VICTORIAN
RURAL GENERALIST
PROGRAM

Rural Generalist Training and Education Guidelines

Overview

The Rural Generalist Training and Education Grant (RGTEG) is funded by the Victorian Department of Health (the department) in recognition of the important role Rural Generalists (RGs) play within Victoria's public health system. RGTEG is overseen by the Victorian Rural Generalist Program on behalf of the Department. The objective of RGTEG is to assist the training of RGs with appropriate skills and scope of practice to meet the needs of the rural and remote communities in which they serve.

Funding Streams

There are two RGTEG streams.

- Stream 1: For Health Services
- Stream 2: For Individual Trainees

Activities funded within each stream are assessed by the relevant Regional Network on their relevance, value for money and likelihood to meet the identified healthcare needs of the community.

Fund Holder

The department is the RGTEG Fund Holder for the grants. Grant funds are paid by the department to a health service or other approved organisation for both streams. Grant funds cannot be paid to an individual. Where the grant is used to reimburse a trainee for their wage or out-of-pocket training costs (Stream 2), the department will pay the funds to the trainee's local health service, or to the VRGP Regional Network's fund-holding health service for distribution to the trainee.

Funds may be allocated prospectively in the case of a payment to a health service for training, or retrospectively to reimburse a trainee following a clinical attachment (for example).

Stream 1 – Health Services

Health Services may receive funding of up to $20,000 to support the employment and training of a specific RG trainee in an accredited training post or training requirement as part of a regional VRGP pathway.

Training post requirements:

- Applications are made for a specific trainee who is PGY3 or above (PGY2 trainees may be considered on a case-by-case basis where there are no other options for gaining required prerequisite training) and meets the RGTEG trainee eligibility as detailed below.
- The post or rotation must provide a linkage between the trainee and their identified community with the workforce and health care need.

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- All training sites must have the appropriate accreditation, including supervision requirements, with the relevant college.
- Both procedural and non-procedural disciplines are eligible.

Health Service Requirements:

- Be located within a Modified Monash Model (MMM) 4-7 location. Sub-regional health services located in MMM3 regions that have Rural Generalist led or mixed models for the applied training, will be considered on a case-by-case basis[1].
- Health services in MMM2 locations will be considered on a case-by-case basis where they provide training that would not otherwise be available to the trainee.
- Funding is made to the health service and may be used to pay the trainee wage and/or supervision expenses (where a supervisor is not otherwise paid for trainee supervision under their contract). It is not expected that the grant will be equivalent to the full cost of both training and supervision.
- Trainees are required to be on an employee arrangement or contract with terms aligned with the relevant industrial agreement[2] (NOTE: the relevant rate in the industrial agreement will apply in all health services irrespective of if they are signatories to the agreement). If the trainee has existing employment arrangements with a relevant RG training provider (such as a GP clinic or on rotation from another service) the health service may make individual payment arrangements with the alternative service. Trainees are not permitted to be paid under Fee for Service arrangements or at rates in excess of the relevant industrial agreement.
- Where funding is used for supervision and the supervisor has existing employment arrangements with an alternative service (such as a private GP clinic) the health service may make individual payment arrangements with the alternative service.

Examples of Stream 1 include:

- An anaesthetic rotation or sessions in a region where there is limited access to the mandatory anaesthetics training required for ACRRM fellowship or as preparation for RG Advanced training.
- A 6-month part-time rotation where the trainee works in a College approved Urgent Care Centre or Emergency Department while also completing a part-time rotation in primary care.
- A clinical rotation within the health service as part of completing a qualification (such as in psychiatry, child health, palliative care). Funds could be used to support the trainee to rotate out from a larger health service to ensure they have training in a smaller rural service or training in an “outreach service” model, while also developing a community connection to a smaller rural community which has this identified community health care need.
- A 6-month emergency medicine rotation to fulfil core emergency training requirements for either college.
- Payment for supervision (or trainee wage) for essential training requirements, such as signing off a procedure or completing a miniCEX or other required workplace-based assessment, within fee for service health services where traditionally only one doctor (the supervisor or trainee) could receive payment under MBS for the consultation/procedure.
- Payments to cover the trainee wages while they are released from a primary care rotation to attend clinical attachments for essential training requirements in a supernumerary capacity.

[1] Requests to be made via the Regional Coordinator and will be determined by the Regional Network.

