

# **RACGP Curriculum for Australian General Practice 2019**

## *Special Skills Unit – Editorial Fellow (EF19)*

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## RACGP Curriculum for Australian General Practice 2019: Special Skills Unit – Editorial Fellow (EF19)

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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.*

# Introduction

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is Australia's largest professional general practice organisation and represents urban and rural general practitioners (GPs), with over 40,000 members working in or towards a career in general practice.

The core skills that form the centrepiece of the RACGP Curriculum for Australian General Practice clearly state, in measurable terms, the knowledge and skills required for each stage of general practice training.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these fundamental, core components that all trainees must learn and be proficient in, a career in Australian general practice also offers a number of optional supplementary roles. One of these is the opportunity to be a medical editor at the *Australian Journal of General Practice (AJGP)*.

*AJGP* aims to provide relevant, evidence-based, clearly articulated information to Australian GPs to assist them in providing the highest quality patient care, applicable to the varied geographic and social contexts in which GPs work and to all GP roles as clinician, researcher, educator, practice team member and opinion leader. All articles are subject to a peer-review process before they are accepted for publication. The journal is indexed in MEDLINE, Index Medicus and Science Citation Index Expanded.

*AJGP* is a member of, and subscribes to the principles of, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE),<sup>2</sup> and adheres to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)<sup>3</sup> recommendations. Acceptance of manuscripts for publication is based on quality, originality and relevance for a general practice readership. The views expressed by the authors of articles in *AJGP* are their own and not necessarily those of the publisher or the editorial staff.

The *AJGP* readership includes GPs, general practice registrars, international medical graduates, primary care academics and medical students. As the journal is open access, readership of the publicly available online version extends more broadly into the international healthcare and education sectors as well as patients and carers.

This curriculum statement is uniquely focused and directed to the needs of those training and working as medical editors for *AJGP*, an optional addition to the formal roles GPs maintain in the Australian workplace. Hence, this curriculum is entirely positioned as supplementary to the core skills that form the centrepiece of the RACGP Curriculum for Australian General Practice.

This curriculum statement provides the structural underpinning for the theoretical and supervised components of trainee medical editors working at *AJGP*, the framework for new graduate medical editor orientation on commencement at *AJGP*, as well as an overview of continuing professional development topics.

In line with the core statement for the RACGP Curriculum for Australian General Practice, this elective skills component follows competency-based education in which participants are acquiring the knowledge and skills deemed to be essential to succeed in medical editing. Each student may then receive additional instruction, practice time and academic support as required, to help them achieve competency and meet the expected standards.

# Core skills – Editorial Fellow

## Domain 1

### Critical evaluation of manuscripts

EF1.1 Medical editors are able to critically evaluate manuscripts

## Domain 2

### Adherence to the peer review process

EF2.1 Medical editors adhere to high-standard peer review practices

## Domain 3

### Writing, editing and developing content

EF3.1 Medical editors ensure clinical accuracy and relevance to general practice

EF 3.2 Medical editors provide high-quality written material

## Domain 4

### Ensuring conformance to high editorial and ethical standards

EF 4.1 Medical editors are ethical and professional

## Domain 5

### Editorial development and planning

EF 1.1 Medical editors provide ongoing leadership for *Australian Journal of General Practice*

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## Domain 1: Critical evaluation of manuscripts

Core skill	Competency outcome	Criteria
<b>EF1.1</b> Medical editors are able to critically evaluate manuscripts	<b>EF1.1.1</b> Submitted manuscripts are critically evaluated for consideration for publication	<b>EF1.1.1.1</b> Demonstrate an understanding of research methodology when considering manuscript submissions <b>EF1.1.1.2</b> Identify whether the manuscript meets the minimum criteria for consideration <b>EF1.1.1.3</b> Determine if the research manuscript meets the minimum scientific standard required <b>EF1.1.1.4</b> Evaluate the medical component of the manuscript for factual information within an evidence-based framework <b>EF1.1.1.5</b> Determine if the manuscript meets ethical standards for submission and publication

# Context and application: Domain 1

## EF1.1.1.1 Research methodology

The critical evaluation of manuscripts submitted for consideration is essential to determine the quality of a work and its potential relevance to Australian general practice. Without an awareness of the current evidence-based guidelines it will be difficult to determine the robustness of the manuscript under review. A key component of critical evaluation requires the medical editor to have a thorough understanding of the various research methodologies authors may apply to their topic under study. It is essential that the medical editor is aware of the fundamental philosophies behind quantitative and qualitative research methods. The medical editor is required to be able to determine if the methodology chosen is suitable for the research aims and that the results/findings are appropriate to the stated research methods. An appropriate understanding of statistical methodology is necessary to make the initial determination as to whether a manuscript is suitable for further review, as incorrect statistical analysis will render the results void. Similarly, the medical editor should have sufficient understanding of qualitative research methodology, recognising that this is a less common approach in general practice research. It is essential that the manuscript is critically reviewed within the context of methodology, and not only for its clinical and scientific components.

