delivery of appropriate supervision to trainees.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

In cases where a private health setting has more than one STP training post, the PICS allowance may be aggregated for infrastructure and used across the facility for the benefit of the whole specialty training cohort. The allowance should not be diverted to support other settings, for example where a provider operates multiple hospitals. For training networks, the allowance would be shared proportionally across each training site. For example, a private health care facility may provide training in the specialties of surgery, paediatrics and psychiatry. Funding may be provided based on the total FTE supported at the facility under the STP and used to provide training resources for the benefit of all trainees at that site.

Investment in facilities through the infrastructure allowance must not be prioritised over the delivery of direct education and training support to trainees in STP posts. This means funding for clinical supervision should not be reduced in order to deliver infrastructure, if this is going to have a negative impact on resources for direct supervision.

If the College providing the STP funding allocation to the health setting has concerns in this regard, it may direct the health setting to reduce expenditure on infrastructure. Colleges are able to consult with the Department of Health before finalising its position on these matters.

Reporting PICs Expenditure

At the time of Progress Reporting the Hospital Liaison will be required to complete a PICS Expenditure Form. As RACS STP is transitioning from paper-based reporting to online reporting, we have not provided templates at this time. We will keep you up to date of our progress and provide instructions (and/or templates) to you at the time of reporting.

When reporting on PICS expenses they must

- Be of an [eligible expense item](#) as listed the tables following this section
- Be listed as exclusive of GST (GST is added on at the time when RACS requests your invoice)
- Be detailed on what was expended

If you are ever unsure if your claim is eligible, please send the invoice and/or detail to RACS STP and we will provide guidance for you.

EXPENDITURE EVIDENCE

For the majority, invoices, receipts and any other evidence are not required upon submission, except if you have been requested to by RACS prior to the Reporting Period (e.g. [Planned Infrastructure Activities](#)). However, all receipts and documentation relating to this claim must be held in the event of future audit or upon request.

Items Eligible for PICS

Item No.	Expense Item	Description
1	Infrastructure	
1.1	Training room outfitting	The purchase of specific medical training equipment and textbooks that will be used by trainees
1.2	Minor renovations of existing facilities to accommodate specialty training	Please complete a Planned Infrastructure Expenditure Form and submit or contact RACS STP to discuss any planned renovations to determine eligibility.
1.3	Videoconferencing facilities	The purchase of equipment, installation of and software upgrade costs/renewals.
1.4	Online educational training	On-line courses and resources such as educational training software and relevant online journal access
1.5	General Overhead Infrastructure	Office asset equipment purchases such as computers; phones; desks; IT equipment and associated facilities that will be used by trainees and their supervisors.
2	Clinical Supervision	
2.1	Administrative Support	Support for activities which promote and maintain good work standards, coordinate practices and policies which lead to a high-quality training experience for trainees in STP posts;
2.2	Educational Support	Activities which help coordinate the educational development of trainees to ensure delivery of a training experience that contribute towards specialty training of the relevant College;
2.3	Networked Supervision Support	Development of networks of training which facilitate seamless transition between training sites ensuring that trainees receive high quality, appropriate training that coordinates supervision across the network;
2.4	Supervisor Development and Training Support	Training programs aimed at enhancing supervisors' leadership and management skills.

Items Ineligible for PICS

Item	Description
Salaries	Cannot be used to 'top up' any salaries or be used to for outside of 'normal' hours to travel to outreach clinics.
International travel for trainees	Any physical attendance at training courses, meetings and conferences held outside of Australia.
Major Capital Works	Major capital works projects involving the construction of new facilities, including as a funding contribution towards the total cost of larger capital projects, or as a funding contribution towards the purchase of substantial medical equipment used in service delivery rather than specifically for training;
Accreditation costs	Direct costs associated with specialist medical college accreditation or any costs related to STP Funding Applications (New Post Process).
General and ongoing operational expenses	the use of funding to contribute to general health setting operational expenses such as administration, salaries, training courses or ongoing building maintenance costs
Office consumables	the purchase of office consumables and other recurrent items such as stationery and printer cartridges, recurrent telephone line and rental costs, including phone call costs, and uniforms and cleaning products;
Hospital consumables	Hospital consumables used in the treatment of patients
Recreational Equipment	Examples: electronic gaming consoles and games/software, sporting equipment