



RACGP



AGPT ACADEMIC POST  
PROGRAM 2020  
COHORT GUIDE



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Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

## **AGPT Academic Post Program 2020: Cohort 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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# CONTENTS

	Acronyms and initialisms	iv
	1. Overview	1
	Academic Post Program purpose	1
	Support during the academic post	1
	2. General program information	2
	Timelines and reporting	4
	AP Program activities	6
	3. Contracting	8
	4. Information for registrars	10
	5. Information for Regional Training Organisations	11
	Role of the medical educator	11
	RTO contracts and funding	11
	6. Information for universities and supervisors	13
	Role of a university supervisor	13
	RTO and university contract overview	14
	University obligations	14

# ACRONYMS AND INITIALISMS

AGPT Program	Australian General Practice Training Program
AP Program	Academic Post Program
ASP	Activity Support Provider
EBA	Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
LMS	learning management system
ME	medical educator
PD	professional development (funding)
RACGP	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
RR	registrar research (funding)
RTO	Regional Training Organisation

# 1. OVERVIEW

Welcome to The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Academic Post (AP) Program for 2020. The RACGP looks forward to working with 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 2020.

## Academic Post Program purpose

The RACGP AP Program is an Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) term where registrars learn academic skills through individualised learning plans. The 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 academic post training terms. 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 academic post registrar is provided by each registrar's RTO, nominated university, the RACGP, and staff from the contracted Activity Support Provider (ASP) – an Australian academic department of general practice.

## Support during the academic post

The academic post is a challenging but rewarding experience. The RACGP and the ASP staff will provide registrars with support throughout the academic term by telephone, email and via the RACGP online learning platform.

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 online learning platform. RACGP and ASP staff regularly monitor the Q&A forum.

Registrars who would like advice regarding program logistics (webinars, workshop and travel arrangements) are encouraged to post questions in the forum for a response from the RACGP.

Registrars, RTO and university staff should direct all other queries to the Ms Georgia Franklin, Education Research Coordinator (academic posts): email [gpedresearch@racgp.org.au](mailto:gpedresearch@racgp.org.au) or telephone 03 8699 0418.

# 2. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

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## Funding and finances

### Academic post funding

The RACGP provides the RTO with funding for each academic post. The funding includes a registrar employment component (salary plus on-costs), professional development (PD) funding, registrar research (RR) funding and RTO program administration costs as follows.

1. The employment component paid to the university by the RTO is for a salary at lecturer level A classification (0.5 full-time equivalent [FTE]) up to a maximum value of \$75,000 inclusive of the following on-costs:
  - clinical loading equivalent to that of an academic staff member 'with significant responsibility for patient care' at 0.5 FTE
  - statutory on-costs of superannuation at the level stipulated in the university Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA), and workers compensation
  - payroll tax (as per the state or territory requirement).
2. RR and PD funding total up to \$8000 (excluding GST) held by the RTO for use by the registrar.
3. An RTO administration fee of \$4000 (excluding GST) retained by the RTO. There is no allowance in the funding for university administration or on-costs other than the items included above.

The RACGP pays the funding in three instalments to the RTO.

Refer to **Invoicing** in this guide for further information.



### Registrar research and professional development funding

The RR funding assists registrars with expenses associated with the registrar's AP Program research project, and the PD funding provides support for professional development activities associated with academic and research training. The total amount available is a maximum of \$8000 (excluding GST). The RACGP includes the full amount in the first milestone payment to the RTO, and the RTO manages requests from the registrar to access the funds.

The RTO must not release RR and PD funding to the registrar's university. The RTO pays for items approved by the registrar's medical educator (ME), or reimburses the registrar as approved expenditure occurs on receipt of invoices. RTOs are encouraged to advise AP Program registrars of the process of accessing funds within their organisation and the final date for access prior to financial reconciliation.

Registrars are encouraged to submit an indicative budget at the time of application; however, the RACGP provides the RTO with the maximum funding allowances for RR and PD funding, regardless of the value of the submitted budgets. This ensures that funds are available should the registrar identify new research support or professional development needs throughout their academic term.

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 meets RACGP funding guidelines as stipulated in the letter of offer and as below. All expenses must be reasonable to the level of research undertaken.

### RR and PD funding guidelines

The RACGP provides the RR funding 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 Program term. The RACGP will not cover the cost of attendance at international conferences under any circumstances.

#### Inclusions:

- 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
- 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, books.

#### Exclusions:

- purchase of research databases, library subscriptions and the like, unless unavailable through the university or the RACGP
- regular travel to and from the workplace
- expenses covered by other funding
- items provided by or available through the university, such as equipment (eg 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 PD or RR funding.

