



THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

Standards for General Practice Education and Training Programs and Providers 2005

This booklet forms part of the *Standards for General Practice Education and Training* series. It is designed for use by providers of general practice education and training to ensure a suitable standard of provision which is universally applied across Australia.

Publications in this series:

Trainers and Training Posts 2005

Programs and Providers 2005

Requirements for Fellowship 2005

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DEFINITIONS

The key terms relating to education in general practice used in this series are:

Education committee	Each faculty has an education committee with subcommittees that oversee vocational training and associated standards, continuing professional development and relationships with undergraduate departments of general practice.
Faculty	The RACGP is a faculty based organisation with six state faculties (see <i>Contact addresses</i>) and the National Rural Faculty; the faculty chairs sit on the national council that governs the college.
Fellow	A GP who has been admitted to Fellowship (or is a Fellow) of the RACGP. Fellowship is granted to those who demonstrate that they have reached the standard required for unsupervised general practice in Australia. See <i>Requirements for Fellowship 2005</i> .
General practice	General practice is part of the Australian health care system and operates through primary care facilities (predominantly private medical practices), which provide universal, unreferral access to whole person medical care for individuals, families and communities. General practice care means comprehensive, coordinated and continuing medical care drawing on biomedical, psychological, social and environmental understandings of health.
General practitioner (GP)	<p>A registered medical practitioner who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is qualified and competent for general practice anywhere in Australia • has the skills and experience to provide whole person, comprehensive, coordinated and continuing medical care, and • maintains professional competence for general practice. <p>Australian general practitioners are vocationally recognised, ie. recognised by the Health Insurance Commission (HIC) as a GP. This includes a requirement for maintaining professional development.</p>
General practice training provider	An organisation providing general practice vocational training accredited for this purpose by the RACGP.
General Practice Education and Training (GPET)	General Practice Education and Training Pty Ltd is a not for profit company whose officers are appointed by the Federal Minister For Health and Ageing that contracts general practice training providers to provide general practice vocational training.
Medical educator	A GP employed by the general practice training provider who designs and participates in the general practice training program and takes on the role of an off site clinical educator.
RACGP censor	An RACGP censor determines whether college standards have been met.
Registrar	A registered medical practitioner who is enrolled in a general practice training program approved by the RACGP to achieve Fellowship of the RACGP.
Student	A university student who is enrolled in a primary medical degree and is undertaking a general practice placement.
Trainer	The GP with responsibility for registrar training in a clinical setting. The trainer takes responsibility for clinical education and placement management. This includes the role of general practice supervisor and mentor.
Training posts	Training posts are placements where general practice registrars are employed to undertake vocational training in general practice.



INTRODUCTION

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is responsible for maintaining and developing the standards of general practice in Australia. The Australian government has adopted Fellowship of the RACGP as the standard for practising as an unsupervised GP in Australia. This document outlines the standards required of general practice education and training programs and their providers to be accredited by the RACGP.

The college ensures that the standards are met through a regular accreditation visit and monitoring of the program delivery. The aim is to have a uniform standard of general practice training across the country which is adequate to ensure that general practice registrars are equipped and motivated in a career as GPs.

The booklet addresses requirements under six headings:

1. *Standards for training programs*
2. *Standards for education and training providers*
3. *Standards for selection and enrolment*
4. *Standards of support for registrars*
5. *Standards of support for trainers*
6. *Standards of performance during training.*

The standards are based, at times almost verbatim, on the following documents:

- World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) Task Force on defining international standards in postgraduate medical education. Postgraduate Medical Education: World Federation for Medical Education Global Standards for Quality Improvement
- The RACGP. General Practice Vocational Training Standards and Requirements.



STANDARDS FOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

The college aims to ensure that education and training of GPs is based on principles and standards of postgraduate medical education that ensure the practitioner is able to practice competently and with compassion. To be acceptable to the college, programs are expected to operate in the manner outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Operating characteristics for postgraduate training programs

The registrar learns principally from practising GPs
The registrar has pastoral support
The registrar has sufficient one on one learning that includes direct observation
The registrar is exposed to inspirational role models
The registrar learns principally in the workplace
The registrar is exposed to a full range of general practice clientele and works in various settings
The registrar receives regular feedback on performance
The registrar learns across all the domains of the RACGP curriculum
The registrar has opportunities for reflection with peers
The registrar has the opportunity to learn the nonclinical workings of general practice

Training programs must meet the following standards:

Standard P.1	The aims and goals of the program must be clearly documented and readily accessible by all participants.
Standard P.2	The program must have a stated goal to train GPs who are competent for unsupervised general practice anywhere in Australia and are able to provide high quality primary health care services relevant to individual and community health needs.
Standard P.3	The program must address the learning needs of participants prescribed in all five domains described in the RACGP curriculum.
Standard P.4	The program must be underpinned by educational concepts and principles appropriate to professional postgraduate vocational training, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognising that registrars are adult learners who have different learning styles and needs and enable registrars to exercise sufficient self direction in their learning • emphasising the integration of vocational training with undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional development • emphasising experiential learning through practical clinical experience. This involves consulting with patients who present with common and significant conditions that exemplify general practice • encouraging commitment by registrars to continuous improvement of their knowledge and skills throughout their professional careers.



