Education Research Grant program 2025

Application guide

Education Research Grant program 2025: Application guide

Contents

Overview

The Education Research Grant (ERG) program aims to continue building research capacity in medical education and training for general practice with a specific focus on education improvement. The overarching objective is to develop evidence-based education initiatives that increase training capacity and improve educational outcomes in Australian general practice training.

Further information and updates on the application process are available on the RACGP education research grant webpage.

RACGP contact details and support

For additional information and enquiries, please email the Education Research Grant Coordinator, Merci Ikeda, at gpedresearch@racgp.org.au

Purpose

The ERG program provides an opportunity for awardees to establish, develop and maintain research partnerships with primary healthcare academic institutions.

The overarching aims of the ERG program are to:

- Build research capacity and skills in medical educators, GP registrars, GP supervisors and training practices

- Promote a culture of academic critique and the use of evidence in general practice training

- Facilitate collaboration between researchers, training practices and universities

- Promote and support the dissemination of Australian general practice education research and implementation of findings to improve general practice training programs

How does the ERG program work?

Education Research Grants are funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care. The grants are awarded, via a competitive process, to successful applicants/research teams who will be undertaking research projects addressing the 2025 Education Research Grant Priority areas.

In 2025, there are up to eight $150,000 grants available for 12 month projects.

The RACGP will facilitate compulsory research support activities for grant holders during the ERG research year to facilitate the attainment of program objectives. The RACGP expects that two members of each ERG research team will participate in these activities. Activities include face-to-face workshops, webinars, journal club and conference attendance. All costs associated with attending these activities will be funded by the RACGP.

The RACGP expects that grant holders will disseminate and publish their project findings during and beyond the funded research period including through conference presentations, articles in peer-reviewed academic journals, reports to the Department of Health and other relevant bodies, and presentations to stakeholders at local, regional and national levels of the College. The RACGP will remain in contact with the project principal investigator beyond the research-funded period to assist with results dissemination through RACGP media and communication channels.

ERG application process

To apply for an ERG program, applicant must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) via an online application form. The 2025 Expression of Interest submission period is open from Monday 8 April 2024 to Friday 31 May 2024. A link to the form will be available from the ERG webpage. EOIs received will be assessed against the eligibility and selection criteria.

Only successful EOI submissions will be invited to submit a full application. Successful EOIs must submit applications online via the SmartyGrants portal link that will be available in the outcome letter.

Please note that each project application through the online portal must be managed by a single team member who will submit the application on behalf of the project team.

Selection criteria

We encourage applicants to refer to this guide when completing the EOI and application form to ensure applications are submitted to the standard required by the Academic Assessment Panel (AAP).

The RACGP recommended that applicants allow plenty of time to prepare the applications.The criteria that the AAP uses to assess applications is included in this guide.

Prior to submitting an Expression of Interest, the team must discuss the proposal with the relevant Director(s) of Training **and/or** National Clinical Leads - Fellowship Support Program (FSP) and Practice Experience Program (PEP) Specialist.

EOI submission and assessment guidelines

Criterion 1 – Eligibility

The proposal must be submitted by an eligible research team, that includes at minimum the following members:

- Medical Educator with expertise in GP training

- Education research expertise

- General practice academic expertise

- Novice or early career researchers (e.g., PhD candidates and current or recent Academic Registrars)

Research teams must have active, collaborative relationships with regional GP training teams, which will facilitate the regional delivery of research projects.

Also strongly encouraged:

- Inclusion of GP registrars, recent Fellows, medical students, GP supervisors and training practices

The AAP expects the applicant to have had meaningful engagement with a suitable research team throughout the research project planning and development. Applicants should understand that the ERG program is designed to build research capacity and foster collaborative relationships between researchers, training practices and universities. Applicants must describe the role of each team member will have in maintaining direct and ongoing involvement in the project.

