RACGP
Royal Australian College
of General Practitioners

Education Research Grant program 2027

Application guide

Education Research Grant program 2027: Application guide

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.

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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 education research 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, at gpedresearch@racgp.org.au

Purpose

The ERG program provides an opportunity for awardees to establish, develop and maintain research partnerships between RACGP Education and Training, and general practice 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, Disability and Ageing. Grants are awarded through a competitive process to successful applicants and research teams undertaking projects that address the 2027 Education Research Grant Priority areas.

For the 2027 round, applicants may submit a proposal for Education Research Grants for either a 12-month project (up to $150,000) or a 24-month project (up to $300,000). Applicants proposing a 24-month project must ensure that their research design, budget and work plan clearly reflect the extended duration.

The 2027 research project period will commence on 1 February 2027 and conclude on 31 January 2028 (for 12-month projects) and 31 January 2029 (for 24-month projects).

The RACGP will deliver compulsory research support activities throughout the ERG research year to help grant holders meet program objectives. Each research team is expected to have two members participate in these activities, which include face-to-face workshops, webinars, journal club sessions and conference attendance. All costs associated with attending the face-to-face components will be covered by the RACGP. Please refer to the ERG Support Activities section for more details.

Grant holders are expected to disseminate and publish their project findings during and beyond the funded research period. Dissemination may include conference presentations, articles in peer-reviewed academic journals, reports to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing 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 after the funding period to support ongoing 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 2027 Expression of Interest submission period is open from Tuesday 7 April 2026 to Sunday 31 May 2026. A link to the form will be available from the ERG webpage.

Only successful EOI submissions will be invited to submit a full application in July 2026.

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 full application form to ensure applications are submitted to the standard required by the Academic Assessment Panel (AAP).

The RACGP recommends that applicants allow plenty of time to prepare their applications.The criteria that the Academic Assessment Panel uses to assess applications are 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.

Guidelines for contacting Directors of Training and/or National Clinical Leads

Before drafting your EOI, the medical educator in your team must discuss your proposed project with the Director of Training in the relevant region(s), and/or with the National Clinical Lead or National Director of Training for projects with a national scope.

Early engagement is essential. Applicants are expected to initiate contact at **the outset of project development**, and **no later than 4 weeks prior to the EOI closing date**, to ensure Directors of Training and/or National Clinical Leads have adequate time to review the proposal and provide meaningful input.

Applications that do not meet this minimum engagement requirement may be deemed non-compliant.

These discussions are essential for refining the project design, assessing feasibility within GP training environments, and ensuring that proposed research will generate findings that are relevant and useful for RACGP GP Training.

A Letter of Support from the relevant Directors of Training and/or National Clinical Leads will be required at the full application stage.

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 or current or recent Academic Registrars)

Research teams must have active, collaborative relationships with regional GP training teams and/or National Clinical Leads, which will facilitate the translation and implementation of research project findings and recommendations of research projects.

Research teams must also have active, collaborative relationships with a University Department of General Practice or equivalent (including a Rural Clinical School).

Also strongly encouraged:

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

Ineligible applicants

RACGP Board Directors are ineligible to apply for research grants as either the Lead Investigator or a Co-Investigator on the project team.

The Academic Assessment Panel 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 that each team member will have in maintaining direct and ongoing involvement in the project.

Applicants who need assistance to be connected with early researchers and/or academic registrars to participate in an ERG project, are advised to contact the Education Research Unit at gpedresearch@racgp.org.au

Criterion 2 – Research proposal

The research proposal will be assessed based on the following:

- Background & justification of research (including literature review)
- Project goal(s) and research questions are clear and aligned with the proposed research design-
- Appropriateness of design & methods (including data collection and analysis)
- Scope and feasibility of research
- Plan for dissemination and translation into practice
- Potential impact of findings on GP training

Where a 24-month project is proposed, the application must demonstrate why the extended timeframe is required and how the additional period will strengthen the project's feasibility, outcomes and impact.

Applicants will receive feedback, and their responses to this feedback will be taken into account as part of the full application assessment.

