



RACGP Education Research Programs
Academic Post Cohort Guide 2019

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Introduction

Welcome to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Academic Post (AP) training term for 2019. RACGP looks forward to working with the 2019 academic registrars and supporting their research projects and training. This guide provides comprehensive information regarding academic posts and is designed for current academic registrars, university supervisors and Regional Training Organisation (RTO) staff who are supporting a registrar to complete a post in 2019.

Key contacts

Dr Jill Byron is the RACGP program coordinator for academic posts. Please direct general queries to Jill by email to gpedresearch@racgp.org.au. As Jill works part-time, another member of the team may respond if your query is urgent.

Kate Huang, the program administrator, coordinates webinar and workshop travel arrangements for AP activities.

Provided in Table 1 is a list of key program contacts.

Table 1: Key program contacts

RACGP Contacts Name	Position	Phone
Jillian Byron	Education Research Program Coordinator	03 8699 0374
Georgia Franklin	Education Research Program Administrator	03 8699 0415
Tricia Quek	Education Research Coordinator (Education Research Grants)	
Rosemary Young	Manager – Policy, Governance and Accreditation	

General program information

Academic Post program overview and purpose

Evidence is the foundation of everyday general practice. General practitioners (GPs) and registrars need to be able to filter, critically appraise, interpret and apply the information available to them. The RACGP Academic Post (AP) program seeks to ensure registrars have the opportunity to build skills in the areas of research, teaching and critical thinking through 12-month part-time AP training terms.

The AP is an AGPT training term where registrars learn academic skills through individualised learning plans. The post provides exposure to research and teaching in the academic environment and encourages registrars to incorporate academic work into their careers. Mentoring and support for the RACGP AP registrar is provided by each registrar's Regional Training Organisation (RTO); nominated university; the RACGP; and staff from Monash University contracted by RACGP to facilitate AP program activities.

Program funding

Funding for an academic post includes a registrar employment component (salary plus on-costs and tax), Professional Development Funding (PDF), Registrar Research Funding (RRF) and RTO program administration costs as follows.

1. Employment component:
 - clinical loading equivalent to that of an academic staff member 'with significant responsibility for patient care' at 0.5 FTE;
 - statutory on-costs up to a maximum of 9.5% superannuation and 2% workers' compensation;
 - payroll tax (as per the state or territory requirement).
2. RRF and PDF total up to \$8,000 ex GST.
3. An RTO administration fee of \$4,000 ex GST.

RACGP pays the funding in three instalments to the RTO. The RTO is responsible for negotiating salary entitlements with the registrar's university; however, registrars should ensure they are kept informed of the process and are satisfied with the outcome of these negotiations. Registrars should contact their RTO if they have queries about funding including salary and access to RRF and PDF. University employment contracts must be of 12-month's duration; and the RTO must inform RACGP if this has not been negotiated. RACGP will not cover any salary costs exceeding the statutory requirement. Furthermore, as an AP is a fixed term post, and there is no expectation that employment will continue beyond 12 months, the RACGP will not cover the cost of a severance payment to an academic registrar under any circumstances. It is the responsibility of the RTO to ensure that this condition is reflected in the agreement with the University and that all steps are taken to ensure that a severance payment does not apply to the registrar's employment.

Registrar Research Funding (RRF) and Professional Development Funding (PDF)

The RRF assists registrars with expenses associated with the registrar's AP research project and the PDF provides support for professional development activities associated with academia and research training. The total amount available is a maximum of \$8,000 (ex GST).

In the first milestone payment to the RTO, RACGP provides the maximum funding allowances for the RRF and PDF, regardless of the value of the submitted RRF and PDF budgets in the application form. This ensures that funds are available should the registrar change or identify new research support or professional development needs throughout their academic term. The RTO must not release RRF and PDF funding to the registrar's university. The RTO reimburses the university or registrar as approved expenditure occurs, or on receipt of pre-approved invoices. RTOs are encouraged to advise new AP registrars of the process of accessing funds within their organisation and the final date for access prior to financial reconciliation.

The RACGP accepts that there may be changes to research funding allocation as the academic registrar's project progresses; therefore, the RTO can approve reasonable changes to approved research funding expenditure providing the expenditure meet RACGP funding guidelines as stipulated in the letter of offer and as below. All expenses must be reasonable to the level of research undertaken.

