

## Recognition of Prior Training Policy (RCPI-Pol-191)

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| <b>Document Title</b>                       | <b>Recognition of Prior Training (to enable access to HST application)</b> |
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| <b>Department</b>                           | Postgraduate Training                                                      |
| <b>Owner/Responsible for Implementation</b> | Postgraduate Training                                                      |
| <b>Approving Body</b>                       | RCPI Training Committee                                                    |
| <b>Effective date:</b>                      | July 2025                                                                  |
| <b>Last review date:</b>                    | July 2025                                                                  |
| <b>Next Review date:</b>                    | June 2026                                                                  |
| <b>Related Documents</b>                    | N/A                                                                        |

## **1. Context**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) forms a critical component of EU policy in relation to widening participation in education and in supporting lifelong learning. RCPI is committed to supporting developments for RPL whilst maintaining the integrity of our training programmes.

In the first instance, the approach RCPI has taken to RPL is around recognising prior training experiences, specifically in relation to equivalence to our BST programmes, to enable application to RCPI HST training programmes. A following phase will build on this and look further at RPL as it relates to Training

In June 2023, the RCPI introduced its first Cross-College Recognition of Prior Training Policy (RPT). With six Faculties / Institutes and thirty-one Specialties at HST, the College has a common position which is very clear as it relates to its Training programmes.

In that context we are expanding the scope of RPL that the College recognises in 2024. This being addressing a legacy issue. Prior to the 2020 amendment to the Irish Medical Practitioners Act, there were a number of doctors in Ireland who were unable to apply for the RCPI's BST programmes as their internship was not recognised by the Irish Medical Council. In this, some NCHDs have already completed several years of clinical experience in Ireland and importantly, post 2020, would have been able to apply for BST training. Please see Section 11 for further detail on this one-off process in 2024 in recognising prior clinical experience for this specific group of doctors.

## **2. Purpose and Scope**

**2.1.** RCPI training is prospectively approved to ensure it is educationally robust and meets Irish Medical Council standards. For the purposes of this document, we will refer to RPL as Recognition of Prior Training (RPT).

The RPT process is the formal recognition of a structured medical training programme which, if deemed equivalent to one of our BST programmes, will enable application to a RCPI HST training programme and avoid unnecessary duplication of training. It does not enable the applicant to receive a BST Certificate of Completion.

**2.2.** This policy aims to ensure a rigorous and well-documented process for RPT which may result in a trainee being granted exemption from completing an RCPI BST training programme and access to apply for one of our HST programmes.

**2.3.** This policy defines the RCPI principles for recognising prior training; who may apply; the process for application and review; and possible application outcomes. It is designed to ensure that assessment of prior training is facilitated and approached in an equitable, transparent, and consistent manner across all Faculties and Institutes.

## **3. Principles**

**3.1. Validity** - The training experience must be relevant to the training programme. Validity of the training experience is assessed for its alignment with the relevant RCPI curricula standards, with consideration of content, level of training, and clinical / medical experience.

**3.2. Authenticity** - The training experience must have been undertaken by the applicant, and the information in the application must be accurate and true.

**3.3. Currency** - The training experience must have been completed no more than five years prior to application to a RCPI HST training programme to ensure currency.

**3.4. Reliability** - The evidence of the training experience must demonstrate consistency and repeatability of the competency, the observable abilities related to a specific activity that integrates knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. The assessment tools used to provide evidence of competency should be reliable and comparable to that of the relevant RCPI BST training programmes.

**3.5. Comparability** - The training experience must be comparable in terms of content, breadth of experience, level of responsibility, rigour of training requirements, assessment, process, supervision and training setting. Comparability ensures that the prior training experience has similar value to that of the RCPI training programme.

**3.6. Evidence-based** - The applicant must provide sufficient evidence of the training experience to demonstrate that the curriculum standards have been achieved, and to enable the assessor to judge the appropriateness of the training experience.

#### **4. Eligibility**

**4.1** To be eligible to apply for RPT, the applicant must have completed a training programme in full and have evidence to prove same.

**Note <sup>1</sup>:** *There may be instances whereby if a training programme is a run through programme of > 4 years, applications from within Ireland only can be considered based on the fact that the applicant has completed the first 2-3 years of the programme in Ireland and a membership exam has been passed, e.g., the Anaesthesia programme in Ireland.*

**4.2** The training experience outlined in the application must have been completed prior to application for RPT.

**4.3** The training experience must meet the principles set out in this policy (#2 above).

**4.4** RPT will not be considered for standalone posts of any duration, or for part completion of a training programme (except as outlined in note 1 under 4.1 above), or for posts that were not part of a formal training programme.

