



AUSTRALIAN GENERAL PRACTICE TRAINING (AGPT) PROGRAM POLICIES 2020

Date first approved:	16 December 2015
Date of effect:	18 December 2020
Date last amended: (refer Version Control Table)	9 December 2020
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Audience:	Registrars enrolled on the AGPT Program Applicants seeking selection onto the AGPT Program Regional Training Organisations Stakeholders

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1 Overarching Principles of the AGPT Program Policies

- 1.1 The Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Program Policies have been informed by ongoing consultation with stakeholders. The revised Policies aim to support Regional Training Organisations (RTOs) and registrars training on the AGPT Program.
- 1.2 The 2020 AGPT Program Policies apply to all registrars enrolled on the AGPT Program.
- 1.3 The AGPT Program utilises the Modified Monash Model (MMM) to define training boundaries.
 - 1.3.1 Registrars training on the general pathway of the AGPT Program will be required to train in a Modified Monash Model (2019) (MMM 2019) 1-7 location and registrars training on the rural pathway of the AGPT Program will be required to train in a MMM (2019) 2-7 location.
- 1.4 Allowances approved under the previous AGPT Program Policies (including leave or extensions of training time) will be honoured under the 2020 AGPT Program Policies. A record with the date of approval will need to be retained on file by the RTO.
- 1.5 The AGPT Program Policies should be considered as an entire suite of Policies, with no one policy superseding or negating the requirements of any other.
- 1.6 All Training Regions of the AGPT Program will be considered to be separate regions, regardless of the RTO responsible for the management of registrar training across the Training Regions.
- 1.7 It is expected that registrars will remain in the Training Region in which they accepted a training place for the duration of their training (transfers are permitted in certain circumstances as specified in the *AGPT Transfer Policy 2020*).
- 1.8 For registrars commencing training following selection onto the AGPT Program, they are required to hold general medical registration without conditions or undertakings in Australia by the commencement of their training on the AGPT Program.
- 1.9 The Policies seek to ensure that a minimum of 50% of registrar training occurs in a Modified Monash (MM) 2-7 location, in line with the Government's commitment to ensure that communities across all areas of Australia, including rural and regional locations, are receiving services from registrar training.
- 1.10 RTOs must develop and publish local policies that complement all of the AGPT Program Policies. These local policies must be made accessible to all registrars within the RTO's Training Region.
- 1.11 RTOs must manage individual registrars' training and progress through training as per the AGPT Program Policies.
- 1.12 It is expected that in instances where the Relevant College requests an RTO to take over the management of a registrar's training from another RTO, that all efforts will be made to comply with the Relevant College's request.

2 Objectives for the AGPT Program Policies

- 2.1 Contribute to the provision of high quality GP training across Australia.
- 2.2 GP registrars are well-distributed, with a minimum of 50% of training occurring in MM 2-7 locations.
- 2.3 GP training is delivered efficiently, with registrars progressing through the training program within the set timeframes ensuring continuity of training and recency of practice.
- 2.4 Doctors entering the Program are selected through a merit-based, transparent and equitable selection process.
- 2.5 Registrars are provided with complaints and appeals processes.
- 2.6 Registrars are treated equitably during their general practice training.
- 2.7 Registrars are supported to undertake training in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health settings.

3 2020 AGPT Program Policies

- 3.1 *AGPT Academic Post Policy 2020*
- 3.2 *AGPT Appeal Policy 2020*
- 3.3 *AGPT Australian Defence Force Registrars Policy 2020*
- 3.4 *AGPT Complaints Policy 2020*
- 3.5 *AGPT Extension of Training Time Policy 2020*
- 3.6 *AGPT Program Leave Policy 2020*
- 3.7 *AGPT Rural Generalist Policy 2020*
- 3.8 *AGPT Training Accessibility Policy 2020*
- 3.9 *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2020*
- 3.10 *AGPT Training Region Policy 2020*
- 3.11 *AGPT Transfer Policy 2020*
- 3.12 *AGPT Withdrawal Policy 2020*