Standard P.5	The program must provide at least 125 hours of peer/group learning via face to face meetings, teleconferences or video conferences over 18 months in general practice. Of this, at least 48 hours must be via face to face meetings.
Standard P.6	The program must provide a minimum of 5 half day sessions or equivalent of direct or videotaped observation of registrar consultations by medical educators along with written feedback during the first 18 months of general practice experience.
Standard P.7	The program must include regular out of practice* group contact opportunities for registrars (for the purpose of education or general support) on at least two occasions per month, facilitated by the training provider.
Standard P.8	The program must have a calendar of educational events developed by program staff in collaboration with trainers and registrars that is published in advance and updated at appropriate intervals.
Standard P.9	The training provider must ensure a broad range of experience is available to registrars by establishing training opportunities in diverse primary care settings.
Standard P.10	An integral and critical part of the education and training in the program must be high quality, regular formative assessment with constructive feedback to registrars on their performance. This assessment must be supported by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documented remediation processes to assist registrars whose progress is assessed as unsatisfactory • a documented process for dealing with registrars whose progress remains unsatisfactory after remediation.

Recommendations for quality development

Quality P.11	Program innovations should be based on recognised educational principles and should include adequate evaluation.
Quality P.12	Programs should utilise educational strategies based on the best available international and Australian evidence of educational effectiveness.
Quality P.13	The educational role of the various components of the program should be identified as demonstrated by documentation of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • objectives and training experiences in each program component and stream • educational processes involved in each component of the program • evidence on the effectiveness of the educational processes employed.
Quality P.14	Relevant, high quality educational resources should be available to support registrar learning. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adequate and appropriate educational resources to support key areas of the curriculum

* This may be via tele- or video-conferencing.



- adequate and appropriate resources and modules to support self directed individual learning
- arrangements and facilities for access to library and information technology resources
- distance education facilities and resources, where appropriate
- learning resources to support different learning and teaching modes, including practice based and group educational activities
- learning resources for medical educators, trainers and registrars in rural and remote locations
- processes for the development of educational resources should involve collaboration with appropriate stakeholders
- all educational resources and materials should be of a quality commensurate with the best in adult professional education.

Quality P.15

Registrars should have the opportunity to undertake elective research or audit projects.



STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

The general practice training provider must ensure that:

- Standard P.16 Medical educators and registrars play a major role in the planning and delivery of educational activities.
- Standard P.17 The provider must maintain up to date lists of training posts and make them available to registrars and doctors seeking enrolment. The lists must include regional:
- hospital posts accredited by the state or territory postgraduate medical council (PMC)
 - training posts and respective trainers accredited by the RACGP
 - special interest posts accredited in accordance with *Standards for General Practice Education: Trainers and Training Posts 2005*.
- Standard P.18 An adequate number of staff with appropriate qualifications and expertise is available to conduct and administer training so that:
- there is a core group of staff with a high level of general practice educational expertise who work at least two sessions per week in general practice
 - there is an adequate level of support staff for effective financial and general administration of the program
 - relevant staff training and professional development opportunities are provided for medical educators
 - medical educators maintain and improve knowledge and skills through continuing professional development.

Recommendations for quality development

- Quality P.19 Comprehensive data on program performance should be maintained so that:
- data is routinely collected to monitor key aspects of program performance
 - records are up to date and accurate
 - key program input and output data, including:
 - application rates, selection and allocation of registrars
 - completion and attrition rates overall and by categories of registrars, eg. part time, full time, urban and rural
 - summative and formative assessment performance, including pass rates
 - ongoing retention rates of graduates within the region
 - reasons for withdrawal.
 - key program delivery data, including:
 - volume and type of education and training activity
 - overall registrar performance data
 - quality measures for each program component.
- Quality P.20 Financial support should be provided to encourage staff attainment of professional and suitable educational qualifications.



STANDARDS FOR SELECTION AND ENROLMENT

The general practice training provider must ensure that:

- Standard P.21 There are clearly documented policies and procedures for selection into training, which are developed and monitored in collaboration with key stakeholders.
- Standard P.22 Documented policies are consistent with best practice in other specialist colleges and other comparable institutions so that the:
- documentation is clear and easily understood
 - documented policies are readily accessed by applicants and are available to the medical profession and the community
 - documentation includes clear specifications for eligibility criteria, application procedures and selection processes.
- Standard P.23 There is a reliable and valid process for selection into training so that the:
- effectiveness of measures for assessing applicants' suitability for general practice training has been evaluated
 - measures used are demonstrably fair and consistent for all applicants
 - documented selection process is implemented in a consistent manner from place to place and year to year
 - measures exist to provide feedback on applicants' strengths and weaknesses
 - documented appeals process is available
 - criteria for determining successful selection are objective and transparent
 - outcomes of the selection process remain consistent from one intake to the next
 - staff involved in conducting the selection process are adequately trained to ensure consistency in procedures and scoring.
- Standard P.24 The selection process operates in accordance with national¹ and international² standards for entry to postgraduate medical training and in particular:
- the standards and procedures are consistent with the template approved by the Joint Standing Committee of the Australasian Medical Council/Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges, particularly in relation to doctors trained overseas
 - there is a clearly described process for ranking applicants in order of merit based on suitability for training
 - there are objective measures for testing the suitability of applicants for training based on required minimum levels of competence.