Criterion 2 – Meets ERG program objectives

The application must demonstrate that it has:

- Potential to build research capacity and skills in the GP Training sector

- Potential to promote a culture of academic critique and the use of evidence in GP training

- Potential to facilitate collaboration between researchers, universities and the training sector

- Potential for dissemination, and translation and/or implementation of findings

- Potential to improve GP training

Criterion 3 – Research proposal

The applicant must demonstrate that they address one of the 2025 Education Research Grant Priorities:

a.   Attraction and recruitment into General Practice training

b.   Integration of general practice vocational education and training with University, hospital, and post Fellowship spaces

c.   Enabling and building positive training experiences in current and evolving training environments

d.   Implementing and evaluating initiatives to support the International Medical Graduate/Migrant Doctor training journey

e.   Exploring the implications and impacts of emerging Artificial Intelligence technologies in General Practice Training

f.   Exploring best practice approaches to how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values, ways of knowing, being and doing and a holistic worldview approach to health and healing are embedded across GP training, including content and pedagogical methods, to improve cultural safety

g.   Recruitment, selection, support, and retention of high-quality General Practice supervisors

h.   Assessment in General Practice Training, including trainee selection

i.   Understanding the implications for GP training of trainees, supervisors and/or medical educators working part-time

Please note that a proposal for a project that does not fit within at least one of these broad priority areas may be considered if a compelling case is presented.

Full application assessment guidelines

In addition to meeting the above selection criteria, full applications will be assessed using these selection criteria :

1. The application provides a clear background and purpose for the project, supported by a literature review and environmental scan specific to the project topic

2. The application describes a clear research objective, that is aligned with the proposed research questions, methods and outcome measures

3. The application demonstrates a thoughtful engagement with the ethical implications of the project, and proposes ways of managing these appropriately

Guide to writing a successful research proposal

To assist applicants with submitting a successful ERG research proposal, we have included the following suggestions.

Research aim and research question/s

The application should have a clear and concise project aim and research question/s. The question/s are normally refined following the literature review and during the research process, but should be stated at the beginning of a proposal.

Research objectives

Applicants should ensure that the research objectives align with the research questions, methods, and outcome measures.

Background, purpose and critical appraisal of the literature

Explain the motivation for the research. How was the gap in knowledge identified? For the literature search and appraisal:

- Identify literature specific to the research topic. Include a statement of the key words used in your literature search.

- Critically appraise the literature and identify valuable contributions to the field. Start with a broad perspective, narrowing down to the specific focus of the proposed study. Identify study limitations and gaps in the literature that you hope to address with your research.

- Consider if the literature review of your research topic would benefit from an international perspective. If there is limited literature currently available in the medical education environment, consider parallels with education and training in other professions. This could add valuable depth to your review.

- Review current practice (ie conduct environmental scan) specific to the research topic.

- Provide a reference list.

A word limit applies to the literature review and environmental scan in the application. Applicants should be aware that a concise literature review is required for publication, so the ability to summarise relevant information on the form is part of the assessment process. Use referencing to direct the reviewer to further information.

Research design and method

Applicants must outline the methods proposed and explain how the design is appropriate to answer the research question. Where the research links to other projects – either existing or proposed – clearly explain the relationship and boundaries between the proposed ERG project and these other projects.

This section should include justifications for:

- Choice of Research design

- Research participants

  Describe who will be invited to participate and how they will be recruited with consideration to ethical issues (eg., vulnerable population groups). Comment on whether participation compensation will be offered. Where the project plans include recruiting registrar participants, indicate whether these are Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program participants and/or Fellowship Support Program (FSP) or Practice Experience Program (PEP) participants.

  If the project is planning to recruit RACGP medical educators, trainees and/or supervisors as project participants, applicants will be required to obtain a Letter of Support from the relevant Regional Directors of Training and/or National Clinical Leads - FSP and PEP Specialist with their full application.

- Data Collection

  Describe data collection methods and processes, data storage, and measures to ensure privacy of participants and confidentiality of data.

- Analysis of Data

  Clarify type of analysis that will be performed and why.

  If this project refers to previously developed tools, rubrics or pilot data, please ensure that these are adequately described and also uploaded with your application.

- Limitations and assumptions.

  Provide potential limitations in the study and describe any assumptions.

Suggested Letter of Support template:

"This is to confirm that . . . (the applicant) has discussed their Education Research Grant application titled . . . with me. This application has my broad support.

I am prepared to provide some basic assistance with reasonable and ethically approved recruitment strategies for the study if it is awarded RACGP Education Research Grant funding. I understand that this assistance may typically include inserting a study flier or short paragraph written by the researchers in relevant RACGP newsletters, general emails or other communications. I may also facilitate other researcher access to potential participants, to assist with reasonable and ethically approved recruitment strategies, at my discretion and convenience. I understand that this letter is indicating my broad in principle support for this application, but is not in any sense a commitment to allocating resources from my team beyond assistance in recruiting participants".