The RACGP requires a financial reconciliation report from the RTO by 31 March 2021. Each RTO will set their own date for registrars' 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 the RACGP with receipts for expenditure at time of financial reconciliation and/or until the end of the head agreement.

Note: 'expenses' 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 Program activities, as well as conference registration fees for the RACGP-supported conference. The RACGP arranges all registration, travel and accommodation using 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 (eg parking, mileage, meals), subject to prior approval and submission of receipts with the RACGP expense reimbursement form/s. Registrars will be informed of acceptable expenses prior to the event.

### Other funding

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

## Timelines and reporting

### AP schedule

Completion of the academic post occurs part time over 12 months, commencing January/February 2020 (Table 1). Specific dates are set between the registrar, RTO and the university hosting the registrar. Research, teaching and clinical work activities will occur throughout the academic post term.

Table 1. AGPT Academic Post Program 2020: Schedule

Activity	Time frame
Contracting between the RACGP and the RTO	September to November 2019
Contracting between the RTO and university	November to December 2019
Workshop 1 (two-day), location to be advised	December 2019
Registrar employment contract with university	January 2020
Commence academic post	January/February 2020
Webinar 1 – held at 7.00 pm AEDT on a weeknight	Week 3 or 4, February 2020
Orientation progress report due	30 March 2020
Workshop 2 (two-day), location to be advised	June 2020 (to be advised)
Mid-term progress report due	30 June 2020
Webinar 2 – held at 7.00 pm AEST on a weeknight	September 2020
Attendance at one conference (to be confirmed)	Mid-year – to be confirmed
Webinar 3 – held at 7.00 pm AEDT on a weeknight	November 2020
Final administrative and research findings reports due	28 February 2021
Conclude academic post	February 2021
RTO Financial Reconciliation Report	31 March 2021

### 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.

The RACGP uses SmartyGrants to distribute and receive reports. Staff distribute a link to the report form via email four weeks before the report due date. The RACGP will also provide information about the report format on the online learning platform (refer to **Online learning** in this guide for information about this platform).

### Orientation and initial progress report

The orientation and initial progress report is due 30 March 2020. Its purpose is to:

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

### Mid-term report

The mid-term report is due 30 June 2020. Its purpose is to:

- ensure registrars are on track with their academic 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
- provide a mechanism for release of mid-term funding to the RTO.

### Final administrative report

The final administrative report is due 28 February 2021. 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
- suggest improvements in the program for future academic registrars.

### Final research findings report

The final research findings report is due 28 February 2021. 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
- mechanism for release of final funding to the RTO.

## AP Program activities

### General information

Academic registrars receive a cohort experience, with regular communication and opportunities to both share and troubleshoot their work in a supportive environment. AP Program activities include webinars, online learning and face-to-face workshops, which are developed and delivered by staff from the contracted ASP. The RACGP will provide registrars with the ASP contact information at the orientation workshop in December 2019. The ASP provides presenters who have skills in specific areas such as quantitative and qualitative research, statistics and ethics, as well as former academic registrars, and a range of allied health practitioners and GPs with primary care research expertise.

The ASP will conduct several learning support needs analyses during the year to ensure that the support activities are tailored to meet the needs of the group, but 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 methodology
- working with stakeholders, including 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
- what to do when things go wrong.

Participation in webinars and workshops is compulsory.

### Webinars

The RACGP and the ASP staff will co-host three webinars for AP Program registrars in 2020, based on training needs identified by registrars.

The RACGP will contact registrars to arrange registration for each webinar, provide the registrar with webinar access information, distribute pre-reading, and confirm any preparation required by the registrar.

### Online learning

To support academic registrars during their post, the RACGP provides access to an online learning management system (LMS) called Learning Seat. This online learning platform provides administrative and educational information, learning resources, opportunities to ask questions relevant to the cohort and a forum for registrars to share post challenges and experiences with their peers.

At the time of the first workshop, the RACGP will contact registrars to provide access to Learning Seat. During the post, registrars are required to check their registered email and the Learning Seat portal regularly to keep informed of program and activity updates.

### Face-to-face workshops

The RACGP and ASP staff co-host two face-to-face workshops during the post. Refer to Table 1 for a schedule of workshop dates. The RACGP and the ASP design the workshops to support academic registrars through the different stages of their research. This provides an opportunity to attend sessions on research skills, network with peers, learn presentation skills and receive feedback from academics and peers. The ASP helps registrars develop their posters and presentations through the learning activities offered during the year.

The RACGP arranges and fully funds attendance. The RACGP contacts registrars via email to arrange registration, accommodation, flights and other details for the workshops, as well as to obtain any registrar materials or slides to be uploaded for presentations.