In summary, the key competencies the medical editor needs to acquire are the ability to:

- demonstrate an understanding of commonly used quantitative and qualitative methods
- evaluate other research methodologies through the use of the available literature.

### Required text and readings

- Greenhalgh T. How to read a paper: The basics of evidence-based medicine<sup>4</sup>

## EF2.1.1.2 Minimum criteria for consideration

All submissions to *AJGP* are initially reviewed by the production team and medical editors to confirm they meet the minimum criteria for consideration. Once it has been determined that they have met the criteria, the manuscript is sent out for further peer review. These minimum criteria are essential to ensure the ongoing high-quality publication standards of *AJGP*.

All scientific and clinical manuscripts need to be critically reviewed to ensure the information contained in the manuscript meets current evidence-based standards and that the content is scientifically and clinically accurate. Criteria to be considered include legislative and ethical requirements. As part of the ethical and professional guidelines followed by *AJGP*, all submitted manuscripts must be accurately referenced. It is essential that manuscripts are presented in an accepted scientific format and demonstrate high-level academic writing styles. All manuscripts should be considered in terms of their relevance to Australian general practice.

Among the key criteria expected of the medical editor is the ability to recognise and identify whether the submitted manuscripts meet COPE and ICJME guidelines, as well as the requirements set out in the *AJGP* author guidelines. All submitted manuscripts must undergo a plagiarism check through iThenticate (refer to **EF4.1.1.2**) and openly acknowledge any potential conflicts of interest (**EF4.1.1.6**).

### Required readings

- *AJGP* author guidelines<sup>5</sup>
- COPE guidelines<sup>2</sup>
- ICJME guidelines<sup>3</sup>

### EF1.1.1.3 Minimum scientific standard

Following on from EF1.1.1, the specific considerations for scientific standards of submitted manuscripts are to determine if the manuscript meets the following requirements:

- There is a defined aim or hypotheses.
- The study demonstrates a gap in the literature that it aims to fill.
- The research methodology is appropriate to the research aim/hypotheses.
- The research methodology is described in sufficient detail.
- Results match the stated methodology applied in the study.
- The interpretation and conclusions are justifiable from the results detailed.
- The introduction and discussion are well contextualised within the current literature.
- The authors have identified the study limitations appropriately.

#### Required readings

- Greenhalgh T. How to read a paper: The basics of evidence-based medicine<sup>4</sup>

### EF1.1.1.4 Evidence-based framework and medical component

As *AJGP* is widely read among Australian GPs and forms part of the ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program, it is crucial that any manuscripts with clinical content are thoroughly scrutinised to ensure they are evidence-based. Therefore, all submitted material is considered in light of its relevance and contribution to Australian general practice as well as for the manner in which it is written.

All submitted material is checked to ensure factual accuracy and the medical editor is required to have an understanding of what constitutes evidence. The clinical content of the material under review needs to be clearly understood and, if unsure, the medical editor should consult contemporary evidence-based resources to ensure clinical accuracy. Manuscripts and other materials are compared and contrasted with contemporary evidence-based resources and are checked to ensure the medical information meets contemporary evidence-based Australian general practice standards.

As *AJGP* is the leading journal for Australian general practitioners, it is crucial that areas of clinical controversy or non-evidence-based care are clearly identified as such and appropriate justification is provided for their inclusion in the manuscript. Consideration is given as to whether the manuscript adds to the current body of clinical knowledge in its area. The manuscript will be critically appraised to determine whether there are significant gaps in clinical reasoning and content provided.

### EF1.1.1.5 Meets ethical standards

As a key mechanism to ensure ongoing high-quality ethical and editorial standards of *AJGP*, the following issues need to be considered in the initial appraisal of all submitted manuscripts:

- Determine if the authors are appropriately qualified and have the necessary contemporaneous experience to write the manuscript.
- Consider whether ghost authors have been used (refer to COPE guidelines<sup>2</sup>).
- Check whether the authors clearly define how each member of the author team contributed to the manuscript and determine if this meets the *AGJP* guidelines.