RRF and PDF funding guidelines

RACGP provides the RRF to cover expenses related to undertaking the research project. Registrars may use professional development funds for Australian conference expenses, excluding those covered by the RACGP during the AP term. The RACGP will not cover the cost of attendance at international conferences under any circumstances.

Inclusions:

- Expenses related to research, including transcription and research assistant services, recruitment expenses, specialist software procurement etc.
- Items related to dissemination of research findings, including publications costs.
- Expenses related to research, including transcription, research assistant, data analyst services, recruitment expenses, travel to undertake research, specialist software procurement etc.
- Items related to dissemination of research findings, including poster printing, publication fee
- Professional development related to academia - research, teaching or education conferences or workshops including registrations fees, accommodation and travel (all Australia only), or University subjects or other courses.

Exclusions:

- Purchase of research databases, library subscriptions and the like, unless unavailable through the university or RACGP.
- Regular travel to and from the workplace.
- Expenses covered by other funding.
- Items provided by or available through the university, such as equipment (e.g. audio recorders) and software licences.
- Expenses related to international conferences and travel.

The registrar must agree to maintain proper financial records for all expenses claimed as part of the PDF or RRF.

RACGP requires a financial reconciliation report from the RTO by 28 February 2020. Each RTO will set their own date for registrar final access to funds. Registrars should ensure that they know what this date is so that they can plan the use of the funds accordingly. RTOs must be able to supply RACGP with receipts for expenditure at time of financial reconciliation and/or until the end of the head agreement.

Note: “expense” refers to actual expenditure and fees the RTO is legally committed to pay. It is not permissible to retain funds for future expenses.

Expenses incurred for attendance at compulsory activities

The RACGP will cover reasonable travel and accommodation costs incurred for attendance at compulsory AP activities, as well as conference registration fees. RACGP arranges all registration, travel and accommodation utilising group rates. Registrars will receive relevant information at the commencement of the academic term and prior to each activity. However, there may be reimbursement for some out-of-pocket expenses, subject to prior approval (e.g. parking, mileage, meals) and submission of receipts with the RACGP expense reimbursement form/s. RACGP will upload expenditure guidelines to the Learning Management System (LMS). Guidelines are subject to change; RACGP will advise if this occurs.

Other funding

Some registrars receive funding from other sources to support their AP research activities. The registrar must inform RACGP of other funding sources and ensure that RACGP funding is not used to cover expenses covered by other funding.

Academic Post timeline

Completion of the AP occurs part-time over 12 months, commencing January/February 2019. Specific dates will be set between the registrar, RTO and the university hosting the registrar. Research, teaching and clinical work activities will occur throughout the academic post term. Provided in Table 2 is the AP activity schedule.

Table 2: Academic Post activity schedule

Milestone	Timeframe
Contracting	September/October
2 day workshop in Melbourne, Victoria – Parkroyal Melbourne Airport	19 and 20 November 2018
Commence Academic Post	January/February 2019
First webinar – held at 7pm AEDT on a week night	February/March 2019
Orientation progress report due Note: this report requires sign off by your Medical Educator (ME) before submission, so ensure to allow time for this.	30 March 2019
Second webinar – held at 7pm AEST on a week night	May/June 2019
Mid-term progress report due Note: your University supervisor must contribute to the report and then your ME signs off before submission	30 June 2019
2 day workshop, location to be advised.	August or October 2019
Attendance at one conference - the Primary Health Care (PHC) conference if it is held in 2019, otherwise GP19. Note: if the PHC conference goes ahead, Academic registrars granted an oral presentation for GP19 will be funded by RACGP to attend.	August or October 2019
Third webinar – held at 7pm AEDT on a week night	January/February 2020
Final administrative and research findings report due Note: your University supervisor and ME must contribute to the report before submission	28 February 2020
RTO Financial Reconciliation Report Note: completed by RTO. Ensure you are aware of the RTO cut-off date for expense reimbursement claims.	28 February 2020
Conclude Academic Post	January/February 2020

Academic Post reports

Academic registrars are required to submit four reports: an orientation and initial progress report, a mid-term report, a final administrative report and a final research findings report. The registrar's university supervisor and RTO ME must read and sign off all reports. It is important that registrars allow sufficient time for the sign off process. University supervisors must also complete a section of the mid-term and final administrative reports before ME sign-off.