The applicant must demonstrate that their application addresses at least one of the nine 2027 Education Research Grant Priorities:

- **Supervision:** Recruitment, selection, support and retention of high-quality general practice supervisors
- **Artificial Intelligence technologies in general practice:** Exploring the implications and impact of emerging artificial intelligence technologies in GP training
- **Education and Assessment:** Educational and assessment strategies in GP training: effectiveness, implementation, quality improvement and innovation
- **Career pathways:** Career paths and types of practice of recent fellows, and implications for GP training
- **Training environments:** Enabling and building positive training experiences in evolving training environments
- **Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values, knowledge, practice and worldview:** Exploring best practice approaches to how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values, ways of knowing, being and doing, and a holistic worldview of health, healing and cultural safety are embedded across GP training, education and assessment
- **Rural general practice training:** Supporting quantity, quality and attractiveness across rural GP training
- **Research capacity:** Developing research skills and culture in general practice training environments
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander general practitioners:** Pathways to success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander GP trainees and GPs

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 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
4. The applicant demonstrates a clear governance framework, communication plan and mitigation to risks
5. The application includes a feasible plan for dissemination, and translation and/or implementation of findings
6. The project demonstrates potential to build research capacity and skills in the GP Training sector
7. The project demonstrates potential impact and relevance to GP training
8. The applicant has responded constructively and comprehensively to the feedback provided by the Academic Assessment Panel at the EOI stage

Use of AI

The RACGP supports the careful and transparent use of AI tools to enhance the quality and efficiency of research preparation. Applicants may use AI tools for literature searching, visualisation, idea generation, proof reading, and refining wording. However, AI tools must not be used to generate substantive sections of the application or research outputs, as this can lead to generic, inaccurate or non fundable proposals.

To maintain academic integrity and ensure the originality of submissions, applicants must adhere to the following expectations:

Acceptable uses of AI

- Conducting or supporting literature searches
- Organising or visualising information (e.g., concept maps, thematic clustering).
- Generating ideas, prompts, or alternative phrasings for consideration.
- Proof reading or improving clarity, grammar, or structure.
- Assisting with formatting or preparing tables, schedules, or checklists.

Unacceptable uses of AI

- Writing full paragraphs or sections of the application, including the research proposal, literature review, method, ethics, or impact statements.
- Generating output that includes fabricated references, data, or evidence.
- Producing analysis, interpretations, or conclusions that have not been verified by the research team.
- Replacing the researcher's own critical thinking, disciplinary expertise, or methodological decision making.
- Submitting AI generated text without human review, correction, and verification.

Disclosure expectations

Applicants must disclose the use of AI tools when AI has contributed to the development of the proposal.

Academic integrity requirements

Applicants remain fully responsible for:

- the accuracy and validity of all content submitted
- verifying any information produced by AI tools
- ensuring all references are real, accurate, and appropriately cited
- maintaining confidentiality and privacy when using AI tools
- ensuring that AI use does not compromise ethical standards or research integrity

AI tools must be used in a way that supports the expertise, judgement, and accountability of the research team.

Guide to writing a successful research proposal

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

Project 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.
- 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.
- Provide a reference list.

A word limit applies to the literature review 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) 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 with their full application. Please note that RACGP email lists will not be made available to research teams. Recruitment invitations will generally be distributed within regular RACGP communications.
- 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:

(The applicant) and (Project title) has discussed their Education Research Grant application 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 also 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

NHMRC 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
Project aim and research questions*	250 words	250 words
Background*	500 words	500 words
Literature review*	500-1000 words	500-1000 words
Research design and methods (total)*	700 words	1000 words
Ethical considerations*	100 words	250 words
Potential translation and impact	200 words	250 words

*Your responses in the following sections have been retained from EOI submission. Applicants are required to review and update these sections to ensure the full application reflects the most accurate and complete version of the proposal, taking into account feedback and recommendations provided by the Academic Assessment Panel.

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 a 12-month project and up to $300,000 (excluding GST) for a 24-month project. Budgets must align with the proposed project scope and duration (12-month or 24-month model) and clearly justify the resources required for the selected timeframe. 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.

Applicants must provide a clear and detailed project budget that:

- Aligns with the funding period.
- Is consistent with the Eligible funding items and avoids Ineligible funding items.
- Demonstrates that the project can be completed within the proposed budget.
- Justifies each expense, including staffing (expressed as %FTE or total hours for contractors).
- Specifies allowances for salaries, consultants, and other costs consistent with the roles and responsibilities table.
- Identifies any additional funding sources and explains how contributions will be used.

Publication costs may be included. If not spent during the funding period, unspent funds may be used for dissemination and publication costs for up to 24 months after project completion.