#### Required readings

- COPE guidelines<sup>2</sup> – discussion of ghost authors
- *AJGP* author guidelines<sup>5</sup>

## Domain 2: Adherence to the peer review process

Core skill	Competency outcomes	Criteria
<b>EF2.1</b> Medical editors adhere to high-standard peer review practices	<b>EF2.1.1</b> Peer review processes are applied effectively <b>EF2.1.2</b> All communication is clear and respectful	<b>EF2.1.1.1</b> Implement the submission and review process <b>EF2.1.1.2</b> Arrange peer review of manuscripts <b>EF2.1.1.3</b> Use reviewer comments to guide editorial decisions <b>EF2.1.1.4</b> Make impartial editorial decisions on appropriateness of manuscript for publication <b>EF2.1.1.5</b> Assist with maintenance of the author and reviewer database <b>EF2.1.2.1</b> Correspondence with authors and reviewers is clear and effective <b>EF2.1.2.2</b> Communicate peer reviewer comments to authors with tact and sensitivity where appropriate <b>EF2.1.2.3</b> Evaluate and respond to author correspondence



## Context and application: Domain 2

### EF2.1.1.1 Submission and review process

The process for handling manuscript submissions involves a detailed knowledge and understanding of the software management system, ScholarOne Manuscripts, as this is the process for dealing with all manuscripts at their various stages. Demonstrated competency in using ScholarOne is necessary before the medical editor can undertake the processing of manuscripts. Through application of the competencies outlined in Domain 1, manuscripts will be moved to peer review, returned to the author for resubmission or rejected at this point.

### EF2.1.1.2 Peer review of manuscripts

A number of peer review models are available. An understanding of the model used by *AJGP* and other models is useful. The *AJGP* uses a catalogue system for the peer review database to ensure a broad selection of peer reviewers with expertise covering multiple categories. The submitted manuscript needs to be considered in detail to determine the appropriate categorisation of potential peer reviewers. Appropriate peer reviewers are ranked according to their particular topic interests and expertise for consideration as a reviewer for a specific manuscript. All reviewers must be considered in terms of apparent or potential conflict of interest, depending on the specific manuscript.

#### Required reading/resources

- ScholarOne Manuscripts: Editor training (online)<sup>6</sup>

### EF2.1.1.3 Editorial decisions

Information gathered through the preceding steps and the responses from peer review process will provide the medical editor with information to determine the next step in the process. Peer review commentary, used in the decision-making process, will sometimes require interpretation. It is necessary to ensure that all reviewers have considered the key issues, such as research methodology and clinical accuracy. The peer review comments are processed into a formal response to the authors, including, at times, specific editorial direction for the authors to take into consideration.

### EF2.1.1.4 Impartial editorial decisions

It is a requirement that the medical editors are able to make impartial decisions regarding manuscripts; therefore, the medical editor needs to demonstrate self-awareness of potential personal biases that may impact the decision-making process. All information gathered needs to be synthesised in the decision-making process, and working collaboratively with other members of the team will strengthen the process.

### EF2.1.1.5 Author and reviewer database

*AJGP* maintains a dynamic author and reviewer database. To this end it is anticipated that the editorial team works collaboratively with the production team to identify potential peer reviewers for consideration. This can be done through known contacts in various medical and clinical associations, wide reading to identify experts in a topic and through other relevant gatekeepers.

### EF2.1.2.1 Clear and effective communication

One of the roles of the medical editor involves communicating with authors and peer reviewers. It is essential to use appropriate, non-judgemental language that is clear and concise. Writing skills need to be such that all communication demonstrates clarity and cohesion with the appropriate use of academic style and language formats.

### EF2.1.2.2 Communicate peer reviewer comments

One of the outcomes of the peer review process is the requirement to communicate the peer reviewers' comments back to the author/s. At times this may mean the reviewers' comments need to be carefully reviewed and edited to ensure that the language is appropriate and communicated with tact and sensitivity. The medical editor is responsible for ensuring that feedback provided by the peer review process is communicated to the author in an effective, timely and appropriate manner. Reviewers' comments, as well as any further directions from the editorial team, should be communicated clearly.

### EF2.1.2.3 Respond to author correspondence

When a manuscript is resubmitted, it is necessary to evaluate whether the author has addressed all of the issues raised through the peer review process. Careful consideration is necessary to determine if each response proffered by the author provides an appropriate and sufficient clarification or amendment as suggested through the peer review process.

An area to consider carefully when providing feedback to authors is when the decision regarding a manuscript is 'not to accept'. It is important to try and anticipate, and hopefully prevent, undesirable responses from authors by providing clear commentary about the manuscript that is sensitive and tactful.

Another component of author correspondence is Letters to the Editor. These require evaluation focused on earlier publications and evaluating the original authors' formal responses.