[2] Doctors In Training (Victorian Public Health Sector) (AMA Victoria/ASMOF) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement 2022-2026 or Medical Specialists (Victorian Public Health Sector) (AMA Victoria/ASMOF) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement 2022 – 2026

There must be a 12-month gap between a successful Stream 1 RGTEG application and a future application to the RGTEG training program under Stream 1 for the same trainee. Activities associated with existing VRGP programs such as RGA and RGC will not be funded.

Stream 2 – Individual Trainee

RG trainees may apply for funding of up to $2,000 to assist with essential training costs such as course enrolment, wages or other expenses associated with training and/or attending an alternative place of work that would otherwise be an out-of-pocket cost to the trainee.

A grant total of up to $2,000 is available per trainee for the duration of their training. This may be for a single application/expense or for multiple applications and expenses over their training. Stream 2 funding is separate from Stream 1 funding and cannot be combined with Stream 1 funding to cover the same activity or expense.

Eligible Stream 2 examples:

- Wage support for a clinical attachment to obtain skills required for fellowship that cannot be obtained by alternative means, such as to gain mandatory anaesthetic or obstetric experience, or primary care logbook skills. Wage support is capped at 10 hours per day at the industrial agreement PGY rate for stage of training. It may be more appropriate for long attachments to be funded through Stream 1.
- Contribution towards enrolment costs in a recognised graduate qualification where completion of that skill would add significant benefit to the community or is required for fellowship. Examples include the anaesthetic ProStart program, a qualification in Child Health or Palliative Medicine.
- Contribution towards costs of additional support required to successfully complete examinations. This may include funding for an individual mentor for trainees who have had an unsuccessful exam attempt.
- Reasonable accommodation costs may be considered on a case-by-case basis where a trainee is required to travel for a mandatory part of their training and the training is not available at their own health service.

Excluded Stream 2 activities

- Payment for exams or exam preparation
- Short (2-3 day) emergency, simulation or similar courses (please apply through RWAV grants https://www.rwav.com.au/grants-2020/public/)
- Funding to attend conferences
- Funding of equipment
- Activities associated with existing VRGP programs such as RGTEG (Stream 1), RGA and RGC
- Activities for which other Commonwealth, State, Territory or Local Government bodies have primary responsibility.
- Activities eligible under existing grant structures such as RWAV or procedural grants
- Overseas expenses
- Interstate expenses where a viable alternative exists within Victoria. Special consideration may be given to trainees within border communities.
- Expenses that are not identified to meet the needs of the trainee's identified community or otherwise deemed unsuitable by VRGP.

Special Consideration

Applications for activities not otherwise covered by the above streams will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Trainee Eligibility

To be eligible for the RGTEG, the applicant needs to meet ALL of the criteria within the relevant category:

Rural Generalist Trainees (without existing fellowship)

1. Be an existing Victorian Rural Generalist Program Trainee on a Victorian training pathway endorsed by the relevant VRGP Regional Network. Applicants will be required to identify the community connected to that pathway and provide a copy of the pathway.
2. Be enrolled in a Rural Generalist fellowship program working towards one or more of the following end points:
    - Fellowship of Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (FACRRM);
    - Fellowship of Royal Australian College of General Practitioners – Rural Generalist (FRACGP-RG).
3. Be currently working in a health service in a MM 3-7[3] location in Victoria OR
    - have previously, within the past 3 years, completed 12-months of post graduate medical employment in a Victorian MM 2-7 location, with intention to work in a MM3-7 location in the future (as per their VRGP pathway);
    - will have completed 12-months of post graduate medical employment in a Victorian MM 2-7 location by the commencement of the RGTEG rotation with intention to work in a MM3-7 location in the future (as per their VRGP pathway);
    - is currently working **in the region** (including MM1) & has a designated pathway plan with a final destination MM3 & above.
4. Be Post Graduate Year 3 (PGY3) or above OR
    - be PGY3 by the time the RGTEG activities will commence;
    - require support through RGTEG to undertake activities that are required to progress in their training at PGY3 (e.g. completing pre-requisite activity for advanced skill training) and not otherwise available;
    - may be PGY2 and considered on a case-by-case basis where there are no other options for gaining required prerequisite training.

The following are NOT eligible:

- VRGP trainees currently on leave from training (for activities undertaken during paused training time).