4 Key Changes in the 2020 AGPT Program Policies

- 4.1 From 31 March 2020 the two GP Colleges, RACGP and ACRRM, will be responsible for the administration of the AGPT Program Policies.
- 4.2 From 31 March 2020 AGPT applications, supported by the RTOs, will be considered by the Relevant College where required.
- 4.3 The *AGPT COVID-19 Support Policy 2020* is a new policy that is separate to the suite of AGPT Program Policies.
 - 4.3.1 The purpose of this Policy is to specify the provisions AGPT registrars are able to access to support them through the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their training progression.
 - 4.3.2 This Policy is time-limited and will be reviewed periodically as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds.
 - 4.3.3 Refer to *the AGPT COVID-19 Support Policy 2020* for further information.
- 4.4 Following feedback from the Regional Training Organisation Network (RTON) Policy Working Group, amendments were made in October 2020 to the *AGPT Extension of Training Time Policy*, the *AGPT Transfer Policy* and the *AGPT Program Leave Policy*. The *AGPT Training Obligations Policy* was also updated to reflect the amendment to the *AGPT Extension of Training Time Policy*.
- 4.5 **AGPT Academic Post Policy 2020**
 - 4.5.1 The definition of Academic Post was updated to provide greater clarity.
 - 4.5.2 The eligibility requirements for RACGP registrars seeking to undertake an Academic Post through the AGPT Program have been updated.
 - 4.5.3 This Policy now specifies that RACGP registrars may reduce or defer the completion of their clinical training requirement if they are unable to undertake the academic and clinical components concurrently. This provision will be considered and granted at RACGP's discretion.
 - 4.5.4 The roles and responsibilities have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' new role in the administration of the Policies.
- 4.6 **AGPT Appeals Policy 2020**
 - 4.6.1 This Policy specifies that it does not apply to registrars seeking to appeal decisions relating to Fellowship exams/assessments, including results and outcomes of

requests for special consideration. Separate appeal processes are available through the Relevant College.

- 4.6.2 The roles and responsibilities as well as compliance and monitoring have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' new roles in the administration of the Policies.

4.7 **AGPT Australian Defence Force Registrars Policy 2020**

- 4.7.1 This Policy allows RTOs, rather than the Relevant College, to approve applications for leave, exceptions to the training location obligations, deferrals of the Commencement of Training and transfer by Australian Defence Force (ADF) registrars to meet ADF service requirements if their application(s) align with ADF posting orders.

- 4.7.1.1 RTOs must notify the Relevant College of all approved AGPT applications for ADF registrars.

- 4.7.2 This Policy specifies that ADF registrars may apply to the Relevant College to have their previous vocational training in Training Facilities outlined at clause 5.1 of this Policy to be recognised as training time on the AGPT Program.

- 4.7.3 The roles and responsibilities have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' new roles in the administration of the Policies.

4.8 **AGPT Complaints Policy 2020**

- 4.8.1 There are no major amendments to this Policy.

- 4.8.2 The roles and responsibilities as well as compliance and monitoring have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' role in the administration of the Policies.

4.9 **AGPT Extension of Training Time Policy 2020**

- 4.9.1 This Policy has been amended to specify that applications for extensions to undertake an approved Academic Post are to be considered and approved by the RTO.

- 4.9.2 This Policy has been amended to specify registrars who are planning to undertake a period of remediation under the approach specified at clause 6 of the *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2020* should include a period of further extension of training time into their plan developed with the RTO. This will enable them to complete any outstanding assessment/exam components following their period of remediation.

- 4.9.3 The roles and responsibilities have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' role in the administration of the Policies.

- 4.9.4 Registrars on an approved Extension for Assessment Purposes should coordinate with their RTO and their training facility the amount of hours that they are to work and any periods of leave that are required. The agreement on hours worked and any periods of leave must take account of the registrar's learning plan and exam preparation.

- 4.9.5 Extensions to Transition to the RACGP's Practice Experience Program or ACRRM's Independent Pathway were also increased and capped at a maximum of twenty six calendar weeks.

- 4.9.6 A new clause 7.2 and amendments to the Colleges responsibilities were made to further clarify the policy intentions.

4.10 **AGPT Program Leave Policy 2020**

- 4.10.1 This Policy clarifies when leave does or does not contribute towards a registrar's training time cap.

- 4.10.2 The roles and responsibilities as well as compliance and monitoring have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' roles in the administration of the Policies.

- 4.10.3 This Policy was updated following advice from RTON in October 2020.