## Domain 3: Writing, editing and developing content

Core skills	Competency outcomes	Criteria
<p><b>EF3.1</b> Medical editors ensure clinical accuracy and relevance to general practice</p> <p><b>EF3.2</b> Medical editors provide high-quality written material</p>	<p><b>EF3.1.1</b> Manuscripts are edited for accuracy, clarity and relevance to general practice</p> <p><b>EF3.2.1</b> Editorial pieces and other written work are of high standard</p>	<p><b>EF3.1.1.1</b> Identify and apply copy editing as appropriate</p> <p><b>EF3.1.1.2</b> Proofread manuscript for clarity and ensure manuscript is correctly attributed, acknowledged, headed, described, captioned, labelled and illustrated</p> <p><b>EF3.1.1.3</b> Determine medical accuracy</p> <p><b>EF3.2.1.1</b> Develop and write editorials</p> <p><b>EF3.2.1.2</b> Conduct book reviews as required</p> <p><b>EF3.2.1.3</b> Develop multiple choice questions (MCQs)</p>

## Context and application: Domain 3 – EF3.1

### EF3.1.1.1 Copy editing

Submitted manuscripts generally require copy editing. One of the key requirements is an in-depth knowledge of the *AJGP* author guidelines, and a working knowledge of *The RACGP editorial style guide*.<sup>7</sup> The medical editor should demonstrate a sophisticated vocabulary and the ability to access appropriate language and syntax resources as required. It is important that the material published by *AJGP* does not contain language that may be considered to be directive or dogmatic. Inaccurate and misleading statements need to be identified and removed. It is essential that all important statements are checked and appropriately referenced.

#### Resources

- *AJGP* author guidelines<sup>5</sup>
- *The RACGP editorial style guide*<sup>7</sup>

### EF3.1.1.2 Clarity

At the proof stage of the manuscript prior to publication, it is necessary to check that clarity of the manuscript has been maintained, and no errors have inadvertently been added. It is also timely to confirm all tables, figures and other style and formatting requirements have been accurately applied during the production process.

### EF3.1.1.3 Medical accuracy

The medical editor should critically evaluate the manuscript to ensure the medical information meets contemporary evidence-based Australian general practice standards.

## Context and application: Domain 3 – EF3.2

A key skill of medical editors is the ability to deliver well-developed academic writing. *AJGP* provides numerous opportunities to publish, including editorials as well as other professional and clinical papers. It is necessary to be completely familiar with the *AJGP* author guidelines as they apply to the various types of manuscripts. Through the critical appraisal of previously published material in *AJGP* and similar contemporary journals, the medical editor is able to gain an understanding of the multiple styles and formats that encompass written academic work. An ability to critically examine one's own written work and to self-edit are highly valued skills. As all work goes through the peer review process it is necessary to be responsive to critique and understand how to respond appropriately.

### EF3.2.1.1 Editorials

One of the roles of the medical editor is to write the editorial for issues of *AJGP*. To do this, it is relevant to consider previously published *AJGP* editorials and those of other contemporary journals to gain an understanding of the range of styles available to an author writing an editorial. Reading widely around the themed topic and commissioned Focus papers will help to develop a broad understanding that can usefully be translated into an editorial piece. Develop a contextual perspective that will guide the argument presented in the editorial, and ensure that appropriate academic language and syntax is used throughout. Keep all formatting and referencing within the *AJGP* author guidelines. Explore the literature and choose appropriate quotations to illustrate your argument. It is important to be self-reflexive, able to critically appraise one's own writing and be receptive to peer review in a positive manner.

#### Resources

- *AJGP* author guidelines<sup>5</sup>
- Previous issues of *AJGP* and similar contemporary medical journals

### EF3.2.1.2 Book reviews

Book reviews form part of the medical editor's responsibility. The opportunity to conduct a book review arises in two main ways: books may be unsolicited submissions by an author or publisher to *AJGP* for review, or may arise as a result of a request from a medical editor to a publisher to review a particular book for possible publication in *AJGP*.

The process for a book review is similar to the deliberations undertaken when critically appraising a submitted manuscript. The work needs to be evaluated in the context of its potential relevance to Australian general practice by considering whether it adds new information to the current body of knowledge or presents information in a new manner. As in submitted manuscripts, the book needs to be checked to determine if it is evidence-based and whether controversial areas are discussed, if relevant. It is also useful to consider if the book is presented in an effective manner that will engage the desired readership.

When writing a book review, it is advantageous to consider book reviews that have previously published in *AJGP* as well as in other contemporary journals to gain an understanding of the range of writing styles available to an author. Book reviews should adhere to the *AJGP* author guidelines and guidelines for book reviews.

