

VRGP Guidelines for additional funded Rural Generalist Advanced posts

Background

Rural Generalists (RG) train with a specific skill set to meet the unique needs of the communities in which they practice. All RG's obtain an advanced skill, in a specific discipline, as part of their fellowship training. There may be occasions when a Rural Generalist wishes to obtain an additional advanced skill to meet the needs of their community and/or for their own professional interest.

Rural Generalist advanced skills are obtained through training positions accredited with the relevant college. In recognition of the important role of Rural Generalists to Victoria's public health system, the Victorian Department of Health (the department) funds some of these posts as Rural Generalist Advanced (RGA) training.

All VRGP RG trainees are eligible to complete a RGA funded training post as part of their RG training pathway. This document 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 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 in this circumstance.

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

- Trainees who have been unsuccessful in meeting the requirements of their advanced skill; or
- 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

Group A – Previously unsuccessful advanced skill

All Rural Generalist trainees require an advanced skill in order to obtain FACRRM or the FARGP¹. 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, with remediation, in order to obtain the satisfactory standard or they may need to pursue an entirely different advanced skill. Trainees within Group A require remediation to obtain their first advanced skill that cannot be achieved through a consolidation year, rather than obtaining a second advanced skill.

The VRGP has implemented increased 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:

¹ Fellowship of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (FACRRM) or the Fellowship of Advanced Rural General Practice (FARGP)

1. Trainees with less than expected progress during their RGA training participate in the existing support and remediation processes with their Training Organisation (TO). This includes concerns about performance in non-clinical domains. It is recommended that the TO process involves discussion with the trainee, medical educator, GP mentor and supervisor, and development of a specific learning plan. The relevant VRGP Clinical Lead can provide additional support as required.
2. If the TO 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 TO 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 (if it is unlikely the trainee will be successful in the original discipline).
3. Trainees are not eligible for an additional funded year for purely change of mind or advanced skill preference. In this situation the Trainee would be encouraged to undertake an unfunded advanced skill position.

Group B – Trainees with an existing advanced skill

RG trainees and fellowed RGs² 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 (as per the RGA selection criteria). Therefore, all doctors wishing to obtain a second advanced skill may only apply, and be allocated, vacant positions that were not filled in the first round.
2. RG trainees who have already completed an RGA year successfully and would like to do a second RGA as part of their training must have completed the time rural component of their college³ before being eligible to apply for the second funded RGA. RG trainees are also required to be on a recognised VRGP training pathway that includes the second advanced skill.
3. Existing fellows are required to demonstrate an existing commitment to rural location (not regional). Applicants will be required to provide information on how the additional advanced skill will meet needs of their identified community.

² Holders of FACRRM and/or FARGP (with FRACGP)

³ 12 months of training in a MM 3-7 (FARGP) or MM 4-7 (ACRRM) region.