- 4.10.4 Category 2 Leave may be declined if the RTO determines, taking into account the reasons the leave has been requested, that this period of leave will be detrimental to the registrars' training.
- 4.11 AGPT Rural Generalist Policy 2020**
- 4.11.1 This Policy has been amended to clarify that all ACRRM applicants and registrars are considered to be undertaking Rural Generalist Training through the AGPT Program and can access the flexibilities of this Policy.
- 4.11.2 For RACGP registrars there are two avenues to undertake Rural Generalist Training through the AGPT Program. Registrars may opt into Rural Generalist Training at the point of applying for selection onto the Program or opt into this training later in training at the discretion of the RACGP.
- 4.11.3 This Policy has been amended to state that registrars who opt out of their Rural Generalist Training may be withdrawn from the AGPT Program at the discretion of the Relevant College. They may be allowed to remain on the AGPT Program provided that they continue to train on the rural pathway.
- 4.12 AGPT Training Accessibility Policy 2020**
- 4.12.1 There are no major amendments to this Policy.
- 4.12.2 The roles and responsibilities have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' role in the administration of the Policies.
- 4.13 AGPT Training Region Policy 2020**
- 4.13.1 There are no major amendments to this Policy.
- 4.13.2 The roles and responsibilities as well as compliance and monitoring have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' role in the administration of the Policies.
- 4.14 AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2020**
- 4.14.1 There are no major amendments to this Policy.
- 4.14.2 Roles and responsibilities as well as compliance and monitoring have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' role in the administration of the Policies.
- 4.15 AGPT Transfer Policy 2020**
- 4.15.1 There are no major amendments to this Policy.
- 4.15.2 The roles and responsibilities and compliance and monitoring have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' role in the administration of the Policies.
- 4.15.3 A new clause was added to reflect that transfers are not required for Extended Skills hospital based rotations (FRACGP) provided there is an agreement between RTOs and the registrar does not require a 3GA provider number for the placement.
- 4.16 AGPT Withdrawal Policy 2020**
- 4.16.1 There are no major amendments to this Policy.
- 4.16.2 The roles and responsibilities and compliance and monitoring have been updated to reflect the GP Colleges' role in the administration of the Policies.

5 Amendments to the AGPT Program Policies Before 2022

- 5.1 The AGPT Program Policies will be updated as required to ensure they continue to support RTOs to manage registrar training and assist registrars in progressing through the AGPT Program.
- 5.2 Should there be any changes to the AGPT Program or other programs and policies that impact the AGPT Program, the Department and Colleges will work together to make the necessary changes to the AGPT Program Policies and communicate them to stakeholders.

6 Options for Registrar Support

- 6.1 There are a number of organisations and options that can provide support to registrars throughout their training on the AGPT Program. These supports include, but are not limited to:
 - 6.1.1 The Relevant College;
 - 6.1.2 General Practice Registrars Australia (GPRA);
 - 6.1.3 RTOs via Registrar Liaison Officers (RLOs), Directors of Training, Medical Educators and other RTO Staff; and
 - 6.1.4 Australian Medical Association (AMA).

7 Flexibility in the AGPT Program Policies

- 7.1 The AGPT Program Policies aim to ensure that registrars progress through their training on the AGPT Program within set timeframes, with continuity of training and recency of practice so that registrars attaining fellowship through the Program are ready to practise as independent specialist GPs.
- 7.2 While registrars are required to adhere to the requirements specified within the Policies, there may be circumstances where registrars will require additional flexibility to manage their training, and/or other circumstances occurring in their lives.
- 7.3 The Policies are cognisant of this, with additional flexibilities for registrars to complete their training set out in a number of the Policies. These include the Extension of Training Time Policy, Program Leave and Training Obligations Policy. In addition, the Transfer Policy enables registrars to transfer to a different training region or pathway on either a permanent or temporary basis in some circumstances to undertake their training.

8 Dual Fellowship Registrar Policy Applications

- 8.1 Registrars training towards fellowship of both RACGP and ACRRM (dual fellowship registrars) are to submit their applications for consideration under the AGPT Program Policies, with supporting documentation and evidence, to the Relevant College where required.
 - 8.1.1 For pathway transfers, exceptions to the *AGPT Program Leave Policy 2020*, further extensions of training time and exceptions to the *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2020*, these applications must be supported by registrars' RTOs.
 - 8.1.2 Applications for appeal (as per the *AGPT Appeals Policy 2020*) or complaints (as per the *AGPT Complaints Policy 2020*) can be lodged directly with the Relevant College by registrars.
- 8.2 For applications under the AGPT Program Policies, supported by RTOs, the RTOs will need to determine which College would be most appropriate to consider the application based on the type of application and reasons for it.
- 8.3 For applications for appeal and complaints submitted directly to the Colleges by registrars, the registrars will determine which College would be most appropriate to consider the appeal or complaint. The RTOs or Relevant College can provide guidance on this.
- 8.4 Following the consideration of applications from dual fellowship registrars, the College assessing the application will inform the other College of the outcome.

