



RCAA Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy

Tertiary level qualifications in rehabilitation counselling are a fundamental requirement of RCAA membership. Clients of rehabilitation counselling services have a right to expect that Rehabilitation Counsellors (RCs) regularly update their skills and knowledge in order to maintain competence and to provide services based on contemporary evidence-based best practice. Participation in RCAA approved continuing professional development (CPD) is a requirement of RCAA membership, and is designed to ensure RCs practice safely, legally and effectively.

The implementation of a CPD Policy also assists in aligning RCs with other Allied Health professions. Allied Health professions have a CPD policy to ensure compliance with the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) in force in each state and territory in Australia. In New Zealand, *The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003* applies.

Further, RCAA is a member association of CICA, the Career Industry Council of Australia. Accordingly, RCAA members are required to comply with CICA professional standards including a requirement for ongoing professional development. CICA requires a minimum of twenty-five hours of CPD per year. RCAA is also recognised by the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authority (HWCA) under its Nationally Consistent Approval Framework for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers. These HWCA guidelines require that employers of rehabilitation professionals providing occupational rehabilitation services, ensure continuous learning and development for staff. CPD is required for all areas of rehabilitation counselling practice.

From 1 July 2016 RCAA will commence random audits of member compliance with the CPD policy. All members must maintain records of CPD activities undertaken, to ensure they meet CPD audit and membership requirements.

1. CPD Requirements

The CPD activities claimed are for learning and contributions to the profession outside of the RC's normal work duties. CPD activities must be aimed at maintaining and improving the member's competence in rehabilitation counselling practice and relevant to their area of practice. The CPD activities should have clear goals and outcomes, as well as objectives that meet the member's individual learning and career development requirements. Overall, CPD activities should seek to contribute to the maintenance and improvement of high quality client service provision in Rehabilitation Counselling practice.

1.1 Membership year

1 July to 30 June each year.

1.2 Full members: Twenty-Five (25) hours per membership year.

A minimum of twenty-five (25) hours professional development per membership year commencing from 1 July 2015.

Please note: One (1) hour of CPD is equivalent to one (1) CPD point. Fifteen or more (15+) hours of core (externally organised) activities AND up to ten (10) hours of elective (self-directed)

activities OR up to ten (10) hours of supervision and/or mentoring, can be counted each year toward a member's CPD.

1.3 Student members

This policy applies to full RCAA members only. CPD does not apply to student members while they are undergoing study. Once the study program has been completed, student members will need to apply for full membership and will then be required to meet CPD requirements.

2. CPD Activities

Continuing professional development is required to cover a range of different professional activities to develop competence, knowledge, and skills required for rehabilitation counselling. Therefore, CPD activities must have a clear focus on developing and extending competence in rehabilitation counselling.

Professional development activities must be relevant to your area of practice. The examples provided below should be considered as a guide only. The RCAA Board of Directors will consider other activities undertaken by members that fall outside of the scope provided below, and evaluate these in relation to their relevance to rehabilitation counselling practice and the aims of the CPD policy.

A combination of CPD activities may be undertaken to make up the required 25 hours of CPD each year. Specifically, CPD hours are made up of 15+ hours of core learning (externally organised activities) AND up to 10 hours of elective (self-directed activities) learning activities or up to 10 hours of supervision and/or mentoring.

2.1 Examples of core (externally organised) CPD activities (15+ hours)

- Attendance at conferences, forums, workshops, seminars, training and courses relevant to RC practice
- Completing a tertiary course of study toward a post-graduate qualification relevant to RC practice
- Rehabilitation counselling related academic research i.e. original research (with relevant ethical clearance), literature review and writing peer reviewed publications
- Organising a conference or symposium relevant to rehabilitation counselling (principal organiser, organising committee and/or presenter)
- Participation in webinars relevant to RC practice
- Presentation of CPD webinars / seminars / training to RC students or colleagues
- RCAA delivered or endorsed CPD events
- RCAA AGM attendance
- RCAA Director meeting attendance
- RCAA Directors working group activities
- Attendance at RCAA focus groups activities
- Auditing member CPD activities for RCAA
- Participation in accreditation activities (review and evaluation of accreditation submissions and on-site visits to tertiary institutions)

2.2 Examples of elective (self-directed) CPD activities (up to 10 hours)

- Critical reading books and journals related to field of practice, and clearly related to rehabilitation counselling
- Reflective practice journal entries (focused on developing competence and quality of practice)
- Completion case reviews and presentations with colleagues/students (with adherence to privacy and confidentiality, as detailed in the RCAA Code of Professional Ethics)
- Participation in committees, external boards, interest groups, etc., with a focus on rehabilitation or RC professional matters
- LinkedIn – researching, uploading, reading, approving and participating

2.3 Examples of supervision or mentoring CPD activities (up to 10 hours)

- Supervision, formal mentoring or assessment of competence of RC students (e.g. professional placement supervision, student mentor/companion).
- Supervision, formal mentoring or assessment of RC colleagues (supervision must include written documentation of the supervision provided and a description of the discussion and any outcomes)
- Receiving supervision and/or mentoring from a Rehabilitation Counsellor (supervision must include written documentation of the supervision received and a description of the discussion and outcomes)
- Supervision/review of student academic research related to rehabilitation counselling

2.4 Accessing CPD Event Information

Relevant CPD events will be advertised on the RCAA website and on RCAA LinkedIn.

RCAA will endeavour to provide relevant CPD opportunities throughout the year to support members to achieve the required 25 hours.

2.5 Members who reside and practice in remote areas

The RCAA Board of Directors recognises that Rehabilitation Counsellors who reside and practice in rural or remote areas may have limited access to formal CPD opportunities. These members are encouraged to participate in online learning opportunities, including: distance education, online courses, supervision, webinars, web-based conferences or workshops or elective and supervision/mentoring CPD activities undertaken using phone and online technologies. Please seek further support from RCAA should you need advice or assistance with accessing these opportunities.

3. Recording and Audit of CPD points

RCAA members must record their CPD activity in the Activ8evolve database on the RCAA website.

3.1 CPD supporting documentation

Members must upload to the Activ8evolve database, supporting documentation (evidence) of participation and/or completion of CPD activities. Examples of supporting documentation include:

- Receipts, certificates or records of attendance/participation
- Research summary
- Summary or brief of article read
- Excerpts of reflective practice journal entries
- Documentation of supervision received/provided, including content and outcomes
- Other supporting documentation as relevant to the activity

Supporting documentation for CPD activities undertaken must be retained for a period of three years and made available to the Board of Directors for audit purposes if required.

3.2 Audit

This policy is effective from 1 July 2015. RCAA will commence random audits of members' CPD to ensure compliance with RCAA policy. Random audits will commence from 1 July 2016.

If you have any questions regarding the CPD policy or audit process, please do not hesitate to contact us at admin@rcaa.org.au

3.3 Failure to comply

In the event that a member fails to comply with the CPD policy, RCAA may refuse to renew membership. Alternatively, RCAA Directors may impose a condition of membership, requiring the individual to complete an agreed plan of CPD activities within a specified period.

4. Renewal of membership

An applicant applying for renewal of RCAA membership must declare that he/she has completed the minimum CPD requirement.

5. Exemptions

Members may apply for exemption due to ill health, leave or other special circumstances. An application for exemption must be submitted in writing to RCAA, specifying the reason for the request and the period of time required. Approval of an exemption is at the discretion of RCAA Directors.

This policy applies from 1 July 2015 and will be reviewed annually.

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