#### **5. Application Process**

**5.1.** The application process will be open from the beginning of July until the middle of August each year. HST applications normally open at the beginning of November for one month – this will allow enough time for a review panel to assess an application and enable eligible candidates to apply for HST.

**Note <sup>2</sup>:** *These timelines are based on receipt of a fully complete application. If an incomplete application is submitted, RCPI cannot guarantee it will be reviewed and an outcome communicated within the specified timeframe. This may impact the ability of the candidate to apply for HST.*

**Note <sup>3</sup>:** *Review panels will be pre-booked and aware of timelines.*

**5.2.** Applications must be made using the RPT application form, with payment of a non-

refundable assessment fee of €250 (to cover cost of Review Panel and College administration).

**5.3.** It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all necessary documentation to demonstrate that the training experience meets the principles and eligibility criteria as outlined in this policy.

**5.3.1.** Documentation required includes the following:

- Full Curriculum Vitae
- Authorised copy of certificate outlining completion of training programme (notarised / translated)
- Evidence of completion of the RCPI CPSP/SMSB Scholarship Pathway, including (where applicable)
- Training / ID number (previous awarding body)
- Copy of training portfolio (or equivalent) to include the training record from the training programme completed
- Curriculum of completed training programme
- Evidence of having held a clinical post in Ireland within the last five years (from point of application)
- Contact details for two referees - should be designated trainers / supervisors / programme leads from completed programme (referees may be contacted and where required a reference requested)

## **6. Application Criteria**

High level application assessment criteria for candidates wishing to have their prior training recognized is outlined below. Evidence of this will be captured in the application form and supporting documentation. (Specific criteria for each of the training programmes is outlined in a separate document)

### **6.1 Experiential Criteria**

- Must be met prior to application
- All posts listed as per individual programme requirements
- Hospital workplace standards listed to include minimum working hours and standard of service provided on site
- Must include minimum period in sites with tertiary care, outpatient clinics, inpatient service, frequency of call - dependent on the training programme
- This will be based on site standard criteria and programme criteria

### **6.2 Engagement with Feedback**

- Applicants must submit a testimonial to demonstrate they have engaged with feedback processes, e.g. coaching mentoring or workplace feedback on their learnings during their time in post

### **6.3 Training Goals**

- Applicants must meet training goals for each programme
- Proposed that two references attest to completion of standard of each goal
- There are approx. 6 to 10 goals per programme
- Descriptions of each will be provided

### **6.4 Evidence of Learning**

- Applicants must demonstrate they have completed taught modules, or equivalent, as per those

outlined in each training programme

## **7. Review Process**

**7.1.** A panel of reviewers will be selected for each Faculty / Institute (at least 4 per Faculty / Institute). This panel will be a nominated subcommittee of the Education and Training Committee in

each Faculty / Institute, and those sitting on the panel must be recognised RCPI Trainers, with all trainer requirements up to date. Applications will be screened and verified by the Medical Training team prior to being assessed by at least 2 reviewers from the relevant Faculty / Institute. Clinicians will be remunerated per assessment.

In assessing applications for RPT, the reviewers will refer to the principles and eligibility criteria in this policy.

**7.2** Each application will be considered on its merits and the outcome will depend on:

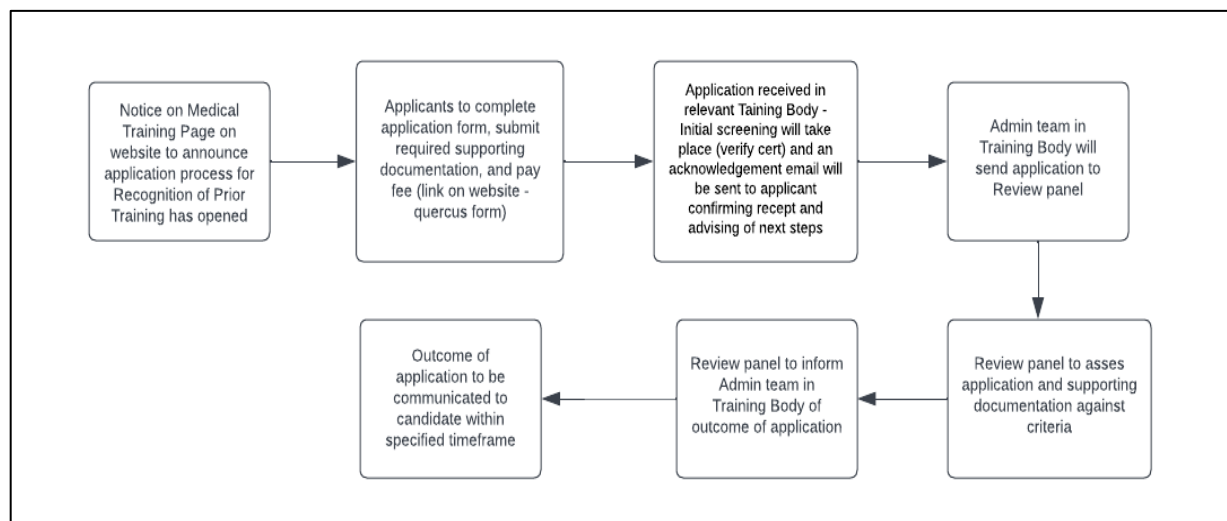
**7.2.1** The completeness and relevance of evidence provided by the applicant;