9 Accepted Supporting Documentation and Evidence

- 9.1 Submissions, applications, complaints or requests made to the Relevant College and/or the RTO, usually require supporting evidence and documentation.
- 9.2 The following are the types of the supporting documentation and evidence that will be accepted:
 - 9.2.1 A valid medical certificate or letter of support from a relevant medical practitioner confirming the registrar, or an immediate family member has an illness or injury and the impact upon the registrar;

- 9.2.2 A letter of support from a counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist confirming the registrar is suffering from a mental illness and the impact of this illness upon the registrar;
 - 9.2.3 In the case of illness of an immediate family member, the supporting documentation should detail the personal support required of the registrar, why no other support is available and the impact upon the registrar;
 - 9.2.4 A death certificate or letter of support from a relevant medical practitioner;
 - 9.2.5 A birth certificate or letter of support from a relevant medical practitioner;
 - 9.2.6 Foster and/or adoption papers or permanent care orders;
 - 9.2.7 In the case of acute personal/emotional trauma, a signed statement from a professional counsellor, psychologist, psychiatrist or relevant medical practitioner verifying how the registrar has been impacted; and
 - 9.2.8 A statutory declaration confirming the registrar, or an immediate family member, has an illness or injury.
- 9.3 Any supporting documentation or evidence provided from a medical practitioner must not be written by anyone with a potential or perceived conflict of interest. This includes:
- 9.3.1 The registrar's family;
 - 9.3.2 The registrar's friends;
 - 9.3.3 Staff from the registrar's RTO; or
 - 9.3.4 Staff/medical practitioners from the practice where they are or have been training.
- 9.4 The registrar's treating medical practitioner must have expertise and qualifications to be eligible to provide the documentary medical evidence. The medical practitioner must declare they have no known or perceived conflict of interest in supplying the supporting documentation or evidence and advise how long they have been treating the registrar or family member.

10 Medicare Provider Numbers

- 10.1 A Medicare Provider Number uniquely identifies a medical practitioner and the location from which they have provided a service. Payment of Medicare Benefits Schedule rebate claims for services provided by a registrar may be delayed or disallowed if Services Australia cannot identify the registrar as having been assessed as eligible to claim Medicare benefits at their place of practice.
- 10.2 A registrar can use the Medicare Provider Number granted for their AGPT Program training placement (AGPT Medicare Provider Number) while undertaking training on the AGPT Program in order to:
- 10.2.1 Complete valid accounts and receipts for their services, so that claims for Medicare rebates for their services can be made;
 - 10.2.2 Refer their patients to other specialists through the Medicare system; and
 - 10.2.3 Request services on behalf of their patients.
- 10.3 There are legislative prohibitions on granting doctors retrospective access to the Medicare Benefits Schedule at their place of practice (commonly referred to as backdating rebate claims). These prohibitions apply to all registrars.
- 10.4 Registrars should not assume their services will attract Medicare rebates until their access to the Medicare Benefits Schedule is confirmed in writing by Services Australia.
- 10.5 Registrars are only eligible for an AGPT Medicare Provider Number that will enable them to provide Medicare rebateable services due to their enrolment on the AGPT Program and inclusion on the Register of Approved Placements.
- 10.5.1 AGPT Medicare Provider Numbers are location specific (linked to the street address of the Training Facility) and only apply to the training term and Training Facility for which they were applied for.

- 10.5.2 AGPT Medicare Provider Numbers cannot be transferred to a different location. Registrars will require an AGPT Medicare Provider Number for every Training Facility in which they will be undertaking training.
- 10.6 Registrars withdrawn from the AGPT Program will be removed from the Register of Approved Placements. Once a registrar is removed from the Register of Approved Placements they are unable to use their Medicare Provider Number. Services Australia will send a letter to the registrar confirming the date they will be removed from the Register of Approved Placements.
- 10.7 If a registrar appeals to the Relevant College regarding a decision made by the RTO or the Relevant College:
 - 10.7.1 The registrar can continue claiming Medicare Benefits while their AGPT Medicare Provider Number remains valid and they remain on the Register of Approved Placements;
 - 10.7.2 Extensions to a registrar's AGPT Medicare Provider Number will not be granted while the registrar is appealing the denial of an extension of training time and their current AGPT Medicare Provider Number has ceased; and
 - 10.7.3 Further AGPT Medicare Provider Numbers will not be granted if the registrar is appealing their withdrawal from their RTO's training program and their current AGPT Medicare Provider Number has ceased.
- 10.8 The *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2020* sets out the training time cap for registrars which must be complied with.
 - 10.8.1 RTOs must not support and apply for an AGPT Medicare Provider Number that extends beyond the training time cap allowed to the registrar under the *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2020* unless one of the circumstances specified in clause 9.8.1.1 below applies.
 - 10.8.1.1 If the registrar has an approved extension of training time (including a Further Extension of Training Time or an Extension to Transition) under the *AGPT Extension of Training Time Policy 2020*, approved Category 2 Leave under the *AGPT Program Leave Policy 2020* which extends their training time beyond the cap or an approved exception to the *AGPT Program Leave Policy 2020*, they may apply for an AGPT Medicare Provider Number to cover the extension to their training time.
 - 10.8.1.2 AGPT Medicare Provider Numbers must not be approved beyond a registrar's available training time (including approved extensions of training time).