Applicants with existing General Practice Qualifications

The purpose of RGTEG is to assist with overcoming some of the barriers towards gaining a fellowship as a Rural Generalist. Therefore, practitioners with existing Rural Generalist qualifications are ineligible to apply[4].

General Practitioners with RACGP fellowship who are committed to upskilling to become a Rural Generalist may apply if they meet the following criteria:

[3] Current or previous employment location is used for **eligibility** purposes to enable consistency with the minimum rural training requirements for RG trainees and minimal availability of pre-vocational training positions in MM 4-7 locations. This eligibility requirement is separate from and does not affect the Stream 1 location requirements.

[4] The definition of a Rural Generalist qualification is a FACRRM and/or FRACGP-RG.

1. Be an existing Victorian Rural Generalist Program Trainee[5] on a Victorian training pathway endorsed by the relevant VRGP Regional Network. Applicants will be required to identify the community connected to that pathway and provide a copy of their pathway.
2. Be enrolled in a Rural Generalist college training program.
3. Be currently working regularly (such as providing visiting medical officer services) in a Victorian funded MM 4-7 health service.
4. Propose to undertake an activity that will meet an identified need within their MM 4-7 identified Victorian rural community.

Application Process

All applications must be made through the relevant VRGP Regional Coordinator by the closing date for the relevant application round. The Regional Coordinator will assist the applicant as required and submit completed applications to the Regional Network for consideration.

Applicants will be requested to provide:

- A completed application form.
- Evidence to confirm they meet the eligibility criteria.
- A copy of their VRGP training pathway including the community that will benefit from the RGTEG.
- A statement demonstrating how the proposed funded activity will advance their practice and contribute to the identified need of the community and health service.

Only applications that meet all the above criteria, have submitted all required components of the application and have been endorsed by the Regional Network or designated Regional Network subcommittee will be eligible for funding.

Role of Regional Coordinator

The Regional Coordinator plays a key role in the RGTEG. They are the first point of contact for expressions of interest for the funding and will support trainees and health services to make their applications. The Regional Coordinator will:

- provide guidance to ensure activities will meet the criteria and balance the needs of the community with the interests of the trainee;
- liaise with the relevant colleges, health services and other stakeholders as required to complete the application;
- confirm funding availability with the department;
- submit the application to the Regional Network for endorsement;
- upload completed and endorsed applications to the VRGP Customer Relationship Management system (CRM);
- provide information on successful applications to the department for the purpose of making payments.

Role of the Regional Network

The Regional Network will be responsible for assessing applications against the eligibility criteria and ensuring that the activity meets an identified community need for that region.

[5] The term 'trainee' is used to describe all VRGP learners including existing fellows.

A Regional Network may elect to delegate the assessment process to a sub-committee or selection panel made up of existing Regional Network members. The Regional Network would need to ensure that the make-up of the panel was sufficient to be able to adequately assess the applications according to the identified criteria.

There is a capped amount of funding allocated to each VRGP Regional Network. Where the demand for funding exceeds availability, the Regional Network may give priority to RG trainees who are working towards the end of their training and require RGTEG funds to support outstanding requirements to achieve fellowship.

If a Regional Network has not allocated the full amount of their funding, then the remaining funds may be reallocated/redistributed to other regions. Regional Networks may elect to maintain a second round waiting list of eligible applicants that were not successful in the first round due to the limitations of funding, that may be offered funds redistributed from an alternative region.

The Statewide Clinical Lead and VRGP Manager will provide a dispute and/or resolution process if required.

Role of the VRGP Statewide Team

The VRGP Statewide Team will provide advice on funding outcomes to the Regional Coordinator and health service.

Application timeline and due dates

There are two RGTEG rounds per year.

Applications for Stream 1 may be made of current or future rotations.

Applications for Stream 2 may be for current or retrospective expenses/wages after the completion of the training.

For Semester 1 2027: application submission prior to 10th January 2027

For Semester 2 2027: application submission prior to 30th June 2027

NOTE – Confirmation of funding availability can be provided by the department prior to the submission closing date for early applications where these are endorsed by the Regional Network.

Further information

Please contact your Regional Coordinator for an application form and more information.

Region	Regional Coordinator	
Barwon South West	**Anna Dyson**	south.west@vicruralgeneralist.com.au
Gippsland	**Julie Rogalsky**	gippsland@vicruralgeneralist.com.au
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