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| GP grants program |
| Program guidelines |
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# Background

The Victorian primary care system is facing long-standing system-wide pressures that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to affordable primary care is impacted by a range of factors, including:

* difficulties securing the supply of General Practitioners (GP) combined with maldistribution across regional, peri-urban, and low socioeconomic areas, limiting patient access; and
* a shift by GPs to private or mixed billing whereby patients are required to make a co-payment which is a deterrent to patients seeking timely care.

The number of GP specialists is not growing at the same rate as non-GP specialists (3.5% per year for GPs, compared to a yearly increase of 4.5% in the number of non-GP specialists). The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) report ‘Health of the Nation’ noted that 13.8% of medical graduates now consider general practice as a preferred career path, a decrease from 16.1% in 2021. Demand is also likely to outstrip supply of GPs in the next decade. Deloitte has forecasted a national shortfall of 11,392 GPs by 2032.

Reports have shown that medical graduates do not choose general practice over other specialties. In many cases, this is due to the loss of entitlements when leaving the hospital setting. GPs also commonly report managing workload as a challenge, and this has been exacerbated by increased pressure placed on GPs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These GP Grant Guidelines (**the Guidelines**) have been prepared to provide information about the GP Grant Program for GP trainees and GP Colleges and outline the relevant requirements. In accordance with these Guidelines, the Administrators will enter into Grant Agreements with the successful applicants that will include, at a minimum, the terms and conditions as captured in Appendix 1 of these Guidelines, under which successful applicants will receive the Grant funding.

# Funding purpose

The Victorian Government has committed $32 million over two years to provide financial incentives (grants) to doctors to become GPs (GP Grants Program). The election policy capped the number of Grants to 400 per year (total 800 grants over two years) and $40,000 per successful applicant.

The Victorian Government established the GP Grants Program with the aim to:

* increase the number of GP trainee enrolments in 2024 and 2025;
* provide a top-up payment for first year trainees of $30,000; and
* provide $10,000 to support the costs of exams to be undertaken during GP training.

# Interpretation

For the purposes of these Guidelines,

**Administrators** means the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), who will be responsible for administering the Grants using funding received from the Victorian Government.

**Grant** means the three payments made by the Administrators to a successful applicant in accordance with these Guidelines.

**Grant Agreement** means an agreement formed between a successful applicant and the Administrators, using funding received from the Victorian Government, which is comprised of the submitted application form, the terms and conditions in Appendix 1 and any other terms as issued by the Administrator.

**Grant Period** means the 24-month period in which the three instalment payments are distributed to the successful applicants as outlined in clause 1.0, Program Dates.

**Prevocational years** means the period between graduation and the commencement of vocational training. This includes the internship year (postgraduate year [PGY] 1) and post internship training (PGY2+).

**Victorian Government** means the State of Victoria, currently being represented by the Victorian Department of Health for the purposes of these Guidelines.

# Program overview

The Grants will be awarded to eligible doctors who have been successfully accepted and commenced a GP training program in Victoria in 2024 and 2025, as well as doctors who had applied, enrolled and were accepted on or after 27 November 2022 into a GP training program and commenced training in Victoria in 2023.

The Grants comprise a maximum of $40,000 and will be delivered through three payments:

* A first instalment payment of $10,000 made at training commencement in an approved training placement;
* A second instalment payment of $20,000 made, subject to the doctor remaining enrolled in a GP training program after 12 months; and
* A third instalment payment of $10,000 made, subject to the doctor remaining enrolled in a GP training program after 24 months. This payment is intended to assist with expenses associated with examination costs.

Approved Administrators will administer the GP Grants Program and will be responsible for assessing eligibility of applicants and delivering payments in accordance with these Guidelines.

# 1.0 Program dates

Instalment payments for the Grants will be delivered as per the dates outlined below for the corresponding cohorts, although there may be some flexibility in individual circumstances. Please refer to your respective GP college for further details regarding instalment payment dates.

**2023 cohort who applied, enrolled and were accepted on or after 27 November 2022**

March 2024 First instalment payment

March 2024 Second instalment payment

March 2025 Third instalment payment

**2024 cohort**

Trainees commencing in January/February

March 2024 First instalment payment

March 2025 Second instalment payment

March 2026 Third instalment payment

Trainees commencing mid-year

September 2024 First instalment payment

September 2025 Second instalment payment

September 2026 Third instalment payment

**2025 cohort**

Trainees commencing in January/February

March 2025 First instalment payment

March 2026 Second instalment payment

March 2027 Third instalment payment

Trainees commencing mid-year

September 2025 First instalment payment

September 2026 Second instalment payment

September 2027 Third instalment payment

# Eligibility

**Eligibility criteria**

* 1. To be eligible for the GP grant, at the time of the application, applicants must:

1. Be enrolled to undertake GP training, by:
   * + Undertaking GP training in Victoria in 2024 or 2025 and meeting the requirements as per either the ACRRM, RACGP or RVTS guidelines. This will involve applying directly to one of the following:

* [Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)](https://www.acrrm.org.au/) <https://www.acrrm.org.au/>
* [Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)](https://www.racgp.org.au/) <https://www.racgp.org.au/>
* [Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS)](https://rvts.org.au/) <https://rvts.org.au/>; or
  + - Have applied, enrolled and been accepted on or after 27 November 2022 into a GP training program in Victoria and have commenced training in 2023.