#### Resources

- *AJGP* author guidelines<sup>5</sup>
- *AJGP* guidelines for book reviewers
- Previous issues of *AJGP* and other similar contemporary medical journals

### EF3.2.1.3 Multiple choice questions (MCQs)

The inclusion of MCQs in *AJGP* provides an invaluable opportunity for the Australian GP to gain CPD Program points. As such, the ability to write effective MCQs is an essential component of the role of the medical editor. There are clear and specific rules and regulations that govern the development and writing of MCQs. In order to gain the necessary competency, the online assessment training program provided by the US National Board of Medical Examiners<sup>8</sup> needs to be undertaken and completed.

When writing MCQs in *AJGP* it is necessary to identify what content will be most appropriate and effective from the chosen articles. The MCQs need to be placed in a meaningful clinical context to enable readers to gain maximum benefit from participating in the educational activity when it is published.

#### Resources

- National Board of Medical Examiners online assessment writing program<sup>8</sup>

## Domain 4: Ensuring conformance to high editorial and ethical standards

Core skill	Competency outcomes	Criteria
<b>EF4.1</b> Medical editors are ethical and professional	<p><b>EF4.1.1</b> Professional and ethical attributes are identified and reviewed</p> <p><b>EF4.1.2</b> All relevant guidelines and legislation are applied to manuscripts</p>	<p><b>EF4.1.1.1</b> Use iThenticate to check for plagiarism of another author's work</p> <p><b>EF4.1.1.2</b> Check for dual publication</p> <p><b>EF4.1.1.3</b> Identify if the manuscript is appropriately referenced to the available literature</p> <p><b>EF4.1.1.4</b> Identify that Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval has been obtained for all research submissions</p> <p><b>EF4.1.1.5</b> Explore potential areas of conflict of interest</p> <p><b>EF4.1.2.1</b> Ensure permission has been granted and complies with copyright legislation</p> <p><b>EF4.1.2.2</b> Identify ICMJE, COPE, <i>AJGP</i> guidelines and relevant Australian legislation and regulations</p>

*COPE, Committee on Publication Ethics; ICMJE, International Committee of Medical Journal Editors*

## Context and application: Domain 4

The ability to critically evaluate a manuscript as outlined in Domain 1 (EF1) and the application of conformance to high editorial, ethical and professional standards occur simultaneously. The following criteria outline in more detail the editorial and ethical procedures that occur when a manuscript is submitted to *AJGP* for consideration.

### EF4.1.1.2 iThenticate

To ensure ethical and professional standards are maintained, submitted manuscripts are checked for plagiarism of another author's work. This is done through the use of iThenticate, a plagiarism detection software product. As this is a key component of the initial review of a manuscript, an understanding of iThenticate's scope and limitations is necessary. Findings from the iThenticate report need to be interpreted and managed.

#### Required reading/resource

- iThenticate online training<sup>9</sup>

### EF4.1.1.2 Dual publication

At times, a manuscript may appear to be submitted that has already been published in some form or is in the process of being published. The medical editor is required to negotiate this issue with the author to ensure that copyright can be legally signed over to *AJGP* for submission and that the *AJGP* publication will be new material.

### EF4.1.1.3 Appropriate referencing

In their initial review, the medical editor investigates whether the manuscript is appropriately referenced to the available literature and explore the references provided to ensure their accuracy.

### EF4.1.1.4 Human Research Ethic Committee (HREC)

All research manuscripts require the author to submit the HREC name and approval number, even when the authors claim HREC exemption. Clinical trials also require a clinical trial approval number, and this needs to be provided with the submission. Determine if the approving HREC is the appropriate committee for the material being explored in the research study.

#### Resource

- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated 2015<sup>10</sup>

### EF4.1.1.5 Conflicts of Interest

At times, the authors of manuscripts may have a known conflict of interest that must be declared in accordance with the *AJGP* author guidelines. A declaration of conflict of interest does not necessarily absolve the author from removing themselves from the manuscript. It will need to be determined whether any conflict as declared impacts on the author's ability to be impartial or to participate. Consider that not all authors will declare a conflict of interest, for multiple reasons, and hence it becomes the responsibility of the medical editor to be aware of such a possibility and to carry out whatever checks are appropriate. Another conflict of interest consideration is when a manuscript may be seen as an advertorial or promotion of the author.

#### Resource

- *AJGP* author guidelines<sup>5</sup>

### EF4.1.2.1 Copyright legislation

The medical editor needs to have a clear knowledge and understanding of copyright regulations as they pertain to *AJGP* and be able to implement these as required.

