

Rural Generalist Advanced Post Guidelines 2023

Rural Generalist Advanced (RGA, also known as AST with ACRRM or ARST with RACGP) training provides doctors working in rural and regional Victoria with access to training in the advanced skills required to meet the medical service needs of their rural communities. Successful completion of at least 12-months training in an advanced skill is a mandatory requirement of Rural Generalist training. In recognition of the important contribution Rural Generalists provide to Victoria's public health system, the Victorian Department of Health (the Department) funds the RGA posts through the Victorian Rural Generalist Program (VRGP). The funding subsidises wages, education, training, and supervision within Victorian health services. VRGP funded positions will be placed in a rural area, where training positions are accredited. VRGP will only support training in a metropolitan area where it is not possible or appropriate to be fully completed in a rural or regional health service for the purposes of meeting accreditation standards.

Advanced skills posts

The VRGP is responsible for the coordination, placement, prioritisation and development of RGA posts across Victoria. This provides a formalised and equitable process for the distribution of RGA posts across Victorian public health services with the aim of addressing community need.

The Department funds 47 RGA posts across Victoria at \$110,000 per post. Each of the five VRGP Regional Networks is allocated nine funded RGA posts each year. The additional two posts are allocated by the VRGP Statewide team to a Regional Network depending on training need. The VRGP Regional Networks determine the need for RGA training within their regions based on the availability of accredited posts, the need for specific skill within their region, training demand for each discipline and trainee interest especially those who enrolled with the VRGP as an RG1.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this document:

ARST	Additional Rural Skills Training
AST	Advanced Specialised Training
Clinical Lead	A rural generalist working in the relevant specialty area who supports the delivery of Rural Generalist training in their discipline through the Victorian Rural Generalist Program.
Funding Body	Refers to the Victorian Department of Health (the Department).
Health Service	The health service responsible for providing the training and supervision to the trainee undertaking the RGA post. The health service signs a funding agreement with the department to receive the RGA funds and is responsible for implementation and coordination of the employment contract and training agreement with the trainee. This includes Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations. Private General Practice clinics are not eligible for RGA funding.
Priority Group	Priority Group levels are used to prioritise candidates for the RGA Match.
RGA	Rural Generalist Advanced (NB this is also known as AST with ACRRM or ARST with RACGP)
RGA Candidate	A doctor applying for an RGA position that has not yet been accepted into a position.

RGA Learning Plan	An education plan that contains details on the individual learning goals for the trainee while undertaking the RGA post. It includes learning objectives drawn from the key learning outcomes associated with the relevant curricula as well as the criteria to be used to evaluate the learning. For some RGA posts the learning plan may consist of a pre-formatted logbook approved by the relevant specialist College. For the purposes of this document, the Learning plan is <i>not</i> the career pathway developed for the trainee.
RGA Match	The Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria (PMCV) coordinates and administers the RGA Match on behalf of the Department of Health. For more information including Match dates visit: www.pmcv.com.au .
RGA trainee	The trainee employed in the RGA position. Existing Fellows are considered trainees whilst undertaking their RGA training.
Training Organisation	The organisation providing the overall training for RG registrars. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both GP colleges, Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) for Australian General Practice Training Program (AGPT) participants • Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS) (NB RVTS trainees must be identified as working toward fellowship with either ACRRM or RACGP) • ACRRM for their Independent Pathway (IP) or Rural Generalist Training Scheme (RGTS) <p>The relevant College will act as the Training Organisation for trainees who are already Fellows.</p>
Supervisor	The doctor providing supervision during RGA training.
Unforeseen and Extenuating Circumstances	Circumstances that were unforeseen and outside a trainee's control at the time of accepting an RGA position. Examples of extenuating circumstances may include significant personal health concern, bereavement, or acute personal/emotional circumstances of an immediate family member.

Accreditation of Posts

RGA posts are 12-month training posts undertaken in Victorian health services in a single discipline.

All funded RGA posts must have accreditation with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and/or the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). For some disciplines accreditation may be administered by a third party such as for the Diploma of Rural Generalist Anaesthesia (DRGA), it is tripartite with the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), ACRRM and RACGP, or for the Advanced diploma of the Royal Australian and New Zealand college of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (DRANZCOG Adv) the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG). Training and education provided within an RGA post must be based on the advanced skills curriculum for the relevant College. Note that the surgery RGA is two years.

