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Australian Institute of Radiography
Professional Accreditation and Education Board

Resumption of Professional Practice

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Preamble

This policy document of the Australian Institute of Radiography (AIR) describes the framework for the Resumption of Professional Practice (RPP) programme for those who have previously held professional accreditation recognised in Australia. This document should be read in conjunction with the Competency Based Standards for the Accredited Practitioner (2005) and Competency Based Assessment (CBA) documents.

Introduction

The Medical Radiation Sciences (MRS) professions face continuous and significant change in technology and professional practice. Radiographers and radiation therapists must possess a thorough and contemporary knowledge in order to respond appropriately and practice safely in this dynamic environment. Returning to professional practice after a lengthy absence from working in Medical Radiations may place the individual radiographer or radiation therapist in a challenging or unfamiliar clinical environment. Those returning to practice may lack the necessary current knowledge and confidence to practice competently and safely.

As the national professional organisation and accrediting professional body representing radiographers and radiation therapists, the AIR has developed a programme for resuming professional practice after an extended absence. The Resumption of Professional Practice (RPP) programme aims to provide a structured pathway to facilitate the recommencement of professional practice.

The RPP programme and Competency Based Assessment (CBA) focus on radiography and radiation therapy as defined in the Scope of Practice for each discipline, specified in the Competency Based Standards for the Accredited Practitioner (CBS). The CBA process is outlined in documentation available at the AIR web site www.air.asn.au or by contacting paeb@air.asn.au. Any person considering a RPP programme should ensure they possess an understanding of both the CBS and the CBA process.

In seeking to re-enter the profession, individuals may be required to obtain a licence or registration from the relevant State regulatory authorities. Radiographers and radiation therapists who are considering resuming professional practice are advised to consult relevant state registration boards or licensing authorities to ascertain their requirements.

Eligibility for the RPP programme

To be considered for the RPP programme, candidates must have previously possessed a Statement of Accreditation (or equivalent) from the AIR. Eligibility is further dependent upon the length of time the candidate has been absent from professional practice. Generally, the following criteria apply:

Up to 5 years absence from professional practice

- Candidate is considered to possess adequate recency of practice.
- Candidate may apply for a Validated Statement of Accreditation

5 to 10 years absence from professional practice

- A preliminary assessment determines the professional practice and / or academic requirements for the RPP programme
- The assessment considers previous professional experience

10 to 15 years absence from professional practice

- Some candidates are not eligible for a RPP programme
- Academic and professional practice requirements will apply for eligible candidates

More than 15 years absence from professional practice

- Candidates are not eligible for a RPP programme

The RPP programme **does not** apply to radiographers and radiation therapists with overseas qualifications desiring to commence work in Australia. Practitioners with overseas qualifications should apply to the Overseas Qualification Assessment Panel (OQAP) of the AIR in order to apply for a Validated Statement of Accreditation. Where such professionals have previously held a Statement of Accreditation from the AIR, an application for the RPP programme may be made.

Candidates considered ineligible for a RPP programme may consider enrolling in an accredited entry-level medical imaging or radiation therapy programme at an Australian university. Details of these programmes are available at <http://www.air.asn.au/careerstudy.php>

