



AGPT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Salary Support Program Policy 2024



Policy details

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Approved by: Assistant Secretary, Travis Power

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Responsible Section: GP Training Innovation Section, Workforce Training Branch, Health Workforce Division

Supporting documents, procedures and forms: Schedule 1: Category 2 training facility criteria

Audience: Eligible facilities employing GP registrars from the AGPT Program (see 6.1)
Registrars enrolled in the AGPT Program
ACRRM and RACGP including the Joint Colleges Training Services Pty Ltd
FNGPTC
Services Australia
Stakeholders

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1. Purpose of policy

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework that governs access to Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Salary Support program (Salary Support program) funding consistent with the Government's Closing the Gap initiative.
- 1.2. The objective of the Salary Support program is to provide funding to maximise the number of GP training placements delivered in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health settings to improve access to appropriate, holistic health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- 1.3. This policy aims to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to appropriate and holistic health care by:
 - 1.3.1. Recognising Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) as the primary training partner in the delivery of culturally safe general practice training in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health;
 - 1.3.2. Providing opportunities for registrars to undertake a part of their core vocational training in training facilities delivering high-quality holistic and culturally safe health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and
 - 1.3.3. Supporting registrars to provide a workforce benefit in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service and encourage long-term retention of GPs in these practices.

2. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
ACRRM	Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, one of the two GP Colleges.
ARST	Additional Rural Skills Training is core training undertaken for FARGP (or, from 1 July 2022, the Rural Generalist Fellowship)
AST	Advanced Specialised Training is core training undertaken as part of training towards the FACRRM.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Training Strategic Plan (Strategic Plans)	<p>Strategic Plans support high quality, innovative regionally based approaches to general practice training in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.</p> <p>Strategic Plans aim to support the GP Colleges (ACRRM and RACGP) to improve quality of general practice training provided in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health settings.</p>

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
FNGPTC	The First Nations General Practice Training Committee (FNGPTC) is the governance group with oversight of Salary Support and Strategic Plans activities, with broad stakeholder representation.
Joint Colleges Training Services Pty Ltd (JCTS)	<p>The two GP Colleges established an incorporated joint venture company, the JCTS, to oversee elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services under the AGPT program. The JCTS will support activities including:</p> <p>The development and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategic plans, including cultural education and cultural mentorship;</p> <p>The provision of registrar housing in remote Northern Territory;</p> <p>Other potential areas of collaboration as agreed between ACRRM and RACGP.</p>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training post	An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training post is considered a specialised post by the GP Colleges.
Accredited training facility	A training facility that has been accredited to deliver training under the AGPT Program.
Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) / Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS)	A member organisation of the state or territory affiliate of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), which has been deemed by the respective affiliate and the NACCHO Board to have met the NACCHO criteria for membership as defined by the NACCHO constitution.
Category 1 training facility	A recognised member facility of NACCHO that holds the relevant College accreditation to deliver training.
Category 2 training facility	A facility that has met the criteria for approval detailed in Schedule 1 of this policy and holds the relevant College accreditation to deliver training.
Core Generalist Training	<p>RACGP: Core Generalist Training refers to General Practice Term (GPT) 1, GPT 2, GPT 3, Mandatory Elective and Extended Skills Training for FRACGP registrars, and Advanced Rural Skills Training for FARGP Registrars.</p> <p>ACRRM: Core Generalist Training covers three of the four-year Fellowship program.</p>

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
Department of Health and Aged Care	The Commonwealth Government agency responsible for Australia's health and aged care system.
Education and Training Requirements	The Education and Training Requirements placed on a registrar working towards fellowship of the RACGP, ACRRM or both. These requirements are specified by the Relevant College(s) and the Department of Health.
FARGP	Fellowship in Advanced Rural General Practice through the RACGP.
FACRRM	Fellowship of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine.
FRACGP	Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.
FRACGP-RG	The Rural Generalist Fellowship is awarded in addition to the vocational Fellowship of the RACGP.
RACGP	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, one of the two GP Colleges.
Registrar	A doctor undertaking specialist training under the AGPT fellowship pathway with a GP College.
Registrar Salary Support	The negotiated and agreed salary component paid to training facilities under the provisions of this policy.
Registrar training placements	This is restricted to College-approved training placements for registrars undertaking vocational training.
State Censor	The GP College State Censor is responsible for interpreting curriculum and standards and making a determination about registrar training requirements.
Training Facility	Includes any facility accredited by the Colleges to provide training under the AGPT Program.