Rural Generalist Advanced Match

The process of matching RG trainees to VRGP funded positions is undertaken jointly by VRGP and the Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria (PMCV).

The RGA matching process is undertaken in three phases to ensure RGA training positions are allocated fairly and in accordance with Department and VRGP objectives.

1. **RGA Pre-match** enables a candidate on an existing VRGP pathway to be preferentially allocated to a RGA position.
2. **RGA Match through PMCV** for all remaining unmatched or existing VRGP candidates and new applicants. This Match is coordinated by PMCV and uses a matching system to allocate positions based on order of the candidate's preference and Priority Group.
3. Following the Match process, **Case Management** of unfilled positions will occur by VRGP Regional Coordinators assisted by the relevant Clinical Lead.

Withdrawing after a Match

Trainees who have accepted a position at any stage, then later withdraw from that position, will in most cases be ineligible to be matched to another funded VRGP for the same year. Exceptions may be considered if there are unforeseen and extenuating circumstances, to be approved by VRGP on a case by case basis.

Eligibility Criteria for all candidates

Prior to being considered for a RGA position, Training Colleges will confirm with VRGP that a candidate is eligible to undertake Advanced Training. Funded RGA training posts are open to applications from candidates who meet the following criteria:

1. Recognised training pathway

- a. Rural Generalist² registrars on, or awaiting acceptance on to, a recognised training pathway such as the:
 - i. Australian General Practice Training Program (AGPT) or College led training pathways once established.
 - ii. Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS)
 - iii. Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) Independent Pathway (IP) or Rural Generalist Training Scheme (RGTS)
- b. Fellowed General Practitioners (FRACGP) obtaining advanced skills to become a Rural Generalist. FRACGP candidates must have enrolled in the Rural Generalist program (FRACGP-RG) prior to commencement in the RGA position and be committed to completing all requirements of the RG program.
- c. Existing Rural Generalists (FACRRM, or FRACGP with either FARGP or FRACGP-RG) who wish to undertake a second advanced skill to fill an identified community need.

2. Registration with the VRGP

- a. Priority Group 1 and 2 candidates must be registered with VRGP before commencement of the position (not from time of application). See below for Priority Group information.
- b. Priority Group 3 candidates must be registered with the VRGP by Match close date.

3. General Medical Registration - All candidates must have full General medical registration in Australia at the time of application.

4. Hospital Experience – Candidates training towards FRACGP-RG will need to provide evidence that they will satisfy all the requirements of hospital-based training before commencement in the RGA position. This will occur via a Hospital Experience assessment with their appointed college training manager/medical educator.

5. Grants and funding - All candidates must declare if they are in receipt of other training or research grants which they may be simultaneously receiving during the RGA training period. This grant or funding will be reviewed under the Department's funding conflict of interest terms to identify if the RGA training funding should be reduced in relation to other grants.

6. Additional criteria - Candidates may be required to confirm with PMCV via the registration process, and later by providing to Health Services, evidence of mandatory workforce details such as their MBBS or equivalent qualification, current and satisfactory Working with Children and National Police Check, evidence of an active Medicare provider and prescriber number.

Priority Groups

Priority Group 1a

1. **Registered with VRGP** - candidates who have registered with the VRGP *within* the region of the position prior to the application for the RGA position. This includes both entry via RG1 (internship) and lateral entry trainees.
2. **Documented VRGP Pathway** – candidates are required to be on a documented VRGP pathway for the discipline of the RGA position at the time of the pre-match. The pathway must identify potential towns of future practice with the RGA skill within their VRGP region.
3. **Rural experience** – candidates will have completed at least 12-months work in an MM2-7 location³ within Victoria within the preceding 2-years of the commencement of the position.
4. **Not yet Felloved.**

Priority Group 1b

In situations where RGA priority position are not prematched to a priority 1a trainee then this group includes candidates who have successfully completed, or will have completed, any advanced skills post by the time they are due to commence the pre-match position. This includes an advanced skill post completed interstate or in a non-VRGP funded position. It also includes fellows of either ACRRM or RACGP, FARGP or FRACGP-RG who are wanting to train in a discipline that has been identified as a priority by the Regional Network.

