

Portfolio	Education	Ref. No.	TOR-2016
Team:	Surgical Training		
Title:	RACSTA Committee Terms of Reference		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy details the terms of reference for the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Trainees’ Association (RACSTA) Committee and its role in the representation of the Association.

RACSTA is comprised of all Trainees of RACS and membership is automatic upon registration into the training program. The RACSTA Committee, being the management committee of RACSTA, fulfils a number of functions relevant to its members. These include working towards improving surgical training, representation of surgical Trainees, protection of Trainees’ interests and provision of an avenue for communication between the Trainees and RACS.

In this policy ‘RACSTA’ is defined as the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Trainees’ Association, ‘Committee’ as the management committee of the Association, and ‘Executive’ as the executive of the Committee. ‘Fellow’, ‘Trainee’ and ‘Region’ are as defined by RACS.

2. KEYWORDS

RACSTA, Committee, Trainee, Association, Training, Surgical, Education, Executive

3. BODY OF POLICY

The RACSTA Committee was established to provide leadership and strategic direction for the Trainees’ Association, and to facilitate its goals and objectives.

3.1. Objectives

- 3.1.1. To be the channel of communication within RACS for the views of all surgical Trainees in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand
- 3.1.2. To advocate for Trainees in matters relating to the educational experience, including selection, training, assessment, and supervision
- 3.1.3. To advocate and promote Trainee wellbeing and health maintenance
- 3.1.4. To facilitate Trainees’ representation within and external to RACS by providing an avenue to voice opinion
- 3.1.5. To promote inter-disciplinary relations between surgical specialty groups within the SET program
- 3.1.6. To assist new Trainees to understand the requirements of SET
- 3.1.7. To promote and assist in the smooth transition from Trainee to Fellow.

3.2. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.2.1. To ensure the Committee membership represents the diversity of Trainees
- 3.2.2. To develop and present policy recommendations in response to the needs of Trainees to the appropriate RACS Committees and Boards
- 3.2.3. To disseminate information to Trainees regarding SET and other RACS activities relevant to Trainees
- 3.2.4. To investigate any appropriate issue raised by the Association or its members and to remain actively involved in all matters of relevance to Trainees

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3.2.5. To oversee RACSTA publications in Surgical News, the RACSTA webpage, social media, and a periodic newsletter, to keep members of RACS informed about RACSTA and its associated activities

3.2.6. To nominate appropriate Trainee representatives, including the RACSTA Co-opted Councillor, to RACS Boards, Committees, and Working Parties as requested except for Specialty Training Committee/Board representatives (as determined by the relevant Committee/Board or Society).

3.3. Powers

The Committee has decision-making authority as delegated by the Education Committee.

3.4. Composition of the Committee

In line with RACS Diversity and Inclusion Plan, RACS seeks to increase diversity on our committees, particularly the representation of women. RACS recognises the benefits that diversity on composition and thought brings to a committee.

Following the 2015 Expert Advisory Group report, RACS set targets to have women represent at least 40% of committee membership by 2020. RACSTA will continue taking proactive steps to maintain this target.

3.4.1. Executive

- a. Chair
- b. Immediate Past Chair
- c. Deputy Chair
- d. Training Portfolio
- e. Support and Advocacy Portfolio
- f. Communications Officer

3.4.2. Specialty Representatives, being one (1) from each of:

- a. Cardiothoracic Surgery
- b. General Surgery Australia
- c. General Surgery Aotearoa New Zealand
- d. Neurosurgery
- e. Orthopaedic Surgery Australia
- f. Orthopaedic Surgery Aotearoa New Zealand
- g. Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery Australia
- h. Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery Aotearoa New Zealand
- i. Paediatric Surgery
- j. Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Australia
- k. Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Aotearoa New Zealand
- l. Urology
- m. Vascular Surgery

3.4.3. Regional Representatives, being one (1) from each Region.

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3.4.4. Co-opted members (Members by application):

- a. ASC Representative
- b. Other co-opted Trainees as required to facilitate the functioning of the Committee, ensure diversity, and to enable appropriate representation of RACSTA’s interests.

3.5. Eligibility Criteria

All Trainees who have commenced Surgical Education and Training (SET), and who are not suspended, on probation, or pending investigation for unsatisfactory performance or unprofessional behaviour are eligible to nominate for election to the Committee.

3.6. Election and Terms of Office

3.6.1. Chair

- a. Election will be by secret ballot at the last Committee meeting of the year
- b. All Committee members have an equal vote
- c. Office will begin from 1 January of following year
- d. In the event of a tied vote the Chair will have a deciding vote.