3. Application and scope

- 3.1. This applies to all registrars enrolled on the AGPT Program.
- 3.2. This policy supersedes the previous AGPT Salary Support Policy 2023 and will come into effect as of TBC.
- 3.3. This policy applies to registrar training placements commencing on or after TBC in an eligible training facility as specified in this policy.
- 3.4. This policy guides the management of registrar training placements by RACGP and ACRRM where the training facility receives Salary Support for the registrar undertaking the training placement.
- 3.5. The policy supports RACGP and ACRRM to provide best practice delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training for registrars training on the AGPT Program, while providing opportunities for workforce benefits and support for practice retention.
- 3.6. Funding is administered by Services Australia to the approved training facilities in accordance with the National Consistent Payment Framework (NCP) to enable registrars to train in an eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service in their region.
- 3.7. The GP Colleges (including via the JCTS), in consultation with the FNGPTC, may implement local policies that govern access to Salary Support program funding to ensure fair and equitable access to limited funding.
- 3.8. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training funding is provided to the GP Colleges for joint administration through JCTS. This funding is aimed at supporting the JCTS Strategic Plans.
- 3.9. The JCTS Strategic Plans should inform the distribution of registrar placements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services within a region.

4. Policy principles

- 4.1. The program supports two complementary health workforce objectives:
 - 4.1.1. To provide long-term training placements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health settings to encourage retention of registrars who are interested in exploring a career in this field; and
 - 4.1.2. To expose as many other registrars as possible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training and support cultural awareness through shorter term placements to inform their training and practice.

5. Salary Support program eligibility

- 5.1. To be eligible for Salary Support program funding, registrars must be:
 - 5.1.1. Enrolled in the AGPT Program; and
 - 5.1.2. Undertaking core vocational training in an eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training post.

- 5.2. Salary supported places in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training facilities are limited to registrars undertaking the following training requirements:
 - 5.2.1. General Practice Training and Extended Skills terms for RACGP;
 - 5.2.2. Core Generalist terms for ACRRM;
 - 5.2.3. Additional Rural Skills Training (ARST) for the FRACGP-RG and Advanced Specialised Training (AST) terms for the FACRRM; and
 - 5.2.4. Mandatory Elective Units.

6. Training facilities eligible for salary support

- 6.1. The following training facilities are eligible for registrar Salary Support under this policy:
 - 6.1.1. Category 1 training facilities; and
 - 6.1.2. Category 2 training facilities, where the facility demonstrates that it is able to meet the criteria outlined in Schedule 1 of this policy.
- 6.2. Salary Support Payments are also available for 6.1 training facilities where the registrar is participating in the Commonwealth Supported Single Employer Model (SEM) trials. This arrangement is enabled up to 31 December 2028.
- 6.3. Training facilities in receipt of registrar Salary Support must agree to:
 - 6.3.1. Maintain their Category 1 or Category 2 training facility College accreditation status;
 - 6.3.2. Employ the registrar on a 'PAYG' basis, except where an exemption is provided under 6.2;
 - 6.3.3. Meet requirements as set by the GP Colleges to verify or document registrar hours worked;
 - 6.3.4. Assist registrars in meeting the training requirements of the AGPT Program;
 - 6.3.5. Provide the registrar with access to a Cultural Educator and Cultural Mentor associated with the training facility; and
 - 6.3.6. Support the registrar to apply for a 3GA Medicare Provider Number specific to the placement.

7. Where Salary Support is not available

- 7.1. Registrar Salary Support is not available for registrars pursuing:
 - 7.1.1. GP Training that is not in an eligible facility as outlined in 6.1 including training in hospital settings.
 - 7.1.2. An extension of training time. For further information, please refer to the [RACGP Extensions of Program Time Policy](#) and [ACRRM Training Time Policy](#);
 - 7.1.3. Training for remediation purposes. See the [RACGP Registrar Support and Remediation Policy](#) and the [ACRRM Remediation Policy](#).

8. Salary Support program funding

- 8.1. Funding of up to \$27 million per annum will be available to support registrar placements in eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health facilities and will be allocated based on the following criteria:

- 8.1.1. Salary Support hourly rates are determined by the Modified Monash Model (MMM) geographical classification system. The MMM location of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training facility will be paid up to the following rates per hour:

Modified Monash Model group	Payable up to a maximum hourly rate of:
A (MMM Regions 1-2)	\$71.00
B (MMM Regions 3-5)	\$85.00
C (MMM Region 6)	\$100.00
D (MMM Region 7)	\$110.00

- 8.1.2. Allocations will be monitored by the FNGPTC through 6-monthly College Minimum Dataset data and budget reconciliations, where adjustments may be made accordingly.
- 8.1.3. Payments will be made monthly and in arrears to facilities as outlined in the NCP.
- 8.1.4. Salary Support must not cover overtime in state and territory government facilities.

9. Exceptions to the Salary Support program funding model

- 9.1. Eligible facilities (under 6.1) can submit a request, in the specified format, to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care to seek an exception to the salary support parameters contained in this policy. Exceptions are to enable an individual 6.1 facility to outline its set of circumstances for consideration.
- 9.2. Exceptions to the Salary Support program policy must be applied for in writing, in the specified format, via email to: FNGPTC@health.gov.au.
- 9.3. Requests for an exception consideration require details of the type of exception requested, including the reasons, the number of FTE weeks, supporting documentation and evidence, and any further information sought by the FNGPTC or the Department of Health and Aged Care.
- 9.4. Decisions can only be made upon the evidence available and failing to provide further information may lead to a determination to decline the exception request.
- 9.5. Training facilities and the JCTS will be notified within 20 business days, via email, of the outcome, including the reasons if a request is declined.
- 9.6. Training facilities are not automatically entitled to an exception outside of the parameters set out in the current policy.