### **Workshop 1**

The RACGP will hold the first workshop in Melbourne in December 2019. The workshop will provide registrars with the opportunity to meet their peers, program staff from the RACGP and ASP staff. During the workshop, the ASP will provide general training in academic research and RACGP staff will outline general information about program logistics, including administration, activities and expectations.

### **Workshop 2**

The RACGP will hold a second workshop in mid-2020. The date will 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**

The RACGP will fund AP Program registrars to attend one research conference during their post. The selection of the conference will depend on timing and content. The RACGP will announce this via the online LMS once the 2020 conference schedule is available. In the past, registrars have been funded to attend the Primary Health Care (PHC) conference, the RACGP national conference or the Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care (AAAPC) conference.

### **Other conferences**

If registrars wish to attend additional Australian conferences, they may, with approval from their RTO, use their professional development funds to cover these costs. Note, the academic post funding must not be used to fund international conferences.

### **Compulsory attendance at support activities**

Academic registrar attendance at support activities is compulsory. Approval to be absent may be granted, but only in exceptional circumstances. The registrar must discuss the circumstances with their ME and, if the ME is supportive of the request, email the RACGP for approval.

# 3. CONTRACTING



**Figure 1. Contracting process**

*RTO, Regional Training Organisation; RACGP, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners*

### Registrar Letter of Offer

Successful applicants for the 2020 AP Program received a Letter of Offer from the RACGP by August 2019. Acceptance of the Letter of Offer constitutes an agreement between the registrar and RACGP. The Letter of Offer outlines the registrar's responsibilities and obligations in completing their post. These obligations include:

- commencement and completion date
- weekly time commitment
- attendance at AP Program workshops
- participation in AP Program webinars, online learning and discussion groups
- attendance at the 2020 conference funded by the RACGP
- completion and submission of orientation, mid-term and final reports
- requirement to liaise with the RACGP in the event of the need to take leave from the program due to extenuating and unforeseen circumstances or Category 1 leave.

The AP Program 2020 activity schedule is in Table 1. Registrars will receive further information regarding activities once they commence the post. The RACGP requires registrars to promptly advise if they anticipate difficulties attending any of these activities. Please note, the RACGP will arrange and fund all reasonable and necessary travel costs associated with attending any required program activities. Registrars should not book travel to attend activities without first consulting the RACGP.

The RACGP recommends registrars consider the activity schedule when negotiating their employment contracts for clinical placements, including requests for professional development leave to attend activities where possible, as well as advising their employer early of any leave requirements.

### Salary and entitlements

AP Program registrars are entitled to receive a salary at lecturer level A classification (0.5 FTE) up to a maximum value of \$75,000 inclusive of the on-costs listed under academic post funding. This amount varies according to the relevant EBA for the specific university. Registrars are encouraged to request a copy of the EBA so that they understand the basis of their employment contract.

The RTO is responsible for negotiating the salary entitlements on behalf of the registrar – refer to [section 5](#).

# 4. INFORMATION FOR REGISTRARS

## Applying for leave from the AP Program

The RACGP will grant academic registrars leave from the AP Program only in the case of extenuating and unforeseen circumstances and in the case of Category 1 leave as provided for under the AGPT Program Leave Policy, and as per the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cwlth). Academic registrars wishing to take leave should read the RACGP document '[A guide to applying for leave from the academic post program](#)'. Registrars and MEs are encouraged to contact the RACGP at [gpedresearch@racgp.org.au](mailto:gpedresearch@racgp.org.au) to discuss the application process. Please note that application for leave does not guarantee its approval.

## 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.*

Please note, the RACGP and Department of Health logos should not be used by registrars on any material or presentations. Registrars should liaise with their university supervisor to ensure that they use the correct templates for all presentations, as well as the agreed authorship list.



# 5. INFORMATION FOR REGIONAL TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

## Role of the medical educator

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The ME nominated in the registrar's academic post application form provides guidance and support to the registrar at the time of the application to select a university supervisor and a suitable research project. The ME is also responsible for advising the RACGP regarding:

- the academic post fit within the registrar's learning plan
- the registrar's eligibility for the post and which term the academic post will fulfil (ie extended skills post, elective or Advanced Rural Skills Training)
- assurance that any required extensions of training have been secured to accommodate the post as a training term.

## RTO contracts and funding

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### Budget template

As soon as the registrar accepts the academic post Letter of Offer, the RACGP emails a notification letter to the RTO's ME and finance contact, and provides a budget template. The ME and finance contact are responsible for ensuring that the relevant RTO staff member liaises with the university to obtain the correct figures for the registrar salary and on-costs according to the relevant EBA. The RACGP expects the registrar will receive the maximum amount permissible under lecturer level A classification (0.5 FTE) up to a maximum value of \$75,000 inclusive of on-costs.

