

**ADVANCED STANDING FOR SPECIALIST TRAINING  
FROM THE UNSW MEDICINE PROGRAM**

*Information for students enrolled in the BMed/MD program at UNSW*

In September 2007, UNSW Medicine reached in-principle agreement with the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA), the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR) and what was then the Institute of Medical Education and Training of NSW Health (IMET), now the Health Education & Training Institute (HETI), for its graduates to be able to seek advanced standing for specialist training in Pathology and Radiology. These arrangements, which took effect from the cohort graduating in 2010, were possible because the Colleges accepted that UNSW Medicine has the staff, resources and appropriate curriculum to be able to provide its graduates with a particularly strong foundation in Pathology and Anatomy, as well as the flexibility within the program to allow focused activities to be undertaken without any adverse impact on general medical training.

Subsequently, the advanced standing pathway was implemented for training in Pathology and has more recently undergone significant modification. With respect to Radiology, RANZCR has maintained in-principle support, but implementation of advanced standing in its training program has been delayed indefinitely.

**Details of the agreed arrangements for Pathology**

UNSW medical students with an interest in Pathology will be able to register for the advanced standing pathway with RCPA. To be eligible to do so, they will need to:

1. Undertake their Independent Learning Project or BSc(Med)(Hons) in an area related to pathology.
2. Make effective use of UNSW/RCPA co-developed online learning resources that help students and graduates learn about the rational use of diagnostic investigations
  - a) the medical student version of this simulation activity, called eDiagnostic, is available only to UNSW students.
  - b) the corresponding PGY1 online resource, known as *iNvestigate* (<http://investigate.med.unsw.edu.au>) has unrestricted access [Note 1] and is directly relevant to learning objectives of the Australian Curriculum Framework for Junior Doctors.
3. Subsequently demonstrate their understanding of the relevant issues by completion of online self-assessments at an appropriate standard of performance – these are available only to graduates registered for the pathway with RCPA.
4. During PGY2, undertake a 10-week term in Pathology, either as a discipline-based term or as an integrated term in a relevant area of clinical medicine – HETI is supporting the development, implementation and accreditation of such terms, which have initially been made available in various outer metropolitan and rural hospitals.

Collectively, the educational activities of the pathway may lead to up to 6 months of advanced standing in the 5-year RCPA training program for laboratory Pathology (i.e. Anatomical Pathology, Microbiology, Chemical Pathology, Haematology) [Note 2].

Undertaking activities in the advanced standing pathway is designed to have no impact on eligibility for registration or on the ability of graduates to attain generalist competencies during prevocational training. Nevertheless, students registering for the pathway will be able to engage with the College from the time of graduation, although completion of training/examination requirements within a reduced period of time will be dependent on maintaining a high level of performance.

What this means for you as a student is that if you have an interest in a career in Pathology, or wish to keep your options open for pursuing such a career, you should give careful

consideration to undertaking an appropriate Independent Learning Project, to enable you to eventually register with RCPA. Because the general allocation of ILPs is random, you will need to organise a negotiated ILP in an area relevant to the practice of Pathology. The College will interpret "relevant" quite broadly e.g. you might undertake an ILP related either to the basic biology of disease or to diagnostic pathology.

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Note 1: Development of the *iNvestigate* website and the eDiagnostic website (which is a derivative of *iNvestigate*) has been supported by a grant from the Quality Use of Pathology Program of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

Note 2: Eligibility for advanced standing is determined by RCPA and is subject to gaining a position in the College's training program. Each application is assessed individually on its merits. Advanced standing is not available in specialist training programs jointly accredited with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. However, completion of the activities of the pathway may be taken into consideration for selection for a training place.

(Document updated by Rakesh K. Kumar, UNSW Faculty of Medicine – September 2015)