RACGP uses Smarty Grants to distribute and receive reports. RACGP staff will distribute a link to the report form via email four weeks before the report due date. RACGP will also provide information about the report format on the online learning platform, (see "*Online learning*" section of this guide for information about this platform).

Orientation and initial progress report

The orientation and initial progress report is due 30 March 2019. Its purpose is to:

- ensure registrars are on track with their post – employment agreement in place, research and teaching commenced;
- flag any areas of concern; and
- identify priority topic areas/resources for the online learning platform.

Mid-term report

The mid-term report is due 30 June 2019. Its purpose of the mid-term report is to:

- ensure registrars are on track with their post and receiving the support they need;
- reflect on experiences as an academic registrar and assist in shaping the project;
- help improve the program for future academic registrars; and
- provide a mechanism for release of mid-term funding to the RTO.

Final administrative report

The final administrative report is due 28 February 2020. Its purpose is to:

- follow up on academic achievements;
- ascertain whether adequate support was provided and identify any challenges faced throughout the post;
- encourage registrars to reflect on their experiences as an academic registrar and identify future career goals; and
- suggest improvements in the program for future academic registrars.

Final research findings report

The final research findings report is due 28 February 2020. This is the final activity required to complete the Academic Post training term. Its purpose is to:

- provide a copy of the registrar's research findings; and
- provide a mechanism for release of mid-term funding to the RTO.

Academic post program activities

Academic registrars receive a cohort experience, with regular communication and opportunities to both troubleshoot and share their work in a supportive environment. AP activities are developed and delivered by staff from Monash University, Department of General Practice. This may include other presenters with skills in specific areas such as quantitative and qualitative researchers, statisticians, ethics specialists, former academic registrars, and a range of allied health practitioners and GPs with primary care research expertise.

RACGP will provide a number of activities across the AP year, including webinars, online learning and face-to-face workshops. Monash staff will conduct a learning needs analysis to determine the requirements of the cohort, however topics covered may include:

- Introduction to primary care research;
- Writing good research questions;
- Critical appraisal of the literature and writing a literature review;
- Applying for ethics;
- Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods methodology;
- Working with stakeholders, sensitive and marginalised groups;
- Recruitment;
- Data management and analysis;
- Clinical data analytics;
- Presenting your work to different audiences;
- Writing abstracts, oral presentations, posters, articles for popular press, academic journals;
- Planning your research career;
- Practice-based research networks;
- Advocacy – getting your research into the public and policy domains;
- Working with supervisors;
- Getting the most out of an academic post; and
- What to do when things go wrong.

Webinars

The RACGP and its AP activity partner will co-host three webinars for AP registrars in 2019, based on training needs identified by registrars.

A member of the RACGP education research team will contact registrars via email to arrange registration for each webinar, provide the registrar with webinar access information, confirm any preparation required by the registrar and obtain any materials or slides the registrar needs uploaded for presentations. Participation in scheduled webinars is compulsory.

Online learning

To support academic registrars during their post, the RACGP education research team will facilitate an online learning management system (LMS), called Moodle. This online learning platform will provide administrative and educational information, opportunities to ask questions and a forum for registrars to share work challenges and experiences with their peers.

RACGP and the activity partner will provide online learning resources through the online learning platform. At the beginning of the year, RACGP will send registrars their Moodle account login details. Registrars must check their registered email and Moodle portal regularly to keep informed of program and activity updates. Registrars must also log into Moodle when advised by RACGP as information and program updates will only be provided on this forum. Please ensure your email provider recognises Moodle emails as safe emails and does not direct them to your spam folder.

Face-to-face workshops

The RACGP and its AP activity partner, will co-host two face-to-face workshops during the post. Refer to Table 2 for a schedule of workshop dates. RACGP and the academic activity support partner design the workshops to support academic registrars through the different stages of their research. Academic registrars will attend sessions on research skills, have the opportunity to network, present their work and receive feedback from academics and peers. RACGP will assist registrars to develop their posters and presentations through the learning activities offered during the year.

