1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) is committed to promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors towards a career path in surgery. The Scholarship is for final year medical students who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and are considering a career in surgery with an opportunity for career development.

This policy governs the awarding of the RACS Career Enhancement Scholarship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Students. It covers the application and selection criteria as well as the duration, eligible activities, value, frequency and conditions of the Scholarship.

2. KEYWORDS

Education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Career Enhancement, Indigenous, Medical Students, Scholarship

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Background

The RACS Career Enhancement Scholarship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Students has been established by the Indigenous Health Committee to assist final year Medical Students, who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, to cover the costs of undertaking surgical-related education, training and/or research opportunities in Australia or New Zealand that will result in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills which strengthen their career portfolios.

3.2. Eligibility

To be eligible for the Award an applicant must:

3.2.1. Be eligible to be a member of the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA); and

3.2.2. Be in their final year at an Australian or New Zealand medical school; and

3.2.3. Be a permanent resident or citizen of Australia or New Zealand.

3.3. Eligible Activities

The Scholarship may be used for one or a combination of the following activities:

3.3.1. Course fees, travel and accommodation to attend surgical skills training workshops in Australia or New Zealand.

3.3.2. Attendance or presentation of a paper and/or poster at a medical, surgical or indigenous health conference in Australia or New Zealand. Preference will be given to applicants presenting research project results and outcomes.

3.3.3. Surgical related research projects.

3.3.4. Other professional development activities deemed appropriate and of benefit to the applicant by the Indigenous Health Committee and/or Scholarship Selection Panel to enhance their career portfolio.
3.4. **Selection Criteria**

3.4.1. Applicants are to submit an application on the prescribed RACS form, together with a current Curriculum Vitae and two (2) letters of reference supporting the application. Proof of eligibility to be a member of AIDA is required. Written confirmation from their institution or place of work confirming that the uptake of this scholarship will not be detrimental to their studies or work must also be included in the application.

3.4.2. The application is to include a submission on the benefit(s) of this professional development opportunity, and should address:

   a. Interest in pursuing a surgical career
   b. Relevance to current stage of training or medical career
   c. Details of study and/or research to be undertaken
   d. Proposed course or itinerary
   e. Envisaged benefits of this activity
   f. Details of any financial support or funding already secured (for example, research grants, sponsorship and/or other grants)
   g. A breakdown of the proposed use of the grant funds.
   h. Current and future commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health activities

3.4.3. Selection will be dependent on:

   a. Outline how the proposed further studies/experiences will enhance their career and promote interest in surgery.
   b. Provision of a clear plan of their proposed studies, emphasising the benefits to be gained.

3.4.4. Award recipients will be selected by the Scholarship Selection Panel consisting of:

   a. Chair (or nominee), Fellowship Services Committee
   b. Chair (or nominee), Indigenous Health Committee;
   c. Member, Indigenous Health Committee (Younger Fellow or Trainee);
   d. Chair (or nominee), Prevocational and Skills Education Committee;
   e. President (or nominee), AIDA;

3.4.5. A number of awards may be offered each year, depending on the availability of funding and the quality of applications.

3.4.6. In the awarding of scholarships, the Scholarship Selection Panel will where possible ensure gender balance in recipients.

3.5. **Value of the Scholarship**

The value of the scholarship is in Australian dollars.
3.6. Conditions of the Scholarship

The following conditions are based on information supplied at the point of application on which scholars’ applications were assessed and approved. Any changes from those originally approved will require RACS’ prior consent. To obtain this consent, scholars are required to notify RACS in writing.

3.6.1. Financial Arrangements

The scholar must refer to his/her financial or taxation advisor to ascertain the taxability of the stipend. General information about whether scholarship is exempt from income tax is available on the RACS website. Please go to www.surgeons.org/scholarships/ and proceed to the FAQ section.

Payment of the scholarship will be made in one instalment.

In order for the payment of the award funds, original documentary evidence of expenditure incurred must be provided (i.e. tax invoices/receipts).

3.6.2. Reporting

The scholar must provide a report of up to 500 words within four weeks of the completion of the activity for which funding has been obtained. The report may be used in promotional material by RACS and/or AIDA.

3.6.3. Acknowledgements

RACS is to be acknowledged in any relevant correspondence, public announcement, advertising, publication or other material relating to the Scholarship.

Recipients may be required to speak at a RACS event.

3.6.4. Publications and Patents

RACS must be notified of any publications as soon as practicable after acceptance by the journal, or patents arising from the award together with the results of any research that is to be commercially developed.

3.6.5. Privacy

RACS takes reasonable steps to protect the information it holds from misuse or loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. The scholar has the right to access his or her personal information and to have it corrected if inaccurate, incomplete or out of date.

3.6.6. Termination of the Scholarship

RACS may, at its discretion, for what is considered grave cause, suspend the tenure of an award for such time as is thought fit, or deprive a scholar of their award. From the date of either of these decisions, the entitlement to stipend and other allowances shall cease. Upon termination, monies already paid and not duly expended shall be refunded to RACS.

3.6.7. Acceptance of Offer
3.7. Administering Committee

The Scholarship is administered by Fellowship Services.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

PRC: RACS Career Enhancement Scholarship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Students

FRM: Application form for RACS Career Enhancement Scholarship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Students

Approver
Professional Development and Standards Board

Authoriser
Council