3.6.2. Executive

- a. The Executive, as specified in 3.4.1, is elected from the membership of the Committee at the last meeting of the year. Current Executive members are eligible for re- election (subject to specified term limits)
- b. Where two (2) or more Committee members indicate their interest to nominate for an Executive position, the Committee will conduct a vote by secret ballot to determine the successful candidate
- c. In the event of a tied vote the Chair will have a deciding vote
- d. Where a general member of the Committee is elected to the Executive, they will vacate their Regional or Specialty Representative position on the Committee. A new representative for the specialty or region will be selected in accordance with these Terms of Reference, to commence at the next meeting
- e. If the Training or Communications Officer positions are unable to be filled, they may be held in a caretaker capacity by a member of the Committee, *as these positions should not present a conflict of interest for a Specialty or Regional Representative*. A Committee member should be elected at the next Committee meeting to fill the vacancy
- f. The Committee shall always endeavour to fill all Executive positions.

3.6.3. Committee

- a. Committee members are elected by Trainees via the regional networks and specialty Trainee groups

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- b. When a Regional Representative position becomes vacant, the Executive will seek nominations from Trainees resident in that Region. If more than one (1) nomination is received, Trainees resident in that Region will vote by secret ballot to determine the successful candidate. RACSTA will nominate each Regional Representatives to become a co-opted member of the relevant state and territory committee and the Aotearoa New Zealand National Committee
- c. When a Specialty Representative position becomes vacant, the Specialty Training Committee/Board will seek nominations from within the specialty Trainee group, and hold a ballot should more than one (1) nomination be received
- d. A member cannot hold Regional and Specialty Representative positions simultaneously. If this occurs, the member must vacate one position and notify the relevant Specialty Training Committee/Board or regional committee
- e. RACSTA will actively seek nominations for positions that are not filled or become vacant during a term of office
- f. Members who become Fellows during their term of office may continue to serve out their term
- g. Members who fail to attend two (2) consecutive meetings and/or fail to provide notification of non-attendance, may be removed from the Committee.

3.6.4. Co-opted members

Appointment of members co-opted for a working party, specific function or period are approved by the Committee or Executive.

3.6.5. Members by application

- a. Up to three (3) new Committee members may be elected per year, if the total membership of the Committee does not exceed thirty (30) members
- b. Trainees who are interested in a membership role are to write to the Committee, enclosing a CV and a personal statement
- c. The Committee will review applications at the last meeting of the year, with successful applicants commencing on 1 January of the following year
- d. Applications may be approved by the Executive or the Committee.

3.7. Tenure

3.7.1. Committee

- a. Regional Representatives will serve for one (1) year with the option to serve for a further term of one (1) year
- b. Specialty Representatives' tenure will be in accordance with the relevant Specialty Training Committee/Board. In most instances this is one (1) to two (2) years
- c. Members by application will serve for one (1) year and may be appointed for a further year by the Committee.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

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- 3.7.2. Executive members will hold office for one (1) year, but individual members will be eligible for re-election for a further period of one (1) year
- 3.7.3. Chair will be elected annually and hold office for one (1) year but be eligible for re-election for a further period of one (1) year
- 3.7.4. Immediate Past Chair will serve for one (1) year only in that capacity, even in the event of the Chair serving another term. If a new Chair is unable to be elected, the Immediate Past Chair may serve in a caretaker capacity until such time as a new Chair is appointed.

3.8. Quorum

- 3.8.1. A quorum of the Committee will comprise 50% of the membership, including a minimum of three members of the Executive
- 3.8.2. A quorum of the Executive is 50% of its members.

3.9. Meetings

- 3.9.1. The Committee shall engage in meetings, teleconferences, and workshops as required ensuring the ongoing support, direction, and leadership of RACSTA
- 3.9.2. The Committee may hold three (3) face to face meetings per year
- 3.9.3. The Executive may meet more frequently on a need's basis. These meetings may be either via teleconference or face to face
- 3.9.4. All Committee members have equal voting rights
- 3.9.5. Voting, if required, may take place by electronic means, so long as the provision of a secret ballot is possible, should this be required.

3.10. Reporting

The Committee's proceedings shall be recorded in minutes and reported to Council via the Education Committee and to the Association via the RACSTA Newsletter.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

There are no documents associated with this policy.

Approver Education Committee
Authoriser Council

Authorised By **Executive General Manager, Education**

Document Owner **Education Governance Specialist**

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