#### Resource

- *AJGP* website at [www1.racgp.org.au/ajgp//home](http://www1.racgp.org.au/ajgp//home)

## Domain 5: Editorial development and planning

Core skills	Competency outcomes	Criteria
<b>EF5.1</b> Medical editors provide ongoing leadership for <i>Australian Journal of General Practice</i>	<b>EF5.1.1</b> Actively participate in planning activities for future issues of <i>AGJP</i>	<b>EF5.1.1</b> Participate in forward planning <b>EF5.1.2</b> Actively commission future articles <b>EF5.1.3</b> Contribute to ongoing quality of <i>AJGP</i> <b>EF5.1.4</b> Attend <i>AJGP</i> Editorial Board meetings

## Context and application: Domain 5

Planning for future editions of *AJGP* commences at the annual medical editors meeting six to 12 months before the publication date of the first edition for that year. The process involves consideration of contemporary issues affecting Australian general practice, which is determined through an understanding of academic and non-academic literature. The depth and breadth of topics covered within the previous four years of *AJGP* and *Australian Family Physician* (*AFP*; former title of *AJGP*) are taken into consideration, as are the documented page visits to the *AJGP* web pages as noted by Google Analytics or similar data sources. The attendance and completion rate data of the MCQs published each month in *AJGP* also add to the decision-making process.

### EF5.1.1 Forward planning

In the process of planning future issues, the medical editor should have an awareness and understanding of the readership dynamics of *AGJP* across time. This will provide the context in which future editions are planned. An awareness of the contemporary issues within Australian general practice will guide topic selection for commissioned manuscripts.

### EF5.1.2 Commission future articles

Another role of the medical editor is to commission articles for future publications, usually on a themed issue. An understanding of a topic and the gaps that exist in currently available resources will provide a mechanism to successfully identify potential topics for consideration. When commissioning a manuscript, a knowledge of the key authors and practitioners in the field will guide the selection of potential authors. Perusal of online databases and publication records will also assist in the selection process. When potential authors have been identified, negotiation then occurs with these authors to encourage their participation.

### EF5.1.3 Quality of *AJGP*

The medical editor needs a clear understanding of corporate quality assurances as they apply to *AJGP*. This includes an understanding of RACGP corporate governance policies, in particular confidentiality, that affect all staff members. Regular performance appraisal processes are in place. There are also mechanisms to formally consider internal and external compliments and complaints from the readership and the public.

### Required reading

- RACGP *Employee guide*<sup>11</sup>



## Curriculum framework overview

The framework that makes up the curriculum for the Special Skills Unit – Editorial Fellow (EF19) is dynamic and designed to cover multiple time frames in a GP’s professional life. As a Special Skills Unit within the RACGP postgraduate program, the framework provides the depth and breadth required to acquire the necessary competencies to fulfil the multiple roles of a medical editor.

The program is designed in such a way that learning takes place simultaneously over multiple domains, providing the necessary theory and skills to move forward into practice under supervision when competencies have been demonstrated.

The framework also serves as a detailed induction program for incoming medical editors working on *AJGP*. In addition, it provides opportunities for guiding ongoing professional development for medical editors to remain professional and up to date in their knowledge and skills.

Registrar		Graduate	
Theoretical component	Practice under supervision	Induction for new medical editors	CPD for current medical editors
<p><b>Domain 1</b> <i>Critical evaluation of manuscripts</i></p> <p><b>Domain 2</b> <i>Adherence to the peer review process</i> Medical editors adhere to high-standard peer review practices</p> <p><b>Domain 3</b> <i>Writing, editing and developing content</i> Medical editors ensure clinical accuracy and relevance to general practice Medical editors provide high-quality written material</p> <p><b>Domain 4</b> <i>Ensuring conformance to high editorial and ethical standards</i> Medical editors are ethical and professional</p> <p><b>Domain 5</b> <i>Editorial development and planning</i> Medical editors provide ongoing leadership for <i>Australian Journal of General Practice</i></p>			