1. Meet the relevant citizenship, visa, qualification, Ahpra registration and training requirements to enter a GP training program.
2. Be successfully accepted into one of the following GP training programs and commence training in Victoria:
   * Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program
   * Fellowship Support Program (FSP)
   * Independent Pathway (IP)
   * Practice Experience Program (PEP) – Specialist Stream
   * Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS)
   * Rural Generalist Training Scheme (RGTS).
3. Undertake training at a location within Victoria or a Victorian border community that is an approved location for GP training in Victoria by the respective GP college.
   1. If an applicant is successful for a Grant, the Administrator will make the first, second and third instalment payments only if the following conditions are met at the time of the instalment payment:

* secured, commenced and undertaking a training placement/term;
* remain enrolled in a GP training program in Victoria;
* maintain a valid working visa; and
* maintain current professional Ahpra registration.

## Further eligibility considerations

In special circumstances, assessed on a case-by-case basis, consideration may be given to a successful Grant applicant who has had to take a leave of absence from their GP training program. The successful applicant will be responsible for providing sufficient reasons or evidence to be considered as a special case. In such cases, the decision of the Administrators on special circumstances will be final.

## Priority criteria

The number of available Grants is capped at 400 per year (total 800 grants over two years). Where demand for grants exceeds the number available, the Victorian Government reserves the right to issue a prioritisation criteria. Priority may be given to Australian citizens, Australian medical graduates, doctors training in locations by rurality and areas of workforce need.

# 3.0 Ineligible applicants

1. The following applicants are ineligible for the Grant:

* Doctors who have enrolled and were accepted into a GP training program before 27 November 2022 are not eligible. (Grants are only available for doctors who applied, enrolled and were accepted into a GP training program in Victoria on or after 27 November 2022 and commenced training in 2023);
* Doctors who were previously enrolled in a GP training program prior to 2024 and re-enter a GP training program in 2023, 2024 and 2025;
* Doctors who have been accepted and commence a GP training program after 2025;
* Doctors who do not train in Victoria (or a border community that is not an approved location) during their training; and
* Doctors undertaking GP training placements during Prevocational years in GP practices.

# 4.0 How to apply

1. RACGP and ACRRM, as Administrators, will administer and distribute the Grants. After they have been successfully enrolled into one of the relevant GP training programs, applicants can apply for a Grant by submitting an application to the Administrators via their websites as per Section 2.1
   1. As part of the application process, applicants must agree that they are aware of the requirements of the GP Grant Program and the terms of the Grant Agreement. By submitting an application form, applicants agree that if they are successful, they will be bound by a Grant Agreement between themselves and an Administrator.
   2. If the application is successful, applicants will be notified via email. This will form an agreement between the successful applicant and the Administrator on the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement, as comprised in the application form, the Terms and Conditions outlined in Appendix 1 and other terms as determined by the Administrators.
   3. If an applicant is successful in applying for the GP Grant program, the applicant will need to provide their Australian bank account details to their responsible Administrator to indicate where they would like the Grant paid.
   4. Applicants can only apply for one Grant and will receive a maximum amount of $40,000.

# 5.0 Assessment of claims

* 1. The successful applicant will be required to confirm that they meet the eligibility criteria at the time of application.
  2. The successful applicant may be requested to provide further information to assist in assessment of their application or claim. The Administrators reserve in their absolute discretion the right to refuse an application or claim and the right not to make a payment where eligibility criteria are not met, or where the applicant does not or cannot provide sufficient information in the required timeframe to assess whether eligibility criteria have been met, or where a claim cannot be supported.

# 6.0 Privacy statement

* 1. Information the applicant provides for the GP grants program, including personal information, will be collected by RACGP and ACRRM as program Administrators for the purposes of assessing eligibility, and to administer claims and payments.
  2. By applying for a grant, applicants consent to the sharing of information as outlined in the Terms and Conditions. Please refer to Appendix 1, clause 11 for more information. RACGP and ACRRM, as Administrators may also contact the recipient to clarify their submitted information, and for program review, reporting, monitoring, audit and evaluation purposes. Please refer to Appendix 1, clause 12 for more information.
  3. RACGP and ACRRM will complete a range of eligibility assessments that may include data matching to clarify the accuracy and quality of information supplied by the applicant. The data matching may occur on enrolment information and personal information provided in the applicant’s application, their supporting evidence and any claim or payment forms.
  4. As program Administrators, RACGP and ACRRM collects demographic information for economic reporting purposes on behalf of the Victorian Government. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated data.
  5. Any personal information about the applicant will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred and stored in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.