**7.2.2** The extent to which the evidence demonstrates that the application meets RPT criteria and principles; and

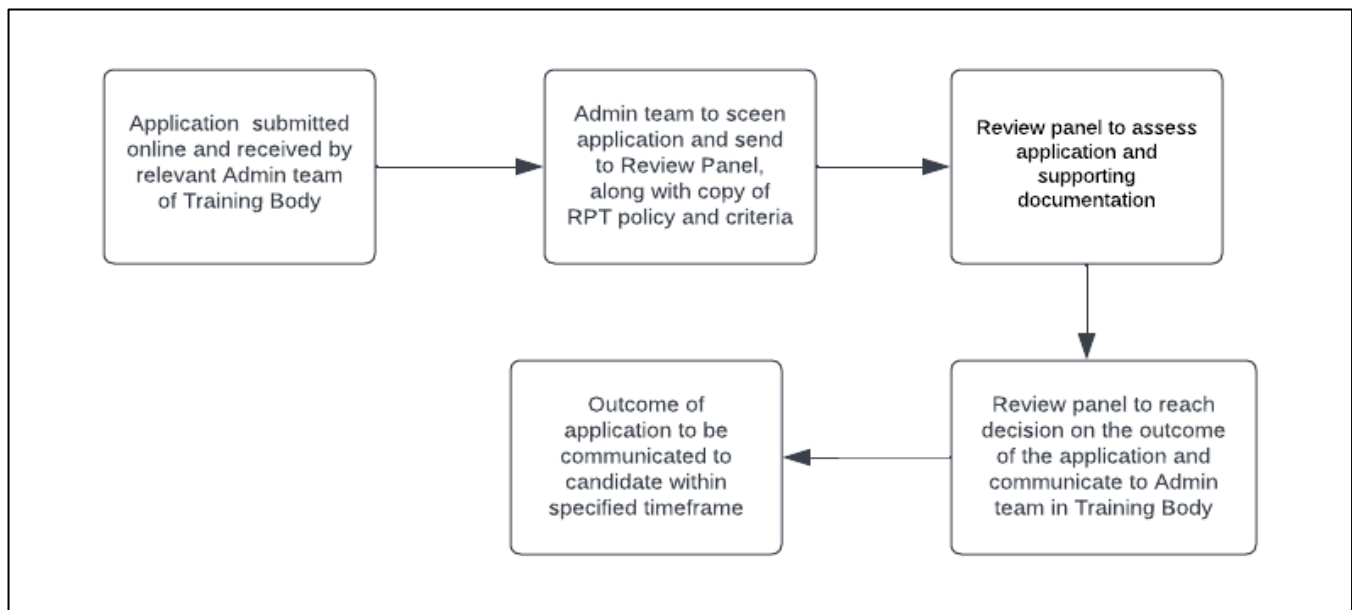
**7.2.3** Whether the evidence demonstrates that the training experience meets the training outcomes of the relevant RCPI BST training programme.

**7.3** The assessment process will be completed within 4 weeks of the closing date of applications, based on the receipt of a fully complete application. This may be longer if the review panel requires additional information or evidence from the applicant to assess an application.

#### **7.3.1** High level process for application



### 7.3.2 High level process for review



## 8. Outcomes

Recognition of prior training will enable the applicant to apply directly for a RCPI HST training programme, without completing a RCPI BST programme. The applicant will not be issued with a BST completion cert. They will be issued a letter outlining the outcome of the process, and advising what RCPI HST Programmes they may be eligible to apply for. In general, letters will be valid for three years from the date of issue, and can be revalidated for one more year. In some cases, the validity time of the letter may vary depending on time since completion of prior training.

