

Policy



AOA
AUSTRALIAN
ORTHOPAEDIC
ASSOCIATION

AOA 21: FLEXIBLE TRAINING POLICY



AOA



Excellence in Orthopaedic
Surgical Education and Training

AOA 21: Flexible Training Policy

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Purpose and Scope

The AOA 21 Training Program is a primarily competency based program. The program is flexible by design as it is intended to respond to the individual development of each trainee. The focus is on achieving goals rather than on spending a predefined period of time on a task or in training generally.

This document outlines the AOA policy and application processes regarding flexible training, including deferral, interruption, leave, transfers, part-time training, and recognition of prior learning.

This document applies to trainees in the AOA 21 Training Program only.

Maximum Training Time

1. The maximum period for completion of the training program for trainees who commenced from 2017 onwards is nine years.

Deferral of Training Commencement

2. It is expected that all successful applicants will be ready to commence training in the year immediately following their selection. However, the FTC may approve a deferral of the Trainee's start date of up to one year.
 - 2.1. Requests for deferral in order to complete unaccredited positions will not be approved.
 - 2.2. Applications for deferral should be directed to training@aoa.org.au.
 - 2.3. Applications for deferral must be made at the time of accepting an offer of a training post in order to minimise disruption to other Trainees. Requests submitted later than this will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
 - 2.4. Applications must include documentation relating to and explaining the request.

Interruption of Training

3. An interruption of training is an approved period of absence from training taken by the Trainee that is not leave.
 - 3.1. There are specific arrangements for interruptions of training for the purposes of:
 - Parental Leave (refer section 4)
 - Research (refer section 5)
 - 3.2. An Interruption of training will only be granted in the first twelve months of training in exceptional circumstances.
 - 3.3. Requests for interruption of training in order to complete unaccredited positions will not be approved.
 - 3.4. When considering an application, the FTC will take into account:
 - The Trainee's progress to date, including the need to complete training program requirements
 - Logistical considerations. For example, the FTC may require the Trainee to take a longer interruption of training than that applied for.
 - 3.5. Any interruption of training must not cause the Trainee's total training period to exceed the maximum period for completion of the training program outlined at item 1. Periods of interruption taken due to illness or parental leave will not contribute to maximum training time for a Stage of Training or maximum period for completion of the training program.
 - 3.6. An approved period of interruption does not compel the employing authority to grant leave (where applicable).
 - 3.7. The FTC may require that the Trainee demonstrate currency of skills before returning to active training. At the discretion of the Chair of Education and Training, these requirements may include (but are not limited to):
 - Clinical observation of the Trainee.
 - Completion of workplace based assessments to gauge level of training.
 - Training requirements developed specifically for the Trainee to ensure currency of skills and knowledge.
 - A reference from a consultant who informally supervised the Trainee during their period of interruption.
 - Panel interviews to assess the Trainee's medical knowledge and skills.

These requirements may be used to determine which stage of training the Trainee will recommence training in.

- 3.8. On recommencement of training, the Trainee will return to the same training status held immediately prior to the period of interruption, that is: Progressing Well, Improvement Required or Performance Concern.
- 3.9. Applications for interruption of training should be directed to the relevant RTC Chair via training@aoa.org.au. The application will be forwarded with the RTC Chair's recommendation to the Chair of Education and Training.

- 3.10. Applications for planned interruption of training should be made by 30 May of each year in order to minimise disruption to other Trainees. Requests submitted later than this will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.11. Applications for interruption of training must be in multiples of six months to coincide with AOA training periods.
- 3.12. Applications must include documentation relating to and explaining the request.
- 3.13. Trainees approved for an interruption of training must pay the published administration fee.

Interruption of Training - Parental Leave

4. AOA supports Trainees in taking an interruption of training for the purposes of parental leave*.
 - 4.1. Interruption of training for the purposes of parental leave may be requested and will be granted at any time during training.

*Parental leave as defined by the Fair Work Ombudsman and National Employment Standards.
 - 4.2. Periods of interruption taken due to parental leave will not contribute to maximum training time for a Stage of Training or maximum period for completion of the training program.
 - 4.3. Following an interruption of training for the purposes of parental leave a return to active training will be negotiated to coincide with rotation dates.
 - 4.4. Trainees returning to active training following an interruption of training for the purposes of parental leave may apply to undertake part-time training as per section 8.

Interruption of Training - Research for a Higher Degree

5. A period of full time research, relevant to Orthopaedic Surgery, during the Training Program is strongly encouraged. Trainees may apply for an Interruption of Training to undertake full time of part time research.
 - 5.1. The research period must be undertaken with a view to the successful completion of a university higher degree (MD or PhD) with two or more years of study.
 - 5.2. Trainees must apply in advance for an Interruption of Training to undertake research for a higher degree. Retrospective applications will not be considered.
 - 5.3. Where an application for Interruption of Training to undertake research for a higher degree is approved, the nominated Research Supervisor must provide 6-monthly progress reports documenting regular feedback.
 - 5.4. Trainees will not be eligible for an Interruption of Training to complete a period of research:
 - until they have satisfactorily completed Introduction to Orthopaedics.
 - if they have been assessed as Performance Concern on their most recent Performance Appraisal.
 - 5.5. Applications for interruption of training for research for a higher degree must be accompanied by:

- A letter of support from the nominated Research Supervisor
- A research proposal, including detail of intention to complete a university higher degree (MD or PhD) with two or more years of study