# 7.0 Other information

7.1 The Victorian Government reserves the right to amend these Guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate (subject to appropriate notice being given either by publication on the Department of Health and Administrator websites, or by email to applicants).

7.2 If an unsuccessful applicant considers that their application has been incorrectly assessed for the GP grants program, they may contact their respective Administrator for advice.

# 8.0 Contact us

8.1 Please contact [gpgrantsprogram@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:gpgrantsprogram@health.vic.gov.au) with any GP grants program queries.

# Appendix 1: Terms and conditions

To provide the Grant to the successful applicants, the Administrators will enter into Grant Agreements with successful applicants. The Administrators will, as a minimum, incorporate the following terms and conditions into their Grant Agreements:

1. As part of the application process, applicants must agree that they are aware of the requirements of the GP grants program and the terms of the Grant Agreement. By submitting an application form, applicants agree that if they are successful, they will be bound by a Grant Agreement between themselves and an Administrator.
2. The Victorian Government will be financially responsible for the GP grants program and will provide the funding amount to the Administrators. However, the Administrators will be directly responsible for the administration of the GP grants program, including the assessment of eligibility, management of the Grant Agreements and distributions of the Grants. Any claims, concerns or grievances by applicants must be made to the Administrators directly.
3. To receive all instalment payments, applicants must maintain their eligibility for the Grant Period. Administrators may contact successful applicants during the Grant Period and/or ahead of instalment payment dates to ensure that their eligibility is maintained. Applicants must satisfy Administrators of their eligibility if contacted for this purpose.
4. The successful applicant may spend the grant amount on items or activities that supports their GP training. The Victorian Government recommends considering allocating amounts to:

* Travel expenses for work, professional development, or social activities
* Housing or accommodation
* Technology or equipment that supports your practise; or
* Exam costs.

1. If successful, applicants are responsible for maintaining professional registration for the Grant Period and informing the Administrator if they are unable to meet grant eligibility requirements as a result of incomplete or restricted professional registration.
2. If, during the course of the Grant Program, the successful applicant withdraws from their GP training program or does not successfully maintain eligibility requirements, they will not be eligible for subsequent instalments.
3. The Victorian Government is not required to withhold tax (PAYG) from Grants paid. The Victorian Government strongly recommends that successful applicants seek independent tax advice for their grant payment and any impact of the payment on their tax liability or any benefits paid under an Australian Government scheme. Successful applicants should be aware that they may be liable to pay tax on their grant. For more information, please refer to the [ATO website](https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/not-for-profit-organisations/getting-started/in-detail/types-of-dgrs/l-z/scholarship-funds): <https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/not-for-profit-organisations/getting-started/in-detail/types-of-dgrs/l-z/scholarship-funds>.
4. It is the obligation of the applicant to ensure that the bank details provided to the Administrators are correct. If the successful applicant provides incorrect bank details, their Grant payments may not be received, and the Victorian Government and its Administrators will be under no obligation to make any repayment.
5. No further Grant payments will be made after 30 November 2027.
6. If the applicant enters into the Grant Agreement and does not comply with its terms and conditions, they may be required to refund any amount paid.
7. Applications and claims may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives for a period of up to three years following the completion of the Grant Period to determine whether the application and information provided during the term of the Grant Agreement was compliant. Applicants must retain relevant records accordingly.
8. Program surveys and evaluation: Grant recipients agree to complete the Victorian Government’s survey, which may be for a period of up to three years after applying to the GP grants program. The program surveys and evaluation will be distributed by the Administrators using the contact details provided by Grant recipients. Responses collected, including any personal information, will be used to produce an aggregated report for the Victorian Government. This information will be treated in accordance with the privacy statement detailed above.
9. Fraudulent claims: By submitting the application form, applicants are declaring that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true, accurate and not misleading about a material fact.
10. If any information in the application or claims for payment is found to be false, misleading or fraudulent (as determined by the Administrator or the Victorian Government in its discretion), any paid Grant will be repayable on demand and the Grant recipient agrees to repay the Grant or any part of it, upon demand under the circumstances outlined in this clause. The Victorian Government and the Administrators reserve the right to take further action, including but not limited to referring the applicant to the relevant law enforcement agency and issuing recovery proceedings in court. Providing inaccurate, untrue, or misleading information may result in an offence being committed and serious penalties may apply.

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