RACGP arranges and fully funds attendance. A member of the RACGP education research team will contact registrars via email to arrange registration, accommodation, flights and other details for the workshops.

Workshop 1

RACGP will hold the first workshop at the Parkroyal Melbourne Airport on 19-20 November 2018. The workshop will provide registrars with the opportunity to meet their peers, program staff from RACGP education

research team and activity partner staff (academics who will provide research support during the post). During the workshop, the activity partner will provide general training in academic research and RACGP staff will outline general information about program logistics, including administration, activities and expectations.

Workshop 2

RACGP will hold a second workshop in either August or October 2019 – date to be confirmed by the start of the Academic Post year. The workshop will provide an opportunity for registrars to present their research and receive further training in research activities. Registrars must prepare an abstract and research poster for the workshop and present these to the academic registrar cohort.

Conferences

RACGP will fund AP registrars to attend one conference during their post. This will be the Primary Health Care (PHC) conference if it is held in 2019, otherwise the RACGP national conference, GP19. However, if the PHC conference does go ahead, Academic registrars granted an oral presentation for GP19 will be funded by RACGP to attend. Please notify the RACGP Education Research team if your submission for GP19 has been accepted for an oral presentation, as soon as possible. Information on the abstract submission process will be available in Moodle, the Learning Management System, and emailed to the cohort as soon as available.

Other conferences

If registrars wish to attend additional conferences, they may use their professional development funds to cover these costs, with approval from their RTO. Note: RACGP is unable to fund attendance at international conferences.

Attendance at support activities is compulsory

Academic registrar attendance at support activities is compulsory. Approval to be absent may be granted, but only in exceptional circumstances. The registrar must obtain approval from their ME to be absent from the activity and forward the approval to RACGP.

Information for registrars

Registrar contracts and funding

Contract overview

The RACGP sent a Letter of Offer to successful applicants for the 2019 academic post training term in September 2018. Acceptance of the Letter of Offer constitutes a contract between the registrar and RACGP. The Letter of Offer outlines the registrar's responsibilities and obligations in completing their academic post. These obligations include:

- attendance at AP workshops;
- participation in AP webinars, online learning and discussion groups;
- attendance at the 2019 conference funded by RACGP; and
- completion and submission of orientation, mid-term and final reports.

Refer to Table 2 for the program activity schedule. Registrars will receive further information regarding these activities once they commence the post. Registrars must inform RACGP immediately should they anticipate difficulties attending any of these activities. Note: RACGP will arrange and fund all reasonable and necessary travel costs associated with attending any required program activities.

RACGP recommends registrars consider the activity schedule when negotiating their employment contracts for clinical placements, including requesting professional development leave where possible; and advising their employer early of any leave requirements.

Each registrar's RTO has also received a Funding Agreement for the AP placement. Please see the "RTO Contracts and Funding" section of this guide for further information.

Funding acknowledgements

It is a requirement that registrars use the following wording to acknowledge funding and support for any publications or presentations arising from the research undertaken during the Academic Post:

"This research project is supported by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners with funding from the Australian Government under the Australian General Practice Training program."

The RACGP and Department of Health (DoH) logos should not be used by registrars.

Support during the Academic Post

The AP is a challenging but rewarding experience. The RACGP education research team and activity partner staff will provide registrars with support throughout the academic term.

- Registrars who would like advice regarding research matters at any time throughout the post are encouraged to post questions in the Q&A section of the Moodle online learning platform. RACGP and the support partner regularly monitor the Q&A forum.
- Registrars who would like advice regarding program logistics are encouraged to post questions in the Moodle Q&A forum.

Alternatively, the *Introduction* section of this guide provides contact details for RACGP staff.

Information for Regional Training Organisations

Role of a Medical Educator

An academic registrar's Medical Educator (ME) is expected to have provided guidance to the prospective academic registrar in selecting a university supervisor and selecting a suitable research project. The ME is also responsible for ensuring the academic post fits within the registrar's learning plan. Together with the registrar, the ME determines the registrar's eligibility for the post and which term the academic post will fulfil (i.e. extended skills post, elective or Advanced Rural Skills Training). The ME is furthermore responsible for ensuring any extensions of training have been secured to enable the registrar's training is recognised.