Priority Group 2

1. **Registered with VRGP** - candidates who have registered with the VRGP in *any* region for at prior to the commencement of the RGA position. This includes both entry via RG1 (internship) and lateral entry trainees.
2. **Documented VRGP Pathway** – candidates are required to be on a documented VRGP pathway for the discipline of the RGA position at the time of the pre-match. The pathway must identify potential towns of future practice with the RGA skill. In the situation where candidates wish to apply for several different disciplines, their pathway may reflect this with multiple options.
3. **Rural experience** – candidates will have completed at least 12-months work in an MM2-7 location³ within Victoria within the preceding 2-years of the commencement of the position.

Priority Group 3

1. **Registered with VRGP** - candidates are required to contact the relevant VRGP Regional Coordinator for the applied position and registered with the VRGP before the PMCV Match close date (see below for link to PMCV website for dates).
2. **Priority Group 3 also includes:**
 - Interstate RG trainees who do not meet the Priority Group 1 or 2 criteria.
 - Candidates applying to undertake a second Advanced Skill, e.g. Felloved FACRRM, RACGP + FARGP or RACGP-RG who don't meet priority 1b criteria.

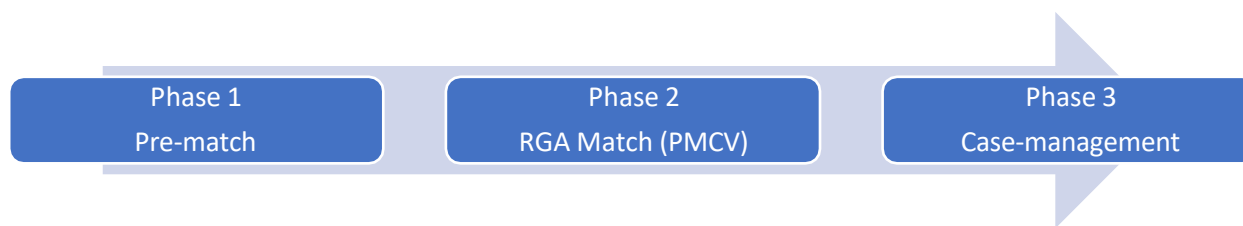
International Medical Graduates

International Medical Graduates are eligible for any of the Priority Groups listed above providing they meet the criteria listed in both the eligibility section (including General registration) and the relevant Priority Group Section.

² A Rural Generalist registrar is considered a registrar training towards a FACRRM and/or the FRACGP plus FARGP (not FRACGP in isolation). RACGP PEP Program trainees are not eligible as they are unable to enrol in the FARGP.

³ Barwon Health is classified as a Regional Health service by the department and is therefore included for Rural Experience despite being located in a MM1 position

RGA Match Phases



The RGA Pre-Match

The pre-match process sits outside of the PMCV match and is administered by VRGP. Pre-matches are available to **Priority Group 1** candidates on a defined VRGP pathway within their region.

Regional Coordinators and Health Services will be aware of eligible pre-match candidates and their training pathway to facilitate pre-matches.

The process for the pre-match is as follows:

1. Regional Coordinators identify any eligible Priority Group 1 candidates within their region who are interested in a pre-match.
2. Once a candidate has been identified, the Regional Coordinator will ensure that both the relevant VRGP Clinical Lead and College training officer or medical educator have had discussions with the candidate to ensure the candidate is suitable for a funded RGA position.
3. Any candidate identified from Priority group 1b must be discussed with the VRGP Statewide coordination team before proceeding further.
4. Health service decides if they wish to participate in the pre-match for nominated position and confirms that the appropriate accreditation for the duration of that position.
5. Regional Coordinators notify the Health Service that there are potential pre-match candidates for a specific position.
6. Health service to run recruitment phase for the pre-match position including reviewing applications and performing interviews as required.
7. Health service offers position to successful candidate. If there are no suitable candidates or a pre-match does not occur, then the position will be advertised in the main RGA PMCV Match with the adjusted Priority Group criteria for that Match.

Candidates who accept a pre-matched position are not eligible to apply to the RGA Match for any other positions. If this should occur, candidates may be withdrawn from the Match by PMCV.

VRGP RGA Match Process

All candidates outside of the pre-match must apply for RGA positions through the annual Rural Generalist Advanced centralised recruitment match administered by the PMCV.