- 9.7. Any exception will only be granted for a set period of time.
- 9.8. The FNGPTC will be updated every quarter on exception requests and outcomes.

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1. Registrars are responsible for:

- 10.1.1. Using the Cultural Educator and Cultural Mentor made available to them.
- 10.1.2. Undertaking cultural awareness training or its equivalent.
- 10.1.3. Using Medicare billing where possible and appropriate.

10.2. GP Colleges are responsible for:

- 10.2.1. Placing registrars in salary supported posts in accordance with this policy and in alignment with the FNGPTC's placement forecasts.
- 10.2.2. Ensuring accurate, timely provision of information to Services Australia to support administration of salary support payments to training facilities.
- 10.2.3. Ensuring registrars have access to a Cultural Educator and/or Cultural Mentor.

10.3. FNGPTC is responsible for:

- 10.3.1. Performance and outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander GP Training Salary Support Program investment.
- 10.3.2. Reviewing and analysing program data and progress reports.
- 10.3.3. Monitoring performance against intended outcomes to inform continuous quality improvement and evaluation of the program.
- 10.3.4. Maintaining a register of program risks and mitigation strategies.
- 10.3.5. In consultation with the GP Colleges, providing advice on annual Salary Support placement projections, ensuring alignment with community need and funding availability.
- 10.3.6. Making recommendations to the government and GP Colleges to improve performance and outcomes.
- 10.3.7. Providing advice and recommendations on Salary Support exception proposals.

10.4. Services Australia is responsible for:

- 10.4.1. Administering Salary Support payments to approved training facilities on behalf of the GP Colleges using the National Consistent Payment Framework (NCP).

10.5. The Department is responsible for:

- 10.5.1. Supporting the functions of the FNGPTC as outlined in the FNGPTC Terms of Reference, including providing financial and placement data and secretariat services.
- 10.5.2. Oversight of grant agreements for the delivery of GP training programs.

11. Compliance and monitoring

- 11.1. The Colleges will monitor training, placements and payments funded through Salary Support and will send a written request to training facilities in the event that data discrepancies are found during monitoring activities. The training facilities will be expected to reply to the Colleges' requests within twenty business days with reasons for the discrepancies and the actions that will be taken to prevent them from recurring.
- 11.2. Any discrepancies in payments will be communicated by the GP Colleges immediately to Services Australia for rectification, and will be reported to the Department and the FNGPTC through scheduled grant agreement reporting.
- 11.3. The Department of Health and Aged Care will monitor data reported through Services Australia, GP College monthly compliance reporting, and the National Minimum Dataset under clause 12, and report updates to the FNGPTC.

12. Entering data into the College Minimum Dataset

- 12.1. Record units with unit type per clause 5, where associated facility has facility type of:
Aboriginal Medical Service – Community Controlled; or
Aboriginal Medical Service – Not Community Controlled; or
Aboriginal Health Training – Non-AMS

13. Version control and change history

Version	Dates
Version Control:	5
Date Effective:	24 September 2024
Approved By:	Travis Power, Assistant Secretary, Workforce Training Branch
Amendment:	September 2024

SCHEDULE 1 Aboriginal Health Training Registrar Salary Support Facility Criteria and Application

Guiding Principles

1. GP Colleges or the JCTS will approve a facility (that is not already a Category 1 approved facility) to be recognised as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training facility.
2. GP Colleges or the JCTS will assess a potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Training Post in accordance with the criteria outlined in this document. GP Colleges are required to advise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training facility in writing of the outcomes of the assessment to become an approved Category 2 Training Facility.
3. Salary Support eligibility and funding allocation will be reviewed once the facility is a deemed a Category 1 or Category 2 facility.

Eligibility Criteria as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Training Facility

To become an approved Category 2 Training Facility, the GP Colleges or the JCTS must be satisfied that the facility has achieved the following requirements:

1. Provide high-quality general practice training opportunities for the registrar, located in a community-based setting.
2. Have included local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders in the facility's decision-making processes.
3. Have instilled culturally safe mechanisms for patient and community feedback.
4. Provide culturally safe and holistic primary health care service, including appropriate waiting rooms, appointment processes and reception areas.
5. Provide the registrar access to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Educator and/or Cultural Mentor identified in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leadership.
6. Have active collaborative partnerships with service/Program providers for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
7. Effectively and meaningfully engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders to deliver culturally safe preventative health programs and initiatives.
8. Cultural awareness training must be in place for all practice staff in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leadership.
9. Show genuine commitment to employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels, across all functions within the facility.
10. Show commitment to developing and maintaining a Reconciliation Action Plan in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leadership.