Leave

6. Periods of leave should have a cumulative total of no more than six weeks in any six-month training period.
 - 6.1. The maximum cumulative leave limit includes, but is not limited to, any leave taken for:
 - Annual leave
 - Personal leave
 - Sick leave
 - Compassionate leave
 - Parental leave
 - Carer's leave
 - Study leave
 - Exam leave
 - Conference leave
 - 6.2. Trainees must apply in writing to the RTC Chair for approval of any leave in excess of the maximum cumulative leave limit. Applications must be made in advance.
 - 6.3. In exceptional circumstances, approval of leave in excess of the maximum cumulative leave limit up to a total of 12 weeks in any six-month training period is at the discretion of the RTC Chair.
 - 6.4. Leave in excess of 12 weeks in any six-month training period, will automatically trigger an interruption of training.
 - 6.5. Leave in excess of the maximum cumulative leave limit without the prior approval of the RTC Chair may result in:
 - The training period not being recognised towards minimum training time requirements.
 - A formal warning in accordance with the *Review of Continued Participation in the Training Program* policy.
 - 6.6. Any leave taken by the Trainee is subject to the approval of the employing authority.
 - 6.7. An approved period of leave by the RTC Chair does not compel the employing authority to grant leave.

Training Region Transfers

7. Applicants who are successful in the selection process are offered a post in a training region for which they have indicated a preference. Training posts are offered according to a combination of applicant rankings and preferences, dependent on where posts are available.
 - 7.1. By accepting an offer, the applicant understands that it is not transferable to another regional training program for the duration of their training. Requests to transfer will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.
 - 7.2. Applicants should not accept an offer under the assumption that they can transfer to another region.
 - 7.3. Requests to transfer between training regions are considered on a case-by-case basis,

as an exception. Requests are not automatically approved.

- 7.4. Initial requests to transfer between training regions should be directed to the relevant RTC Chair via training@aoa.org.au.
- 7.5. AOA will not facilitate transfers; the onus is on the Trainee to fulfill the application criteria at item 7.6.
- 7.6. Applications:
 - will only be considered outside the selection process offer period where the Trainee has found another Trainee in the same stage of training with whom to swap.
 - must include documentation of support from the relevant RTC Chairs.
 - must be accompanied by supporting documentation including details of the circumstances leading to the request.
- 7.7. Applications, which fulfil the criteria at item 7.6, should be directed to the Chair of Education and Training via training@aoa.org.au.
- 7.8. Approval of training region transfers will be at the discretion of the Chair of Education and Training.
- 7.9. If a Trainee has been granted a transfer, this arrangement is for the remaining duration of their training.

Part-time Training

8. Trainees can apply to complete a period of part-time training.
 - 8.1. Applications for part-time training must be made at least six months in advance in order to minimise disruption to other Trainees.
 - 8.2. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account the availability of an appropriate part-time training post.
The FTC is working towards identifying training posts suitable for part-time training in each training region. However AOA is unable to guarantee that such a position will be available in any given training period.
 - 8.3. Any approval of part-time training is subject to the final decision of the employing authority. Where appropriate, AOA will advocate on the Trainee's behalf to facilitate part-time training.
 - 8.4. Trainees must have a training commitment of at least 50% of a full time trainee in any one training year.
 - 8.5. Any part-time training period will not change the maximum period for completion of the training program outlined at section 1.
 - 8.6. Trainees undertaking part-time training must achieve the documented Training Program Requirements.
 - Feedback Entries, WBAs, eLogs and monitoring and review meetings must be completed at the full-time rate.
 - Minimum time requirements for each Stage of Training are full-time equivalent.
 - 8.7. Applications for part-time training should be directed to the relevant RTC Chair training@aoa.org.au. The application will be forwarded with the RTC Chair's

recommendation to the Chair of Education and Training.

- 8.8. Applications must include documentation relating to and explaining the request.
- 8.9. Trainees approved for a period of part-time training must pay the part-time training fee.

Recognition of Prior Learning

9. Current Trainees who believe their prior orthopaedic learning experience has led to demonstrated curriculum competency can apply for recognition of this experience.
 - 9.1. Clinical experience gained in an unaccredited registrar position is not eligible for Recognition of Prior Learning.
 - 9.2. Clinical experience in another recognised training program within the 2 years prior to commencement of training will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The onus will be on the Trainee to demonstrate comparability between the training programs.
 - 9.3. Former AOA Trainees who have been successful in their re-application to training, and who have re-commenced the training program, may ask to be assessed in their first year of return as to their level of competence. Following completion of their first year, the trainee will be allocated to an appropriate stage of training based on a review of training performance by the relevant RTC and Chair, Education and Training.
 - 9.4. Trainees with prior research experience completed within 5 years prior to the commencement of training, which meets the requirements of the project or coursework research pathway, may apply for Recognition of Prior Learning. Research must be directly relevant to orthopaedic surgery.
 - 9.5. Applications for Recognition of Prior Research Learning must be submitted on a Research Recognition of Prior Learning application form and should be directed to the Research Coordinator via research@aoa.org.au.
 - 9.6. All other Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning must be submitted on a Recognition of Prior Learning application form and should be directed to the relevant RTC Chair via training@aoa.org.au.
 - 9.7. Applications must include documentation relating to and explaining the request.
 - 9.8. The application will be forwarded with the RTC Chair's recommendation to the Chair of Education and Training.
 - 9.9. The RACS *Recognition of Prior Learning policy* applies to elements of the Training Program delivered by RACS.

Special Consideration

10. In exceptional circumstances, Trainees may apply for special consideration of deviation from AOA policy.
 - 10.1. Applications for special consideration must be submitted, in advance, on the Special Consideration Application Form along with any relevant supporting evidence.

- 10.2. Applications for special consideration should be directed to the relevant RTC Chair via training@aoa.org.au. The application will be forwarded with the RTC Chair's recommendation to the Chair of Education and Training who may then choose to elevate these requests to the FTC as necessary.
- 10.3. Requests for special consideration will be considered on a case-by-case basis.