The completed budget template must be emailed to the RACGP for approval. If it is not approved, the RACGP will contact the RTO to request justification for the costs or provide the RTO with an opportunity to resubmit the budget with modifications. Once the RACGP approves the budget, it is signed and a final copy is sent to the RTO. The signed accepted budget forms item D of the funding agreement between the RACGP and the RTO. Once the RACGP approves the budget, the RTO is expected to provide the registrar with the salary information.

**Please note, the RACGP expects that the registrar will be paid to the value of the approved budget. Any discrepancies reported at the time of financial reconciliation will require justification.**

### Contract overview

As soon as the budget is returned and approved, the RACGP prepares the RACGP–RTO funding agreement for review by the RTO, including the terms and conditions referred to in the contract. The length of time for the contracting process varies. Therefore, the RACGP encourages RTOs to commence negotiations with the university for the RTO–university funding agreement at the same time. Refer to **RTO and university contract overview** in this guide and Figure 1.

The RACGP contract with the academic registrar’s RTO obligates the RTO to:

- provide written confirmation of salary and entitlements to the registrar on approval of the budget by the RACGP
- negotiate an agreement with the registrar’s university to support their AP Program placement
- ensure the registrar has signed a fair contract with their university
- ensure the registrar’s salary commences at the start of the academic term
- support the registrar throughout their term, in partnership with the registrar’s main university supervisor
- manage the registrar’s access to RR and PD funding expenditure within the guidelines for funding
- ensure that as required, the registrar’s ME reviews, contributes and signs off the academic registrar reports
- promptly alert the RACGP if any issues arise that may jeopardise the successful completion of the post
- address any issues identified in academic registrar reports
- submit an itemised expense reconciliation on conclusion of the post, including the RR and PD funding expenditure and final salary cost.

### Invoicing

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

1. 50% of the employment component plus full RR and PD funding 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, university supervisor and ME
3. 10% of the employment component less unspent funds on receipt and approval of a signed copy of the final research findings report from the academic registrar and their university supervisor
  - a completed budget template, and
  - a completed reconciliation template.

### Financial reconciliation

At the end of the academic post year, the RTO is required to submit an itemised reconciliation of expenditure for RR and PD funding, as well as any underspend on the salary component. Reconciliation is due by 30 March 2021 and RTOs are required to send it by email to [gpedresearch@racgp.org.au](mailto:gpedresearch@racgp.org.au). The RACGP undertakes to review and respond to the reconciliation within two weeks of receipt so that the RTO may issue an invoice for the final milestone payment. Receipts for all expenditure must be available on request.

# 6. INFORMATION FOR UNIVERSITIES AND SUPERVISORS

## Role of a university supervisor

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The RACGP expects that, as part of the academic post application, the university supervisor who signed the declaration worked with the academic registrar to develop their research proposal. The research may be an individual project or involvement in a larger project, where the registrar has a clear and independent role. The 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.

The RACGP expects the university supervisor to meet regularly with the academic 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-year and end-of-year reports.

## RTO and university contract overview

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Once the registrar accepts the offer of an academic post:

1. The RTO negotiates the registrar's entitlements with the university for a fixed-term, 12-month contract to cover the academic post term.
2. The RTO submits the budget to the RACGP by 30 September 2019 for approval.
3. On approval of the budget, the RTO informs the registrar in writing of their entitlements.
4. The RTO–university contract is prepared.

As soon as the RACGP accepts the budget, the RTO is encouraged to immediately liaise with the university regarding the RTO–university contract so that it can be executed as soon as the RACGP–RTO contract is executed. It is the responsibility of the RTO and university supervisor to ensure that the registrar:

- receives a contract that reflects the RACGP-approved budget
- is promptly informed of their employment conditions
- is paid on commencement of the post.

As this is a fixed-term contract, the RACGP will not cover severance costs. The RACGP does not require a copy of the training provider–university funding agreement.

## University obligations

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The RACGP expects the university will:

- promptly negotiate the RTO–university contract
- ensure that the registrar has signed a fair contract and their salary commences at the start of the academic term
- support the registrar throughout their term, in partnership with the registrar's medical educator
- ensure the registrar's supervisor reviews, contributes and signs off as required by the academic registrar reports
- promptly alert the RTO if any issues arise that may jeopardise the successful completion of the post, including any requests for leave in unforeseen or extenuating circumstances or Category 1
- address any issues identified in academic registrar reports.





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