## Domain 1: Critical evaluation of manuscripts

### EF1.1 Medical editors are able to critically evaluate manuscripts

#### EF1.1.1 Critical evaluation of submitted manuscripts

- **EF1.1.1.1** Demonstrate an understanding of research methodology when considering manuscript submissions
  - Demonstrate an understanding of commonly used quantitative and qualitative methods
  - Evaluate other research methodologies through use of the available literature
- **EF1.1.1.2** Identify whether the manuscript meets minimum criteria for consideration
  - Meets COPE guidelines
  - Meets ICJME guidelines
  - Conflicts of interest are declared and within guidelines
  - Meets *AJGP* author guidelines
  - Passes iThenticate plagiarism check
  - Written in an appropriate academic style
  - Accurately and appropriately referenced
  - Content is accurate
  - Relevant to general practice
  - Different to current or recent *AJGP* publications
  - Determine if worthy of further review
- **EF1.1.1.3** Determine if the research manuscript meets the minimum scientific standard required
  - There is a defined aim or hypothesis
  - The study demonstrates a gap in the literature that it aims to fill
  - The research methodology is appropriate to the research aim/hypothesis
  - The research methodology is described in sufficient detail
  - Results match the stated methodology applied in the study
  - The interpretation and conclusions are justifiable from the results detailed
  - The introduction and discussion are well contextualised in the current literature
  - The authors have identified the study limitations appropriately
- **EF1.1.1.4** Evaluate the medical component of the manuscript for factual information within an evidence-based framework
  - Content meets current evidence-based Australian general practice standards
  - Content is factually accurate
  - Areas of controversy or non-evidence-based care are clearly identified and justified
  - There are no significant gaps in clinical content and reasoning
- **EF1.1.1.5** Determine if the manuscript meets ethical standards for submission and publication
  - Determine if the authors are appropriately qualified and have the necessary contemporaneous experience to write the manuscript
  - Consider whether ghost authors have been used (refer to COPE guidelines<sup>2</sup>)
  - Check whether the authors clearly define how each member of the author team contributed to the manuscript and determine if this meets the *AGJP* author guidelines

## Domain 2: Adherence to the peer review process

### EF2.1 Medical editors adhere to high-standard peer review practices

#### EF2.1.1 Peer review processes are applied effectively

- **EF2.1.1.1** Implement the submission and review process
  - Detailed knowledge and understanding of the software management systems: ScholarOne Manuscripts
  - Demonstrated competency in effectively using ScholarOne
  - Ability to determine which manuscripts move to peer review, are returned to the authors for resubmission or rejected at this stage
- **EF2.1.1.2** Arrange peer review of manuscripts
  - Understand models of peer review used by *AJGP* and by other contemporary journals
  - Understand the *AJGP* catalogue system for the peer reviewer database
  - Consider the manuscript in detail to determine the appropriate categorisation of potential peer reviewers
  - Understand how to choose and rank order appropriate peer reviewers
  - Ensure that the potential peer reviewer has no apparent conflict of interest
- **EF2.1.1.3** Use reviewer comments to guide editorial decisions
  - Develop skill in interpreting and using peer reviewer commentary
  - Incorporate peer reviewer commentary into a formal response to the authors
  - Incorporate editorial directions to the authors for consideration
  - Determine whether key issues (eg research methods and clinical accuracy) are addressed across all peer reviews
- **EF2.1.1.4** Make impartial editorial decisions on appropriateness of manuscript for publication
  - Synthesise all information gathered into the decision-making process
  - Work collaboratively with other members of the team in the decision-making process
  - Have self-awareness of personal bias to minimise impact on the decision-making process

- **EF2.1.1.5** Assist with maintenance of the author and reviewer database
  - Working collaboratively with the editorial and production teams
  - Identifying potential peer reviewers for consideration

#### EF2.1.2 All communication is clear and respectful

- **EF2.1.2.1** Correspondence with authors and reviewers is clear and effective
  - Using appropriate, non-judgemental language that is clear and concise
- **EF2.1.2.2** Communicate peer reviewer comments to authors with tact and sensitivity where appropriate
  - Carefully reviewing and editing peer review comments to ensure the language is appropriate
- **EF2.1.2.3** Evaluate and respond to author correspondence
  - Evaluating whether the author has addressed all issues raised in the peer review process and formally considering whether each response provided by the author is appropriate and sufficient
  - Responding to unsavoury author correspondence when the decision is ‘not to accept’
  - Anticipating and as far as possible preventing unhelpful correspondence in the decision-making process
  - Working with Letters to the Editor (LTTE) about published papers
  - Evaluating LTTE focused on an earlier publication
  - Evaluating the original authors’ formal responses

## Domain 3: Writing, editing and developing content

### EF3.1 Medical editors ensure clinical accuracy and relevance to general practice

#### EF3.1.1 Manuscripts are edited for accuracy, clarity and relevance to general practice

- **EF3.1.1.1** Identify and apply copy editing as appropriate
  - Ensure familiarity with the academic style required by *AJGP* and *The RACGP editorial style guide*<sup>7</sup>
  - Access appropriate language and syntax resources as required – thesaurus, dictionary (online or print)
  - Identify and remove ‘directive’ language
  - Identify inaccurate or misleading statements
  - Ensure important statements are referenced
- **EF3.1.1.2** Proofread manuscript for clarity and ensure manuscript is correctly attributed, acknowledged, headed, described, captioned, labelled and illustrated
  - Determine that a logical flow has been developed by the authors and that the writing style is clear and unambiguous
  - Scrutinise the proof/formatted version of the manuscript to ensure clarity has been maintained and no errors have inadvertently been introduced
- **EF3.1.1.3** Determine medical accuracy
  - Critically evaluate the manuscript to ensure the medical information meets contemporary evidence-based Australian general practice standards

