



Recognition of Prior Learning

NZCPHM Policy and Procedure

Definition

Registrar: A doctor who has been accepted onto the NZCPHM training programme

Candidate: A doctor who is considering, but has not yet applied for or has not yet been accepted onto, the training programme

Purpose

This policy and procedure describes the principles and process for assessing and crediting previous learning and/or experience in public health medicine.

- It should be used when a **registrar** wishes to claim credit for, or exemption from, part of the NZCPHM training programme.
- It should be used when a **candidate** wishes to have their prior learning assessed prior to applying to the NZCPHM training programme.

If a complete exemption from the training programme is being sought, the Pathways to Fellowship policy will apply.

Policy

A **registrar** or **candidate** may apply for one or more of the following types of recognition of prior learning (RPL):

- Exemption from Basic Training
- Credit towards Basic Training for postgraduate public health papers previously completed
- Credit towards Advanced Training

A **registrar** can apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), upon acceptance into the training programme.

A **candidate** can apply for a recognition of prior learning assessment before applying to the NZCPHM training programme.

The focus of RPL will be on the outcome of learning. As a general principle, credit or exemption will only be awarded for evidence of learning outcomes, not for length of experience or time spent in training.

In making the assessment of prior learning, the currency of the experience or qualification will be considered e.g., how long ago the MPH or papers were completed, or when the public health work experience was undertaken.

Where the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence to show they have met the learning outcomes, the application is not likely to be approved.

The decision to award RPL is made by the Assessment Panel.

Procedure

Exemption from Basic Training

A registrar who has been accepted onto the Training Programme and who already holds an MPH or equivalent may apply for exemption from Basic Training (i.e., direct entry into Advanced Training). In this case, they must provide the College with detailed and clear information (including formal course outlines from relevant university providers) describing the nature of each paper in their qualification, as well as a copy of thesis or dissertation if completed. Consideration will include when the MPH or equivalent was completed, the grades achieved for each paper, the equivalency of the content and complexity of each paper (including specific learning outcomes) to the New Zealand requirements, and that a research project equivalent to at least a dissertation size and standard has been completed as part of the MPH.

If an MPH or equivalent has been gained overseas, it is unlikely that complete exemption from Basic Training will be granted, but credit for some papers will be given. In this case the College will require the registrar to complete additional papers to familiarise themselves with New Zealand public health concepts and issues, the New Zealand health care system, and with Māori health, in order to complete basic training.

Credit for public health papers previously undertaken

Where a registrar's previous academic qualifications do not merit exemption from Basic Training, they may apply to the College for credit for particular papers that are part of Basic Training requirements. The time since a paper was taken and the currency of the learning outcomes will be taken into account.

The College is likely to award credit for University of Otago or Auckland DPH/MPH papers if the papers are compulsory or recommended papers, as prescribed by the NZCPHM Training Programme. The registrar must have achieved at least a B grade (70-74%) or above in these papers. Where there is a grade of B- or lower, no credit will be awarded. If the paper for which credit is not awarded is a compulsory paper, the registrar will be required to repeat the paper if this is possible or to take an alternative paper, preferably in the same field, approved by the TPD. If the paper for which credit is not awarded is not a compulsory paper, another paper must be taken in its stead.

For papers taken at other universities, there are two considerations. The first consideration is whether the paper will be accepted by the relevant university as part of the DPH/MPH programme in which the registrar will enrol for Basic Training. The registrar should approach Otago or Auckland University directly for this. If Otago or Auckland University agrees to award credit for a paper from another university that covers equivalent material to one of the College's compulsory or recommended MPH papers, then this would be automatically acceptable to the College. If the paper is accepted by the university but is not appropriate for College requirements (because the credit is not for a paper that is equivalent or similar to one that is compulsory or recommended by the College) then the registrar will be required to undertake an additional paper to complete the College's Basic Training requirements.

The second consideration is the grade(s) achieved for the papers taken at the other universities. A grade to the equivalent of a New Zealand B (70-74%) (not B-) or higher is required. If there is a grade of B- or lower then no credit will be awarded by the College, even if the paper has been accepted towards the DPH/MPH by Auckland or Otago University. In this case the registrar will be required to undertake an additional paper/s as appropriate to complete the College's Basic Training requirements.

Notwithstanding the College's minimum grade requirement of a B, registrars must also meet any minimum requirements set by the university at which they are enrolled.

The College will also consider applications for credit for a research project equivalent to at least a dissertation size and standard, on an appropriate public health related topic, that was undertaken as part of a Masters of Public Health programme providing a grade equivalent to an Auckland or Otago University grade of B (70-74%) or higher has been achieved. If a lower grade has been achieved, then no credit will be awarded by the College.

Adjustment to Basic Training time

If a registrar is given credit for papers that have been completed prior to joining the Training Programme, their Basic Training time may be reduced proportionately, e.g., if a registrar is provided credit for one full time semester (usually four papers of 15 credits each) of Basic Training, they will be required to complete only a further 12 months of Basic Training time. Credit, in terms of time, will not be awarded where this is less than one full semester i.e., three papers or less. Where this occurs, the registrar will have the full 16 months to complete all outstanding MPH requirements i.e., nine or more, papers and the dissertation.