11 Compliance and Monitoring

- 11.1 The Relevant College reserves the right to monitor RTO compliance with the AGPT Program Policies as required.
- 11.2 The Relevant College will send a written request for response to RTOs if data discrepancies are found during monitoring activities. RTOs will be expected to reply to the Relevant College's request within 20 business days with reasons for the discrepancies and the actions that will be taken to prevent them from recurring.

12 Common AGPT Program Roles and Responsibilities

- 12.1 These are the roles and responsibilities that are common to registrars, RTOs and the Relevant Colleges across all AGPT Program Policies.
- 12.2 Registrars are responsible for:
 - 12.2.1 Monitoring their own health and well-being;
 - 12.2.2 Actively identifying and managing their well-being and fatigue;
 - 12.2.3 Behaving professionally, ethically and responsibly within their training;
 - 12.2.4 Practising safely;

- 12.2.5 Monitoring their own progress through training;
 - 12.2.6 Meeting their Education and Training Requirements;
 - 12.2.7 Responding to requests for information from the Relevant College and/or their RTO;
 - 12.2.8 Being familiar and complying with the AGPT Program Policies, as well as relevant RTO, College and ADF requirements (where applicable);
 - 12.2.9 Maintaining general medical registration while training on the AGPT Program;
 - 12.2.10 Advising their RTO of any conditions and/or undertakings imposed on their medical registration;
 - 12.2.11 Ensuring that they hold current and correct Medicare Provider Number(s) for the appropriate Training Facilities before they commence training; and
 - 12.2.12 Obtaining and providing evidence to their RTO that they have obtained permanent residency or citizenship of Australia or New Zealand if they commence the AGPT Program as a FGAMS 457 or TSS 482 visa holder.
- 12.3 RTOs are responsible for:
- 12.3.1 Monitoring the health and well-being of registrars enrolled in the AGPT Program;
 - 12.3.2 Ensuring processes to manage registrar fatigue and assessing registrar workloads are in place;
 - 12.3.3 Monitoring registrars' progress through training;
 - 12.3.4 Managing registrar training as required by the AGPT Program and the Relevant College;
 - 12.3.5 Managing a registrar's Training Time;
 - 12.3.6 Ensuring registrars are supported in their training to enable them to practise safely;
 - 12.3.7 Being familiar and complying with the AGPT Program Policies, as well as relevant RTO, College and ADF requirements (where applicable);
 - 12.3.8 Ensuring that registrars who commence the AGPT Program as FGAMS 457 or TSS 482 visa holders have obtained their permanent residency or citizenship of Australia or New Zealand prior to issuing their Completion of Training Certificate;
 - 12.3.9 Responding to requests for information from the Relevant College;
 - 12.3.10 Notifying the Relevant College of registrars with conditions and/or undertakings imposed on their medical registration;
 - 12.3.11 Ensuring that registrars training have current general medical registration;
 - 12.3.12 Ensuring that all registrars enrolled in their training program hold current and correct Medicare Provider Number(s) for the appropriate Training Facilities before they commence training;
 - 12.3.13 Ensuring that any Medicare Provider Number applications submitted on behalf of registrars do not future date an AGPT Medicare Provider Number beyond the registrars training time cap;
 - 12.3.14 Ensuring that the Registrar Information Data Exchange (RIDE) is updated regularly to ensure registrar records are up to date, complete and accurate;
 - 12.3.15 Participating in compliance and monitoring activities;
 - 12.3.16 Developing and managing local policies and procedures that complement the entire suite of AGPT Program Policies; and
 - 12.3.17 Ensuring the RTO local policies and procedures for registrars on the AGPT Program are made publically accessible and communicated to registrars.
- 12.4 The Relevant Colleges are responsible for:
- 12.4.1 Monitoring the implementation and application of the AGPT Program Policies;

- 12.4.2 Monitoring registrar and RTO compliance with the AGPT Program Policies;
- 12.4.3 Following up with RTOs on discrepancies found during monitoring activities;
- 12.4.4 Working with the Department of Health to make amendments to the Policies as required; and
- 12.4.5 Ensuring a link to the Policies is clearly available on their websites.

13 Version Control and Change History

Version Control:	7
Date Effective:	18 December 2020
Amendment:	Seventh Version