**8.1.** One of the following outcomes will be communicated to the applicant once it has been assessed:

**8.1.1.** Request granted – The applicants request to have their training recognised meets the required standard and is granted.

**8.2.2.** Request not granted – It is not appropriate for the assessors to grant the application. The Review panel will outline the grounds on which the application was rejected, from the list below.

- **Insufficient experience** - The experience listed by the candidate was not deemed to be equivalent in standard of care, services provided or patient volume to that required
- **Insufficient supervision** - The applicate has not clearly demonstrated they received senior clinical supervision to guide feedback and learning while in post
- **References inadequate** - The standard of reference submitted does not allow the committee to determine with confidence that the applicants can proficiently meet the training goals outlined
- **Further evidence of learning required** - Additional documentation of learning equivalence is required for reapplication

- ***Rejected due to incomplete documentation checklist*** - Applicant was not progressed to panel review as application had areas of insufficiency on final submission

## 9. Appeals

There is an appeal mechanism. RCPI prides itself on fair, open and robust processes. Should an applicant wish to appeal the decision, a nominated member of the relevant Faculty / Institute will review the application. There is only one round of appeal allowed. There is a charge for an appeal. An applicant is reimbursed the appeal fee if their appeal is successful,

## 10. Governance, Monitoring, Quality Assurance

Governance, oversight and arrangements for the regular monitoring and review of RPT activities across all Faculties and Institutes will be through the Accreditation and Quality Improvement Department. This policy and process for RPT are embedded with RCPI quality assurance procedures.

This policy document will be reviewed after 1 year from the date of last approval.

For further information on our RPT (including FAQs) click [here](#).

## 11. A specific group of doctors based in and who commenced working in Ireland prior to 2020 and who have several years clinical experience they see as equivalent to a RCPI BST

Prior to the 2020 amendment to the Irish Medical Practitioners Act, there were a number of doctors in Ireland who were unable to apply for the BST programmes as their internship was not recognised by the Irish Medical Council. In this cohort, some NCHDs have already completed several years of clinical experience in Ireland and importantly, post 2020, would have been able to apply for BST training. To address this legacy issue, the College is providing a process in 2024 only to recognise clinical experience as equivalent to BST training for the group of doctors who started work in Ireland pre-2020. If their prior experience is deemed equivalent to BST, they will be eligible to apply for HST training. A candidate must meet all requirements for BST which includes having Membership (MRCPI).

Like for the Recognition of Prior Training, there is a formal application process and if successful, it does not enable the applicant to receive a BST Certificate of Completion.

## 12. Public Health Medicine and Occupational Medicine and RPT

Both Public Health Medicine and Occupational Medicine do not have their own specific BST. In that context, both HST programmes have clearly laid out what prior training / qualifications that they will accept as eligibility for an application to their HST programme.

The detail for each is laid out on their respective webpages under “Apply for HST”.

Public Health Medicine click [here](#).

Occupational Medicine click [here](#).

## 13. Recognition of Prior Clinical Experience

Please note that this is a time limited pathway which will close permanently to applications on 1 October 2025

Prior to the 2020 amendment to the Irish Medical Practitioners Act, there were a number of doctors in Ireland who were unable to apply for the BST programmes as their internship was not recognised by the Medical Council. In this cohort, some NCHDs have already completed several years of clinical experience in Ireland and importantly, post 2020, would have been able to apply for BST training.

In order to address, this legacy issue, the College is providing a process to recognise clinical experience as equivalent to BST training for the group of doctors who started work in Ireland prior to 1 January 2021. If the prior experience is deemed equivalent to BST, they will be eligible to apply for HST training. All other HST application criteria must be met - e.g. Membership (MRCPI).

Applicants under this pathway must satisfy the following criteria at point of application:

- Living in Ireland and working in the Irish healthcare system since before 2021 and have been in continuous employment in Ireland up to the point of application with supporting documentation from your NER app.
- Must have completed a recognized internship programme, with notarized certification within the last ten years.
- Demonstrate that you have completed clinical experience in Ireland that could be deemed equivalent to the rotational requirements of the relevant BST programme. Please review the 2025-2026 curriculum
- Demonstrate that you have met the curriculum outcomes of a BST programme
- Certificates of Attendance at Relevant BST Courses (Communication, Ethics, Leadership, Safe Prescribing)
- Contact details to seek references from your last two supervising consultants in Ireland.