Ethical considerations

Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of the ethical issues that may arise from the project and measures to mitigate any risks. Include a statement regarding the ethical issues that have been identified, and how they will be addressed.

It is not sufficient to say that an ethics committee has already approved the project.

Applicants with projects that include direct observation of GPs in training consultations are advised to consider and mitigate the risks to GPs in training, practices, patients and the researchers. It is important to consider their perspectives and vulnerabilities. These may include concerns and/or distress in relation to being observed during patient care provision, and 'revealing' their knowledge gaps and learning needs. GPs in training may be concerned that any error or gaps may have negative consequences for them. Applicants should consider how to ensure patient safety, and any other risks, and discuss realistic mitigation strategies.

It is the responsibility of the lead investigator to ensure the conduct of the project complies with all Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) requirements. We encourage applicants to liaise with a HREC before submitting their application, especially in relation to the level of risk involved.

The process of ethical review with any HREC often takes longer than anticipated, so be sure to allow adequate time in the work plan. Applicants may apply to the RACGP National Research and Evaluation Ethics Committee (NREEC) or to a university HREC for approval of their research.

In regard to participant recruitment, be sure to consider:

- the process of obtaining consent, especially where a power imbalance may exist
- if there is involvement of vulnerable groups – in the ERG context, this could be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse populations, international medical graduates or GPs in training
- how data and privacy are protected
- appropriate use of participant compensation for their time.

The usual compensation provided directly to participants who are GPs or GPs in training is approximately $125 per hour; however, the RACGP advises researchers to also consider compensating practices for any loss of staff time where appropriate.

For further information, refer to the National Health and Medical Research Council's National statement on ethical conduct in human research.

Other resources:

NH&MRC Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research at www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Research Integrity Canberra, ACT: NHMRC; 2022 [Available from: www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/research-integrity.]

AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (the AIATSIS Code) at aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/code-ethics

See also RACGP Ethics at www.racgp.org.au/the-racgp/governance/committees/national-committees/ethics-committee

EOI and application form - word limit guidelines

Research sections (Part 2)	EOI form	Full application form
Research aim and research questions	250 words	250 words
Background	500 words	500 words
Literature review	N/A	500-1000 words
Environmental scan	N/A	500 words
Research design and Methods (total)	300 words	750 words
Ethical considerations	100 words	250 words
Potential translation and Impact	200 words	250 words

Project governance and management

Applications will need to demonstrate a clear project governance structure and identify to whom the project team will report. There should be a clear delineation between governance, advisory and researcher roles.

Applicant must ensure that the timelines fit within the reporting requirements for the grant – refer to the Administration and support activities schedule.

Project budget

Provide a project budget that is consistent with the funding inclusions and exclusions. The RACGP will consider funding up to $150,000 (excluding GST) for each successful project. Applicants must ensure they can complete the project within the proposed budget. If an applicant has funding from another source, the RACGP will ask the applicant to identify this and explain how they will use each contribution.

Be sure to include:

- full details to justify each expense
- allowance for salaries and consultants, specifying the full-time equivalent (FTE) for each role, or the total hours if it is a short-term contractor role, and ensure that this is consistent with information provided in the roles and responsibilities table.

Publication costs may be included within the project budget. In the event this budget item is not spent during the funding period, there will be an opportunity to use unspent funds for disseminating the results and publication costs for 24 months following project completion .

> The ERGs will only provide funding for costs incurred during the funding period, 1 January 2025 - 31 December 2025. The AAP will only approve funding applications that meet the selection criteria and application requirements listed below. The project's budget total cannot be changed once it has been approved by the AAP.

Successful grant holders may request an amendment to re-allocate their funds to new or existing line items of the approved budget by writing to gpedresearch@racgp.org.au during the grant period.

> Amendments must include only items that are consistent with the funding inclusions list.

Funding inclusions

- Salaries for staff undertaking the project (list staffing requirements as percentage of FTE); for short-term contractors, list total hours.

- Travel and meeting costs.

- Data analysis and data transcriptions.

- Reasonable recruitment incentives – refer to the guidance provided under Ethical considerations.

- Items related to dissemination of research findings, including poster printing, conference registration, economy flights and accommodation within Australia.

- Reasonable overhead or management fees of administering organisations (capped at a maximum of 3%).

ERG project teams will be able to access the unspent funds already allocated to them to present the ERG work at a national conference within 12 months after project completion. The unspent fund may be used to cover the registration cost and accommodation/travel associated with the conference.