It is an essential requirement that candidates Register with the VRGP as soon as possible. Registration must be received and acknowledged prior to the Match closing.

Candidates will be advised by VRGP of their VRGP number which is a unique identifier. **Candidates will be asked to provide their VRGP number as part of the PMCV application process.**

Registration must be received and acknowledged, with the number included in the PMCV application **prior to the Match closing**. Candidates without a VRGP number, PMCV status will be changed to ineligible and will not proceed further in the matching process.

Please refer to the specific RGA Match Candidate Guide on the PMCV website for details on how to apply, opening and closing dates and the regional interview process www.pmcv.com.au. Vacant positions will be advertised on the VRGP website.

The RGA Match will be open to:

- Priority 1 candidates who were not allocated a pre-match position.
- Priority 2 candidates
- Priority 3 candidates

Priority Groups within the RGA Match

When applying through PMCV, each candidate will be asked to tick an applicability statement that will help identify their Priority Group (PG). Priority Group eligibility will be confirmed by VRGP Regional Coordinators.

- Priority Group 1
 - Current VRGP trainee applying within their region, on a defined pathway applying within that region who are unmatched through pre-match
- Priority Group 2
 - Current VRGP trainee on a defined pathway in any region with a single or multiple discipline/s.
- Priority Group 3
 - Interstate trainee who does not meet Priority Group 1 or 2 criteria. See Priority Group Flowchart – Appendix 1
 - Applying to undertake a second Advanced Skill, e.g. Fellowed FACRRM, FARCGP + FARGP

How Priority Groups are applied

When the Match has closed, and the Match is run, PMCV will run an algorithm which aligns preferencing from candidates and health services. This will be done in two rounds.

- The first Match allocation will be Priority Group 2 candidates and any Priority Group 1 candidates who were not pre-matched.
- The second Match allocation will be for any unmatched candidates from the first Match allocation and include Priority Group 3 candidates.
- Any unmatched positions after the second Match allocation will be case managed by Regional Coordinators to find suitable trainees.

Funding of a second RGA post

All VRGP RG trainees are eligible to complete a funded RGA training post as part of their RG training pathway. This section provides guidance on the allocation of a second or additional RGA funded position to trainees who have already accessed RGA funding for a previous post. Trainees can be funded within Victoria for a maximum of two RGA training posts. Trainees may elect to complete training in an additional advanced skill in an unfunded position, these guidelines do not apply to unfunded positions.

There are two situations in which a trainee may request an additional RGA funded year

- a) Trainees who have been unsuccessful in meeting the requirements of their advanced skill; or
- b) Trainees who have been successful in completing an advanced skill and are seeking to obtain a second advanced skill to specifically meet workforce and community need.

a) Previously unsuccessful

There are many reasons a trainee may have been unsuccessful in their attempt to complete an advanced skill, such as the inability to complete training requirements such as logbook and assessments (to a satisfactory level or a level that can be remediated within 12-months). Trainees in this situation may require an additional full RGA in the same discipline to obtain the satisfactory standard or they may need to pursue an entirely different advanced skill.

The VRGP has implemented progress monitoring requirements for RGA positions to maximise the opportunity for early identification and intervention for Trainees in difficulty. Despite this, there still may be trainees who require additional RGA training and therefore the following process should be followed:

- Trainees with less than expected progress during their RGA training are to participate in the existing support and remediation processes with their College. This includes concerns about performance in non-clinical domains. The relevant VRGP Clinical Lead can provide additional support as required.
- If the college training team believes that the trainee would benefit from (and be successful with) significant additional training, beyond what can be achieved through remediation and the RG Consolidation program, then the college training team is to make a recommendation to the Statewide Clinical Lead that the trainee be eligible for an additional funded year. This recommendation may be for an additional year in the same or a different discipline.
- Trainees are not eligible for an additional funded year for purely change of mind of advanced skill preference. In this situation the trainee would be encouraged to undertake an unfunded advanced skill position or to apply the following year as a Priority Group 3 candidate.

b) Trainees with an existing advanced skill

RG trainees and Fellowed RGs⁴ may elect to undertake a second advanced skill to meet the needs of their community and/or professional interests. This includes doctors who have an existing advanced skill that was not obtained through a VRGP funded position. The following process applies for all doctors in this category applying for funded RGA positions:

1. First preference for RGA positions will be given to RG trainees obtaining their first advanced skill (refer to the RGA priority criteria). Therefore, all doctors wishing to obtain a second advanced skill will be allocated to either Priority Group
2. RACGP trainees and Fellows must have completed the rural requirement of the FARGP or RACGP-RG, before being eligible to complete a second funded RGA.