The Training Programme must be completed within a period of ten years to ensure the validity and currency of the training undertaken. Any credit of training time awarded as a result of an application for RPL will be deducted from the time limit to complete training.

The currency of courses, qualifications and work experience will be looked at as part of the recognition of prior learning process. If this was more than 10 years prior, recognition of prior learning may not necessarily be awarded.

The Training Programme requires a registrar to submit a dissertation proposal following the completion of six months FTE Basic Training time. Registrars who have been credited time for papers that have already been completed may be required to submit a dissertation proposal earlier than this.

Credit towards Advanced Training

Credit towards Advanced Training for previous experience will be considered only where that previous experience meets the usual requirements for a training placement, for example that there was a definite position practising public health medicine, that there was suitable supervision and suitable work activities were completed. Credit may be in the form of training time and/or number of required placements. Registrars are required to demonstrate each Core Skill and Competencies ¹3.1, 3.2 and 5.1 in each full year of training. In applying for credit towards Advanced Training the applicant must clearly describe which Core Skills and Competencies have been addressed and how this has been demonstrated.

In order to be awarded credit towards Advanced Training, the following information must be prepared and provided to the College office by the registrar:

- work location (full title of the organisation and unit)
- title of the position, dates of employment/work, FTE proportion
- job description
- a clear description of the nature of work undertaken, including reference to the core skills and professional attributes of public health medicine
- a letter from **either**

¹ Competencies are available to view at [NZCPHM website](#)

- the direct manager that:
 - confirms the position held, including the dates that apply
 - provides some detail concerning the nature of the work undertaken and the standard of the applicant's work practice
 - confirms the supervisory relationship as outlined by the registrar, and, if supervisory arrangements were in place, provides detail of these;
- **or** a letter from the person who supervised this position (if different to the direct manager) that:
 - confirms the position held, including the dates that apply
 - provides some detail concerning the nature of the work undertaken and the standard of the applicant's work practice
 - confirms the supervisory relationship as outlined by the registrar, and, if supervisory arrangements were in place, provides detail of these
 - confirms the supervisor's own formal public health medicine qualification and experience
- copies of written reports or documents that demonstrate the Competencies, in particular 3.1, 3.2 and 5.1, and Core Skills achieved, with a report from the supervisor attesting to the achievement of the Competencies and Core Skills.

It is important to note that as the learning has taken place outside the training programme, it is unlikely to have met all the College's requirements e.g., for site accreditation or supervision. The amount of time credited is therefore unlikely to be as much as the length of time spent in the work positions presented for recognition and is unlikely to be more than 12 months in any circumstance. This principle will apply in particular where each Core Skill and Competencies 3.1, 3.2 and 5.1 cannot be demonstrated.

The recency of work experience will be looked at as part of the recognition of prior learning process. RPL may not necessarily be awarded when the worksite experience occurred prior to MPH study.

Where the time credited applies to an accredited training site and an established registrar position, and where the registrar continues to train at the same site as a part of the training programme, the total amount of time is unlikely to exceed 52 FTE weeks.

RPL Assessment Process – for a registrar

The registrar will be informed of a date that their application should be received by the College office, in order to meet committee meeting timeframes.

An RPL fee is payable to the College; this is set annually by the College Council. Processing of the application will not commence until the fee has been paid. Note that there is no fee for an application for credit for Auckland or Otago University DPH/MPH papers completed prior to joining the Training Programme. In the case of a registrar applying to return to the programme, the Training Programme Application fee will apply instead of the RPL fee.

College staff will forward the application to a suitably qualified Fellow of the College, usually a member of the Assessment Panel. The application is assessed by the Fellow and a recommendation made to the Assessment Panel who makes the decision as to the amount and nature of the credit or exemption awarded.

RPL Assessment Process – for a candidate

Application for an interim RPL assessment by a candidate may be made at any stage.

An RPL (prior to application) fee applies to an RPL assessment prior to NZCPHM training. Processing of the assessment will not commence until the fee has been paid. Candidates who choose to apply for the NZCPHM training programme in the year following the RPL assessment will have the Training Programme application fee waived and will not be required to pay an RPL fee if successful in that application.

College staff will forward the application to a suitably qualified Fellow of the College, usually a member of the Assessment Panel. The application is assessed by the Fellow and the results will be provided to the candidate. Note that this is an interim assessment only – confirmation of the RPL that will be granted is only made after the candidate has successfully applied to the training programme.

The Chair of the Assessment Panel will make the final decision as to the amount and nature of the credit or exemption awarded.

Notification of Outcome

The outcome of the application for RPL will be advised in writing, by email, to the applicant within two weeks of the decision being made. Should the outcome be considered by the applicant as unsatisfactory, they may request a reconsideration or review of this decision using the Reconsideration, Review and Appeal Policy and Procedure.

Associated Documentation:

- Training Curriculum
- NZCPHM Competency List
- Training Manual
- Selection of Registrars NZCPHM Policy and Procedure
- Reconsideration, Review and Appeal NZCPHM Policy and Procedure
- Pathways to Fellowship Policy
- International Registrar Placements NZCPHM Policy and Procedure

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