RPP process

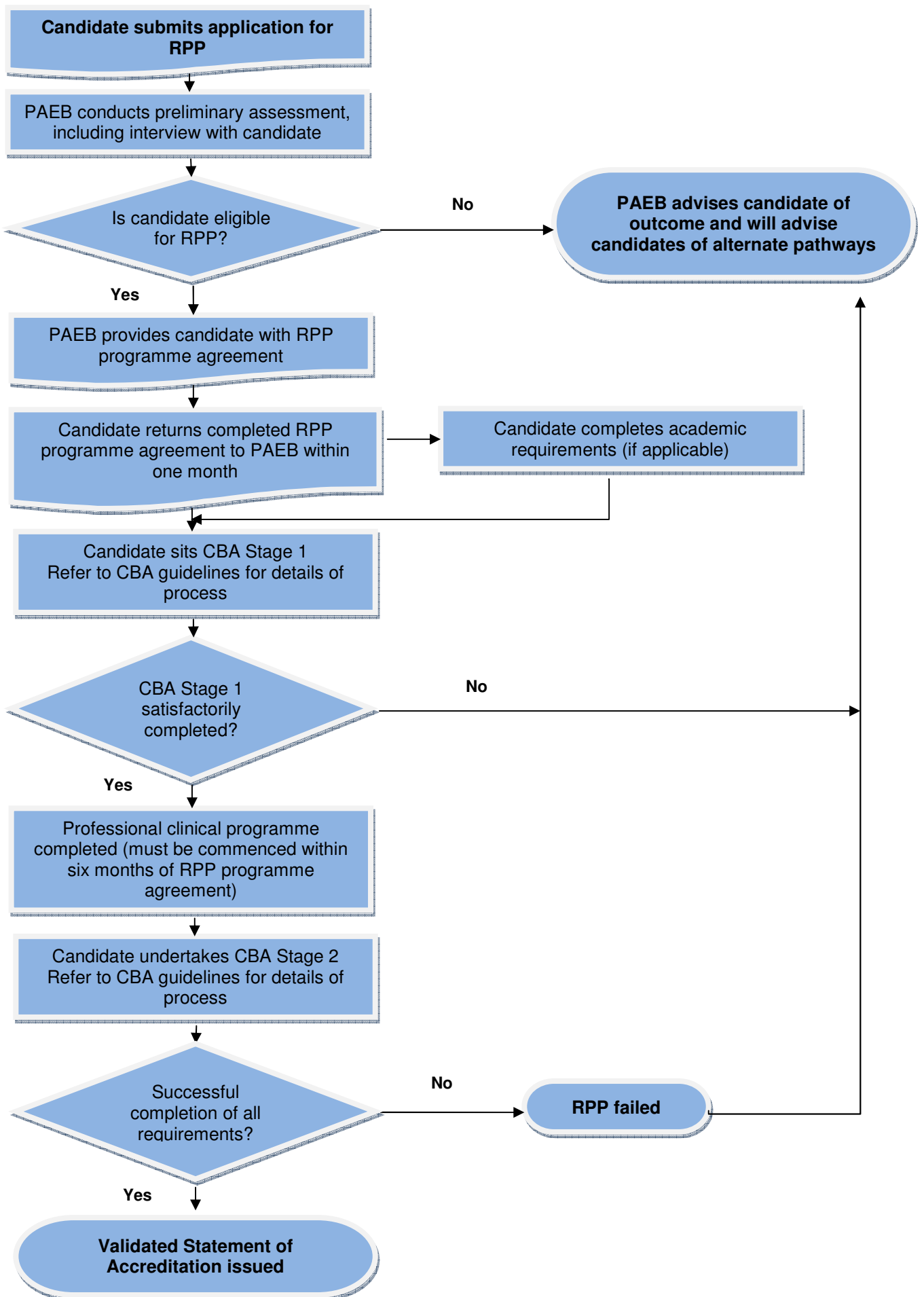
The Professional Accreditation & Education Board (PAEB) manages the RPP programme, including the CBA. The PAEB is supported in this role by administrative staff of the AIR.

Where a candidate is considered eligible for a RPP programme, written advice of the customised programme will be provided. The RPP programme commences upon receipt of the candidate's acceptance of the programme schedule and conditions. **The candidate may not commence the RPP programme until written confirmation of their agreement to comply with the programme schedule and conditions has been received by the PAEB.**

In general, the RPP process entails:

- Candidates apply for a RPP by submitting a completed application form available at www.air.asn.au detailing their professional qualifications, experience and other supporting information.
- Following receipt of the application, the PAEB will facilitate a meeting between the candidate and relevant expert professionals to ascertain the candidate's broad knowledge, understanding and experience. This preliminary assessment to determine whether the candidate is eligible for a RPP programme and, if so, what the individual programme might entail;
- The RPP programme will include a period of professional practice which may be up to twelve months
- The RPP programme may include formal academic study, depending on the outcome of the preliminary assessment
- Stage 1 of the Competency Based Assessment (a written exam) must be successfully completed in order to progress to Stage 2.
- Stage 2 of the CBA, clinical practice and assessment tasks undertaken over fifteen days duration, must be successfully completed

On successful completion of the RPP programme the radiographer or radiation therapist will be eligible for a Validated Statement of Accreditation from the AIR.



RPP programme structure

The RPP programme is customised for each candidate. All candidates must complete a period of professional practice and Stages 1 & 2 CBA. Some candidates may be required to complete formal academic study or computer skills training, depending upon the recency and range of their professional experience.

Generally, the Stage 1 CBA is completed prior to commencement of the professional practice programme or the academic programme. The clinical professional practice programme and any required academic programme or computer skills training may be undertaken concurrently and must be successfully completed before a candidate may proceed to the Stage 2 CBA.

Professional Practice Programme

Candidates undertake professional clinical practice for a period of up to 12 months (full-time equivalent FTE) as determined by the PAEB. Generally, the minimum attendance is three days (FTE) per week to ensure continuity of experience. The candidate will gain experience in a comprehensive range of procedures and tasks in the clinical environment to enable them to meet the requirements of the Scope of Practice detailed in the Competency Based Standards for the Accredited Practitioner (2005). The CBA Stage 2 undertaken at the conclusion of the RPP programme is based upon this Scope of Practice.