> The ERGs will only provide funding for costs incurred during the funding period, 1 February 2027–31 January 2028 (for 12-month projects) and 1 February 2027–31 January 2029 (for 24-month projects). The Academic Assessment Panel (AAP) will only approve budgets that meet the selection criteria and application requirements. Once approved, the total budget cannot be changed.

Grant holders may request amendments to reallocate funds to new or existing line items during the grant period. Amendments must be submitted in writing to gpedresearch@racgp.org.au and must remain consistent with the Eligible funding items list.

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

Eligible Funding items

Staffing costs – salaries for project staff (expressed as %FTE) or total hours for short-term contractors. If casual staff attending the ERG workshop or online support activities, ensure that the hours are budgeted for in addition to the project research requirements.

- Travel and meeting expenses – costs associated with project-related travel and meetings.
- Data-related costs – analysis, transcription, and associated services.
- Recruitment incentives – reasonable participant compensation, consistent with ethical guidance.
- Dissemination activities – poster printing, conference registration, domestic economy flights, and accommodation within Australia.
- Administrative overheads – reasonable management fees of administering organisations, capped at 3%.

For 24-month projects, applicants must ensure that all requested funding remains consistent with eligible items and is appropriately distributed across the extended research period. Unspent funds already allocated may also be used within 12 months of project completion to support dissemination at a national conference (e.g., registration, travel, and accommodation).

Ineligible funding items

The following items are not eligible for funding under the ERG program:

- Expenses incurred outside the funding period (except approved publication or conference dissemination costs using unspent funds).
- Ongoing resource management or maintenance costs beyond project completion.
- Physical infrastructure or contributions to large capital projects.
- Subscriptions or memberships.
- International conference attendance (travel and accommodation).
- International conferences outside Australia and New Zealand (only online attendance may be funded). Applicants must also indicate if they have applied for funding for the same project through the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine ERG. A 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 strongly 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

Applicants should outline the proposed project deliverables and anticipated outcomes, including consideration of how results may be scaled beyond the local level (for example, regional, national or international dissemination). Applications are expected to:

- Identify the target audience (e.g., GP registrars, supervisors, educators, policymakers, academic researchers).
- Incorporate clear plans for dissemination of findings during the project planning stage, using appropriate channels such as peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, reports, and RACGP communication platforms.
- Demonstrate how dissemination will contribute to strengthening general practice (GP) training, for example by embedding evidence-based approaches into registrar education, enhancing supervisory practices, and supporting continuous improvement of GP training programs.

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

Members of the Academic Assessment Panel (AAP) will individually assess and score each ERG application against the published selection criteria. Following this, the panel will convene to discuss their assessments and determine whether each application meets the minimum requirements for funding.

If the number of suitable applications exceeds the available grants, the panel will rank applications by giving consideration to:

- Project scope and alignment with ERG priorities
- Research design and methodological rigour
- Anticipated outcomes and potential impact
- Plans for translation and dissemination of findings
- Proposed budget and justification of costs
- Feasibility of project timelines

Outcome

The RACGP will notify all applicants on the outcome of their application, as well as provide feedback from the Academic Assessment Panel. The decisions of the Academic Assessment Panel 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, Disability and Ageing.

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 agreement template will be provided to successful applicants with their outcome notification letters. 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 within the specified timeframe.

Application and Program timeline

Activity	Timeframe
• Expression of interest period	**7 April–31 May 2026**
• EOI submissions advised of outcome • EOIs to be submitted via Smarty Grants	**mid July 2026**
• Application period for successful EOI submissions • Applications to be submitted via Smarty Grants	**mid July–early September 2026**
• Applicants advised of outcome	**mid/late October 2026**
• Contracts arranged	**November–December 2026**
• ERG cohort commences research project	**1 February 2027**
• Workshop 1 (face to face)	**March 2027**
• Initial Progress report due	**April 2027**
• Support activity (online)	**May–June 2027**
• Mid-term report due	**July 2027**
• Support activity (online)	**September–October 2027**
• Attendance at a national conference - RACGP funded	**TBC**
• Workshop 2 (face to face)	**November 2027 (TBC)**
• ERG project concludes	**31 January 2028 (12-month projects)** **31 January 2029 (24-month projects)**
• Final research findings report/Financial reconciliation due	**March/April 2028**

This timeline reflects the 2027 12-month program schedule. The 2028 (24-month) timeline will follow a similar timeframe.

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