Once the registrar's Academic Post application has been accepted, the ME is expected to:

- ensure the registrar has signed a fair contract with their university;
- ensure the registrar is paid for their work in a prompt manner; and
- support the registrar throughout their term, in partnership with the registrar's main university supervisor.

RTO contracts and funding

Budget template

RACGP has emailed RTOs a notification letter regarding successful applicants and a budget template that when complete will form Item D of the Funding Agreement. The budget template includes the state regulated statutory on-cost entitlement percentage (payroll tax, superannuation and workers' compensation).

The RTO must negotiate the registrar's entitlements with the registrar's university, including a 12 month contract to cover the academic term, and keep the registrar informed of this process. The RTO must then submit the final budget on the prescribed template to RACGP by 5 October 2018.

The RACGP will approve or decline the completed budget template. If declined, RACGP will contact the RTO to request justification for costs or provide the RTO with an opportunity to re-submit the budget with modifications. Once RACGP approves the budget, a final copy is sent to the RTO signed by both RACGP and the RTO.

The RACGP does not require a copy of the training provider/university funding agreement.

Contract overview

Once the completed budget template has been approved, the RACGP will send the RTO a Funding Agreement which forms a contract between RACGP and the academic registrar's RTO. By signing this document, the RTO agrees to:

- provide written confirmation of salary and entitlements to the registrar on approval of the budget by the RACGP;
- manage the registrar's RRF and PDF expenditure within the guidelines for funding, including reasonable changes from the original application;
- submit an itemised expense reconciliation, including receipts for costs incurred during the AP for RRF and PDF expenditure;
- negotiate an agreement with the registrar's university to support their AP placement;
- ensure the registrar's ME reviews, signs off and contributes as required to academic registrar reports; and
- address any issues identified in academic registrar reports.

Invoicing

The RACGP requires RTOs to issue and send tax invoices to the RACGP to receive its milestone payments. RACGP pays funding to the RTO in three instalments.

1. 50% of the employment component plus full RRF, PDF and RTO administration costs - on execution of the signed funding agreement;

2. 40% of the employment component - on receipt and approval of a signed copy of the mid-term report from both the academic registrar and their university supervisor;
3. 10% of the employment component on receipt and approval of:
 - a signed copy of the final research findings report from the academic registrar and their university supervisor; and
 - a completed budget template; and
 - a completed reconciliation template.

Financial reconciliation

At the end of an academic term, the RTO is required to submit an itemised reconciliation of expenses and receipts for RRF and PDF costs incurred during the academic post. Reconciliation is due on 28 February 2020 and must be emailed to gpedresearch@racgp.org.au.

The RTO must return to RACGP any funding not expended in either the RRF or PDF categories or from the registrar's salary allowance, in the form of a reduction to the final payment instalment. RACGP will send a reconciliation template to the RTO on receipt of the academic registrar's final reports.

Information for universities and supervisors

Role of a university supervisor

RACGP expects that the university supervisor who signed the declaration worked with the academic registrar to develop their research proposal, as part of the academic post application. The research may be an individual project or involvement in a larger project, where the registrar has a clear and independent role. RACGP expects the supervisor to provide advice on the appropriate scope and breadth of the research project, the applicability to general practice, feasibility and timelines.

On acceptance of the registrar's research and teaching proposal, RACGP expects the university supervisor to meet regularly with the registrar to monitor the progress of their research, allocate appropriate teaching tasks, provide guidance and feedback on research and teaching, and involve the registrar in daily departmental activities. The supervisor is also required to contribute to mid-term and end-of-term reports.

RTO and University contract overview

The RTO enters into a contract with the university regarding its employment of the academic registrar. The RTO's ME will arrange a time to meet with the academic supervisor to discuss the academic registrar's employment conditions. This may happen in person, via teleconference or videoconference. The RTO ME must inform the registrar of this process and provide the registrar with information regarding the process of negotiation. The academic registrar is expected to undertake a fixed term 12-month contract for their academic term. As this is a fixed term contract, the RACGP will not cover severance costs.

It is the responsibility of the university supervisor to liaise with the university's Human Resources department to ensure that all arrangements are in place prior to the commencement of the academic registrar's contract. **It is essential that the academic registrar receive his/her salary on commencement of the post.**