The professional practice programme must be undertaken at a clinical facility approved by the PAEB. A list of accredited centres is available at air.asn.au. **Candidates should note that the CBA Stage 2 must be undertaken at an approved clinical facility different to that where the clinical professional practice programme is completed.**

It is the candidate's responsibility to arrange the location and approximate timing of the clinical professional practice programme. Candidates will be provided with a letter of introduction from the PAEB with which to approach clinical facilities. Candidates must disclose potential conflicts of interest with regard to the clinical centre or supervisor (e.g. family members employed at the centre). Final details of the professional practice programme must be approved by the PAEB prior to commencement.

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It is not expected that the candidate will receive any payment or remuneration of any description from the clinical facility, the PAEB or the AIR at any stage of the RPP programme.

Candidates are required to comply with any workplace requirements of the clinical facility which may include, but are not limited to:

- orientation,
- occupational health and safety education,
- insurances,
- immunisation status,
- criminal history verification and
- clearance for working with minors.

Supervision during the professional practice programme

Candidates must have direct supervision at all times during the clinical professional practice placement. For the purposes of the RPP, direct supervision requires that the supervisor must directly observe all aspects of the candidate's professional practice. **The candidate may not undertake any unsupervised or sole practice, or supervise the practice of others.**

The RPP clinical supervisor is the candidate's mentor during the clinical professional practice programme, providing support, guidance and opportunities for development in the scope of practice for the Accredited Practitioner.

The clinical supervisor will provide ongoing feedback to the candidate and the PAEB and complete a written report to the PAEB at the conclusion of the professional practice programme. An example of the written report is provided at Appendix 1 of this document.

The candidate is encouraged to seek regular feedback from the mentor and other colleagues in the clinical centre.

At all times during the professional practice programme and the CBA Stage 2 the candidate is expected to:

- Adhere to the organisational requirements of the clinical centre and to comply with all reasonable requests and instructions
- Adhere to the AIR Guidelines for Professional Conduct for Radiographers, Radiation Therapists and Sonographers

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- Practice only under the direct supervision of an appropriately accredited radiographer or radiation therapist
- Advise the PAEB promptly of any emerging issues that may affect the candidate's progress in the RPP

Should it be determined by the RPP clinical supervisor at the clinical centre or the PAEB that the candidate is practising in an unsafe manner, or in a manner that contravenes the Guidelines for Professional Conduct for Radiographers, Radiation Therapists and Sonographers, or in a manner that contravenes the RPP agreement, the RPP will be suspended immediately. The PAEB will conduct an independent review of the situation. Following review of the circumstances, the clinical professional practice programme and/or the RPP programme may be terminated.

Computer skills

It is expected that candidates possess adequate computer skills to function in the contemporary professional environment. If such skills are not evident, the candidate will be advised to undertake relevant computer skills training, frequently offered at TAFE, community colleges and universities. Associated costs are the responsibility of the candidate.

Academic programme

The candidate may be required to undertake an academic programme. Required academic content will reflect professional knowledge and practice changes since the candidate's initial professional qualification and will be detailed in the customised programme. Examples of content include, but are not limited to:

Radiation Therapy

- Electronic portal imaging,
- Radiation therapy information systems
- 3D, conformal and IMRT planning
- CT, MRI & PET co-registration

Radiography:

- Digital image acquisition, review, manipulation and archive
- Multiplanar sectional radiographic anatomy
- Imaging pathology, interpretation and informed opinion

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The academic programme for each candidate is dependent upon the level of the existing academic award and any academic deficiencies, and the length of time the candidate has been absent from professional practice. Costs associated with the academic programme are the responsibility of the candidate.

The PAEB will provide the candidate with details of the required academic programme and contact information for Australian universities. It is the responsibility of the candidate to identify relevant units of study and submit comprehensive details to the PAEB for approval prior to commencement of the academic programme.

Evidence of successful completion of the academic programme must be submitted to the PAEB before proceeding to the Stage 2 CBA.

Costs associated with the RPP

Costs relating to the provisional accreditation and the CBA Stages 1 and 2 will be detailed in the customised programme agreement and are the responsibility of the candidate.

Costs associated with the academic programme are determined by the education provider and are the responsibility of the candidate.

Costs associated with complying with requirements of the State regulatory authorities are the responsibility of the candidate.

Costs associated with complying with the organisational requirements of the host clinical centres and attending the professional practice programme are the responsibility of the candidate.

Candidates must possess professional indemnity insurance to commence the RPP. Professional indemnity insurance is available to Provisional Members of the AIR or the candidate may arrange for private cover. Costs associated with professional indemnity insurance or provisional membership are the responsibility of the candidate.

Recognition of successful completion of the RPP Programme

A Validated Statement of Accreditation will be issued upon successful completion of the RPP programme.

Appendix 1: Professional practice programme – Clinical Supervisor’s report