STANDARDS OF SUPPORT FOR REGISTRARS

The general practice training provider must ensure that:

- Standard P.25 Adequate provision is made for part time training and registrars are supported in gaining recognition for work done.
- Standard P.26 Registrars are supported in securing at least two different general practice placements of high quality during their training.
- Standard P.27 Registrars are supported in securing quality hospital rotations and special interest posts that will support their ability to provide quality primary care in the future.
- Standard P.28 Registrars are supported in securing academic training positions during their training, 6 months of which may be included as special interest training.
- Standard P.29 Registrars who have registered an interest in rural general practice training are supported at the earliest opportunity if they choose to:
- enrol in the Graduate Diploma in Rural General Practice (RACGP) and/or contemporary training for Fellowship of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)
 - arrange an advanced rural skills post.
- Standard P.30 Registrars who enrol in the Graduate Diploma in Rural General Practice (RACGP) or Fellowship of ACRRM are supported in pursuing the educational opportunities specified in a manner that integrates learning with their vocational training.
- Standard P.31 There are mechanisms for pastoral support, counselling and monitoring of registrar wellbeing that include:
- a documented 'registrar in difficulty' process
 - identified procedures for remediation
 - a process for identifying problems that might lead to difficulties in special training situations, such as remote placements or practising alone for a period of time.

Recommendations for quality development

- Quality P.32 The training provider should encourage the registrar to take on an educational role within the training setting with colleagues and students by making opportunities available and supporting the registrar in this activity.
- Quality P.33 The training provider should encourage registrars with a keen interest in the discipline to become a scholar in general practice.
- Quality P.34 Registrars should be supported in maximising the training opportunities available to them in keeping with their own preferred learning styles and self directed learning needs.



STANDARDS OF SUPPORT FOR TRAINERS

The general practice training provider must ensure that:

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| Standard P.35 | There are sufficient accredited trainers and training posts in the region to provide for registrars' needs and adequate succession planning for trainers and training posts. |
| Standard P.36 | General practitioners are supported in seeking accreditation and prepared adequately for taking up the role of trainer. |
| Standard P.37 | Trainers have at least 3 days of meetings (or pro rata equivalent) annually to enable trainers to come together and develop teaching skills. |
| Standard P.38 | The required expertise, responsibilities and duties of trainers are clearly described and made available to prospective trainers. |
| Standard P.39 | The special contribution of individual trainers to general practice education and training is brought to the attention of their colleagues and to the college. |
| Standard P.40 | Trainers are supported in undertaking a higher degree in general practice or medical education. |

Recommendations for quality development

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| Quality P.41 | The training provider establishes a peer group of trainers that meets regularly to provide support and educational opportunities. |
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STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE DURING TRAINING

It is important that the program assesses the registrar's progress to provide information to guide the registrar's future learning activities (See *Standard P10*). This is in addition to the monitoring undertaken by trainers. To be effective, formative assessment activities should assess the key knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required for independent general practice, be iterative and provide information to guide registrar's future learning activities. The assessment methods should form part of a supportive quality improvement process aimed at improving clinical practice. Any significant deficiencies will ideally be discovered and corrected during training rather than at the Fellowship Examination.

The program's formative assessment activities should therefore:

- be designed to adequately assess across the range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours outlined in the RACGP curriculum
- be used early enough and with sufficient frequency to provide the opportunity for registrars to regularly update their learning plans
- incorporate specific, timely and regular feedback to registrars about their performance
- be aimed at improving clinical practice and include an assessment of performance in the real clinical setting (See *Standard P.6*)
- provide specific information about what needs to be improved and an agreed plan for how to go about making the desired changes
- include registrars' own assessments of their performance and learning needs
- be documented in order to guide future learning and demonstrate progress
- include an agreed plan for meeting significant learning needs and reassessing performance in identified areas
- invoke remediation or 'registrar in difficulty' processes if appropriate.

To enable trainers and medical educators to recognise registrars who are not performing to an acceptable level the college recommends that the program and trainers utilise *Good Medical Practice for General Practitioners*³, as a guide. Clearly, most registrars will probably fall below the acceptable standard from time to time but the improvement of performance during training is a key requirement of the registrar. It is worth remembering that these statements about medical practice apply even more directly to the trainer and educators.

Experience has shown that some registrars will not perform well in certain situations and perform to an acceptable (or even high) standard in other settings – for this reason a registrar who is having difficulties may need to move to another setting as part of the remediation process.



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