### EF3.2 Medical editors provide high-quality written material

#### EF3.2.1 Editorial pieces and other written work are of high standard

- **EF3.2.1.1** Develop and write editorials
  - Consider previously published editorials in *AJGP* and other contemporary journals to gain an understanding of the range of styles available to an author
  - Read widely around the themed topic, including commissioned Focus papers to develop a broad understanding
  - Develop a contextual perspective to argue and develop in the editorial
  - Explore and choose appropriate quotation from the literature to illustrate your argument
  - Write the editorial with appropriate academic language, syntax and referencing that meets the *AJGP* author guidelines
  - Critically appraise own writing, including an appropriate response to peer review
- **EF3.2.1.2** Conduct book reviews as required
  - Consider previously published book reviews in *AJGP* and other contemporary journals to gain an understanding of the range of styles available to an author
  - Critically appraise the text in the context of relevance to Australian general practice, and whether the book adds new information to the standard body of knowledge
  - Determine if the material presented is written in an effective manner that will engage the reader
  - Determine if the book is evidence-based and whether controversial areas identified
  - Write the review and follow the processes for peer review
  - Work within *AJGP* author guidelines
- **EF3.2.1.3** Develop multiple choice questions (MCQs)
  - Undertake online assessment training program provided by the US National Board of Medical Examiners
  - Study associated written material to gain a clear understanding of the rules and regulations that govern MCQ development and writing
  - Extract appropriate content to use in MCQs from the relevant manuscripts
  - Place the MCQs in a meaningful clinical context to enable readers to gain maximum benefit from participating in the educational activity when published

## Domain 4: Ensuring conformance to high editorial and ethical standards

### EF4.1 Medical editors are ethical and professional

#### EF4.1.1 Professional and ethical attributes are identified and reviewed

- **EF4.1.1.1** Use iThenticate to check for plagiarism of another author's work
  - Be familiar with the iThenticate product information to understand the scope and limitations of the product
  - Develop an understanding of how to interpret findings in the iThenticate report
  - Understand the processes of managing the findings
- **EF4.1.1.2** Check for dual publication
  - While this is part of the iThenticate process, consider this aspect and develop an appropriate response to the authors to avoid duplicate publications
- **EF4.1.1.3** Identify if the manuscript is appropriately referenced to the available literature
  - Explore the references to ensure their validity

- **EF4.1.1.4** Identify that Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval has been obtained for all research submissions
  - Ensure the author has submitted the HREC approval number, even when there is an exemption
  - Ensure clinical trials also have the required clinical trial approval number
  - Consider if the approving HREC is the appropriate committee for the material being explored
- **EF4.1.1.5** Explore potential areas of conflict of interest
  - Ensure declaration of conflict of interest does not absolve the author from removing themselves from the manuscript
  - Consider whether the manuscript is an advertorial or promotion of the author
  - Consider whether the conflict as declared impacts on the author's ability to participate

#### EF4.1.2 All relevant guidelines and legislation are applied to manuscripts

- **EF4.1.2.1** Ensure permission has been granted and complies with copyright legislation
  - Have a clear knowledge and understanding of copyright regulations as they pertain to *AJGP*, and implement these as required
- **EF4.1.2.2** Identify ICMJE, COPE, *AJGP* guidelines and relevant Australian legislation and regulations

## Domain 5: Editorial development and planning

### EF5.1 Medical editors provide ongoing leadership for *Australian Journal of General Practice*

#### EF5.1.1 Actively participate in planning activities for future issues of *AGJP*

- EF5.1.1.1 Participate in forward planning
    - Maintain awareness and understanding of the readership dynamics across time
    - Maintain awareness of contemporary issues in Australian general practice and how these guide topic selection for commissioned papers
  - EF5.1.1.2 Actively commission future articles
    - Understand the topic, including the gaps in currently available resources that commissioned manuscripts will address
    - Determine key leaders in the topic to be addressed through a perusal of relevant online databases, including publication records
    - Negotiate with potential authors to encourage their participation
  - EF5.1.1.3 Contribute to ongoing quality of *AJGP*
    - Possess a clear understanding of RACGP corporate governance policies as they apply to *AJGP*
    - Appraise performance
    - Understand the processes in place for handling internal and external compliments and complaints
  - EF5.1.1.4 Attend *AJGP* Editorial Board meetings
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