Applications

All candidates outside the pre-match process must apply for RGA positions through the annual Rural Generalist Advanced Skills centralised recruitment Match. This process is administered by the Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria (PMCV). Please refer to the PMCV website for more information: www.pmcv.com.au.

Training

Health services funded to deliver RGA posts are responsible for ensuring that the trainee's teaching, learning, and supervision reflects the training requirements outlined by the relevant curricula.

An individual RGA Learning Plan should be developed jointly by the trainee, the RGA supervisor and the college training team. The plan should include learning objectives drawn from the key learning outcomes associated with the relevant curricula. The college training team will be responsible for ensuring the Learning Plan reflects the training requirements of the trainee and is aligned to the service needs of the community. The Learning Plan will also specify the required number of training hours or required number of procedures to be performed to meet the advanced skill training requirements. Trainees should contact their respective college training team directly regarding Learning Plans.

The relevant VRGP Clinical lead will have oversight of the training plan, this will necessitate contact between the trainee and the Clinical lead and where necessary involve the college training team.

Part-time training is available for some positions. This should be discussed with the Regional Coordinator and relevant Health Service prior to the Match closing date.

Administration and monitoring

Victorian Rural Generalist Program - Statewide Team

The VRGP Statewide Team is responsible for managing the administration of the RGA positions and recommending the allocation of RGA funding to relevant health services by:

- confirming the RGA funding to relevant health services supports eligible medical practitioners to gain procedural and non-procedural advanced skills to meet identified Victorian rural and regional community needs.
- ensuring RGA posts support the VRGP objectives and guidelines as determined by the department.

College Training teams

The College Training teams (CTT) are responsible for the administration of training and monitoring the quality of education, training, and mentoring. Documentation of actions to be taken to address concerns should occur in accordance with the CTT's policies for escalation and remediation.

CTT's may request assistance from the VRGP's Regional Coordinators and/or Clinical Leads if they have concerns regarding a trainee and/or a health service.

Health Services

The Health Service is responsible for ensuring that the education, training, and supervision provided to the trainee is of sufficient quantity and quality for the trainee to meet the requirements of the post. This includes but is not limited to:

- allocation and availability of an appropriate supervisor.
- appropriate accreditation for the position'
- ensuring protected teaching time as per the accreditation requirements.
- adequate clinical exposure to meet logbook and curriculum requirements.

Formal monitoring of the trainee's progression according to the Learning Plan is to be undertaken by the trainee and the RGA supervisor (and/or mentor) at **three-monthly intervals** for the duration of the RGA post. The review should be arranged by the trainee and/or supervisor and consist of the trainee and their primary supervisor having a one-on-one discussion that compares a trainee's progress against the training requirements of the placement. This review should incorporate two-way feedback. The trainee will need to notify the CTT of the outcome of this review.

It is a condition of the funding to Health Services that they provide the necessary support, supervision, and resources to assist the trainee to meet the goals of the training plan within the time constraints of the post.

Contact Details

VRGP Contacts

Gippsland Regional Coordinator	Julie Rogalsky	gippsland@vicruralgeneralist.com.au
Grampians Regional Coordinator	Kim Lane	grampians@vicruralgeneralist.com.au
Hume Regional Coordinator	Merryn Lodding	hume@vicruralgeneralist.com.au
Loddon Mallee Regional Coordinator	Gemma Bilardi	loddon.mallee@vicruralgeneralist.com.au
South West Regional Coordinator	Anna Dyson	south.west@vicruralgeneralist.com.au

College Training Teams

ACCRM	Katrina Vazzoler Training Network Coordinator	k.vazzoler@acrrm.org.au
RACGP	Julianne McLuckie	julianne.mcluckie@racgp.org.au
RACGP FARGP (for existing fellows)	Claire Milton	claire.milton@racgp.org.au