

Rural Generalist Advanced Skills Program Guidelines

2021 Transition Guidelines

Introduction

The Rural Generalist Advanced (RGA) skills training provides doctors in rural and regional Victoria access to the advanced skills required to meet the medical service needs of the rural communities in which they practice. This supports the development, recruitment and retention of a skilled Rural Generalist workforce for rural and regional Victoria.

In recognition of the important role of Rural Generalist doctors to Victoria's public health system, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (the department) funds the RGA skills training under the Victorian Rural Generalist Program¹. Funding assists advanced skill training post costs, specifically for the provision of appropriate education, training and supervision.

These guidelines replace the Rural Extended and Advanced Procedural Skills (REAPS) 2019 guidelines and come under the governance framework and coordination of the statewide Victorian Rural Generalist Program.

Advanced skills accreditation

RGA skills posts are 12-month training posts undertaken in Victorian health services with relevant medical College accreditation in a single discipline.

To qualify for support under the RGA skills training, all 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). Training provided within an RGA post must be based on the advanced skills curriculum for the relevant College which is also responsible for the formal accreditation of RGA posts².

The accreditation may occur through existing Training Organisation structures. The Victorian Rural Generalist Program works collaboratively with Training Organisations and health services to assist in this process as required. For some disciplines accreditation may be administered by a third party such as the Joint Consultative Committee on Anaesthesia (JCCA).

Advanced skills posts

The Victorian Rural Generalist Program is responsible for the coordination, development and monitoring of RGA posts across Victoria. This provides a formalised and equitable process for the distribution of department funded RGA posts across Victorian public health services and public hospitals with the aim of addressing community need for Rural Generalists.

¹ For a full overview of the Victorian Rural Generalist Program and its statewide coordination and management framework go to <https://www.vicruralgeneralist.com.au/>

² Additional information and descriptions regarding advanced skill curriculums and accreditation standards, can be found on the College websites.

Development of new posts and renewal of existing posts will be assessed by the VRGP based on the post's ability to demonstrate it meets the outcomes of the Victorian Rural Generalist Program and is accredited with the relevant College. The need for RGA training in particular disciplines will be informed by the VRGP Regional Networks based on identified community workforce need within each region. The VRGP then recommends to the department these accredited posts for funding.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this document:

Clinical Lead	Supports the delivery of Rural Generalist training in rural and regional Victoria through the Victorian Rural Generalist Program.
Funding Body	Refers to Department of Health Human & Services (the department).
Health Service	The health service is responsible for providing the training and supervision to the trainee undertaking the RGA position. 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.
RGA Trainee	The trainee employed in the RGA position. This includes all eligible participants as per the eligibility criteria below. Fellows are considered trainees whilst undertaking their RGA training only.
Supervisor	Doctor providing supervision during RGA training. The type and level of supervision required for the position is determined by the relevant College.
Training Organisation	The organisation providing the training for RG registrars. This includes Regional Training Organisations (RTO's) for Australian General Practice Training Program (AGPT) participants; Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) for their Independent or RG100 Pathway. The relevant College will act as the Training Organisation for Trainees who are already Fellows of their College.
Training Plan	An education (or learning plan) that contains details on the individual learning goals for the trainee while undertaking the RGA post. It should include 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 training plan may consist of a pre-formatted logbook approved by the College. For the purposes of this document, the Training plan is <i>not</i> the career pathway developed for the Trainee.

Eligibility

Rural Generalist Advanced funded training positions are open to applications from the following medical practitioners:

- Victorian Rural Generalist³ registrars on a recognised training pathway such as the:
 - Australian General Practice Training Program (AGPT)
 - Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS)
 - Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) Independent or RG100 Pathway
- Fellowed General Practitioners (FRACGP) obtaining advanced skills to sub-specialise as a Rural Generalist. FRACGP applicants are required to have enrolled in the Fellowship of Advanced Rural General Practice (FARGP) prior to commencement in the RGA position.
- Existing Rural Generalists (FACRRM, or RACGP with FARGP) who would like to undertake a second advanced skill to fill an identified community need. Please note that where positions are limited, priority may be given to trainees obtaining their first advanced skill.
- All applicants 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 or funding the applicant may be simultaneously receiving.

Training

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

An individual training plan should be developed jointly by the trainee, the RGA supervisor and the Training Organisation. The plan should include learning objectives drawn from the key learning outcomes associated with the relevant curricula. Training Organisations will be responsible for ensuring the training plan developed reflects both the training requirements of the trainee and is aligned to the service needs of the community. The training 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 Training Organisation directly in regard to training plans.

³ A Rural Generalist registrar is considered a registrar training towards a FACRRM and/or the FRACGP plus FARGP (not FRACGP in isolation).

Administration and monitoring

Department of Health and Human Services

The department as the funding body will hold a funding agreement with and distribute the funds directly to the health service where the RGA trainee is undertaking their post.

Victorian Rural Generalist Program- Statewide Team

The Victorian Rural Generalist Program's 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 Victorian Rural Generalist Program's objectives and guidelines as determined by the department.

Training Organisations

The Training Organisations are responsible for the administration of training and monitoring the quality of education, training and mentoring. The Training Organisation will be responsible for external oversight of the three-monthly review of progress (see below) and are to provide written confirmation to the VRGP Regional Coordinators every three months that progress monitoring has occurred for each Trainee. Documentation of actions to be taken to address concerns should occur in accordance with the Training Organisation's policies for escalation and remediation.

Training Organisations may request assistance from the Victorian Rural Generalist Program's Regional Coordinators if they have concerns regarding a Trainee and a health service's and/or the Training Organisation's policies are not likely to result in resolution of these concerns.

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 allocation of the appropriate Supervisor and protected teaching time as per the accreditation requirements.

Formal monitoring of the trainee's progression according to the Training 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 their TO of the outcome of this review.

Where a trainee has been identified as needing additional education and/or support to meet the requirements of the RGA post, then the Training Organisation will work with the health service and the trainee to address these additional needs as required. 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.

Applications

All candidates must apply for a training post through the annual Rural Generalist Advanced Skills centralised recruitment match. This process is administered by the Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria (PMCV). The 2021 RG Advanced match through PMCV has already occurred and undergoing a process of evaluation. Details of the 2022 RGA match will be released when available.

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