Funding exclusions

- Expenses incurred beyond the project funding period (except for budgeted and approved publication and conference dissemination costs using unspent fund).

- Ongoing costs associated with resource management and maintenance beyond the project completion date.

- Physical infrastructure/contribution to large capital projects.

- Subscriptions or memberships.

- Items related to international conference attendance.

- International conferences outside Australia and New Zealand will only be funded for online attendance.

Applicants must indicate on the RACGP application form if they have also applied for funding for the same project through an Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine ERG. An ERG project may only be funded by one College.

Collaboration

As one of the overarching aims of the ERG program is to facilitate collaboration between researchers, medical educators, training practices and University Departments of General Practice (or equivalent), the RACGP strongly encourages research teams to collaborate widely. Research teams are also encouraged to consider engaging former academic registrars in the research project where this is appropriate.

All members of the research team must have direct and ongoing involvement in the project and provide substantial input into the application, including peer review.

Outcomes and results dissemination

Outline the proposed project deliverables and the potential outcomes of the project. Consider how these could be scaled up beyond the local level. Applications are expected to give consideration to the target audience, and plans for the dissemination of findings, during the project planning stage.

Selection process

Academic Assessment Panel

The AAP is a selected group of RACGP and external representatives. The main function of the AAP is to assess the suitability of applications submitted for an ERG. At a minimum, the AAP consists of the following members:

- Senior Academic Advisor of the RACGP Education Research Unit who will act as Chair

- Representative from an organisation with an interest in academic and educational research in general practice and primary care

- Senior Medical Educator with an academic background

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person with health research experience

- Representative from the RACGP Expert Committee – Research

- Academic with research experience in medical education and/or health policy

Assessment process

AAP members individually assess and score each of the ERG applications against the selection criteria. At a meeting of the AAP, panel members discuss their assessments and decide whether an application meets the minimum criteria for the grant. In the event that there are more suitable applications than grants available, the panel will rank the applications, giving consideration to project scope, design, methods, intended outcomes, translation plans, proposed budget and feasibility of project timelines.

Outcome

The RACGP will notify all applicants on the outcome of their application, as well as provide feedback from the AAP. The decisions of the AAP are final and are not subject to appeal.

Contractual arrangements and funding

The RACGP funds the ERGs projects with funding from the Department of Health and Aged Care.

RACGP will enter into funding agreements with successful contracting organisations, which will set out the obligations and responsibilities of both parties to complete the ERG project.

Funding will be provided to successful lead organisations in three stages:

- 50% of the total funded amount on execution of the funding agreement

- 35% of the total funded amount on receipt and approval of the mid-term report

- 15% of the total funded amount (less unspent funds as per financial reconciliation) on receipt and approval of the completed final report and financial reconciliation.

Funding agreements will be provided to applicants with their Invitation to Apply letter (when the application period opens). Contractual terms will reflect those that RACGP is already subject to with the Department and certain terms may not be capable of amendment. If an applicant wishes to seek departures from the Funding Agreement, this must be notified to the RACGP by submitting a table of departures within their full application.

Administration and support activities schedule

There will be three administrative reports due:

- Initial progress report (dates to be confirmed)

- Mid-term report (dates to be confirmed)

- Final report and financial reconciliation (dates to be confirmed).

The RACGP will also be delivering at least four support activities to the cohort throughout the year. These will be scheduled, and grantees will be advised of these at the time of outcome release.

Application and Program timeline

Activity	Timeframe
• Expression of interest period	**8 April - 31 May 2024**
• EOI submissions advised of outcome • EOIs to be submitted via Smarty Grants	**mid July 2024**
• Application period for successful EOI submissions • Applications to be submitted via Smarty Grants	**mid July - early September 2024 (8 weeks)**
• Applicants advised of outcome	**mid/late October 2024**
• Contracts arranged	**October - November 2024**
• ERG cohort commences research project	**1 January 2025**
• Workshop 1 (face to face)	**March 2025**
• Initial Progress report due	**April 2025**
• Support activity (online)	**April-May 2025**
• Mid-term report due	**July 2025**
• Support activity (online)	**September-October 2025**
• Attendance at a national conference - RACGP funded	**TBC**
• Workshop 2 (face to face)	**November 2025 (TBC)**
• ERG project concludes	**31 December 2025**
• Final research findings report/Financial reconciliation due	**February 2026**