RACGP Education Research Programs

Academic Post Guide 2018

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Introduction

Welcome to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Academic Post (AP) training term for 2018. RACGP looks forward to working with the 2018 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 2018.

Key contacts

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

Direct queries regarding travel arrangements for program activities to the RACGP administrator for academic posts, Kate Huang.

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

Table 1: Key program contacts

RACGP Contacts Name	Position	Email	Phone
RACGP Education Research Inbox		gpedresearch@racgp.org.au RACGP general enquiries 1800 331 626	
Talya Mathews	Manager, Research, Evaluation & Analysis, Education Services	talya.mathews@racgp.org.au	03 8699 0358
Jillian Byron	Education Research Program Coordinator	jillian.byron@racgp.org.au	03 8699 0374
Kate Huang	Education Research Program Administrator	kate.huang@racgp.org.au	03 8699 0415

General program information

Academic posts 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 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 the academic environment and encourages registrars to incorporate academic work into their careers. Mentoring and support for the RACGP AP will be provided by each registrar's Regional Training Organisation (RTO); university; the RACGP; and staff from the university contracted to facilitate AP program activities (the academic post activity partner).

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 program administration costs. RACGP pays funding in three instalments to the RTO, and includes:

1. Employment component comprising:
   - 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 up to $5,000 ex GST;
3. PDF up to $3,000 ex GST; and
4. An RTO administration fee of $4,000 ex GST.

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 RTF and PDF. University employment contracts should be of 12-month's duration; the RTO must inform RACGP if this has not been negotiated. RACGP will not cover any salary costs exceeding the statutory requirement (as per university employment conditions for academic staff).

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

The RRF assists registrars with expenses associated with the registrar's AP research project, to a maximum of $5,000 (ex GST). The PDF provides support for professional development activities associated with academia and research training, to a maximum of $3,000 (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. This ensures that funds are available should the registrar change or identify new research support or professional development needs throughout their academic term. RRF and PDF funding must not be released to the registrar's university; the RTO should instead pay invoices as they arise, or reimburse the university or registrar as approved expenditure occurs, as per their own policies and procedures.

The RACGP accepts that there may be changes to research funding allocation as the academic registrar's project progresses; therefore, reasonable changes to approved research funding expenditure are acceptable, with written approval from the registrar's university supervisor and ME. These changes must

meet RACGP funding guidelines as stipulated in the letter of offer and as below (see update in Note 1 at the end of this section). All expenses must be reasonable to the level of research being undertaken.

RRF funding guidelines

RTOs must supply receipts for expenditure at time of financial reconciliation.
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.

Exclusions:
- Professional development expenses. Courses or activities associated with professional development are available through the Professional Development Funding (PDF) attached to each AP.
- 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.

PDF funding guidelines

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.

The registrar must agree to:
- Maintain proper financial records for all research related expenses to be claimed as part of the PDF, and make all financial records available, at any reasonable time, by an appointed officer of the RACGP. All grants are subject to the RACGP's audit requirements, therefore financial records must clearly allow identification of the PDF from other income, and allow all expenditure to be verifiable.
- Ensure that any PDF is expended only during the period of the AP, as specified by the start and end dates in Schedule 1.

Note 1: as per email advice of 7 February 2018, after feedback from the 2017 AP cohort, RACGP sought and received approval from Department of Health to allow registrars to use the total of $8,000 for any mix of RRF or PDF expenses. RACGP encourages registrars and their supervisors to review their budgets together to ensure that registrars obtain the maximum benefit from the funding. The exclusions listed in the guide remain.

RACGP requires a financial reconciliation report from the RTO by 15 March 2019. 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.

Expenses incurred for attendance at compulsory activities

The RACGP will cover reasonable travel and accommodation costs incurred as a result of attendance at compulsory AP activities, as well as conference registration fees. RACGP will distribute information at the commencement of the academic term and prior to each activity. RACGP uses a designated booking system; however, there may be reimbursement for some out-of-pocket expenses, subject to prior approval. RACGP will upload expenditure guidelines to Moodle 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 2018. Specific dates should 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

Activity	Indicative Date/s	Responsible person
Letter of offer signed and returned	Mon 18 September 2017	Registrar
Budget signed and returned	Mon 2 October 2017	RTO
Budget approved or amended	Mon 9 October 2017	RACGP
Contract sent to RTO	Mon 9 October 2017	RACGP
Contract signed and returned	Mon 16 October 2017	RTO
Contract executed	November 2017	RTO/RACGP
2-day workshop in Melbourne, Victoria	Mon 20 and Tues 21 November 2017	Registrar
Commence academic post	January/February 2018	Registrar
First webinar	22 February 2018, 7pm AEDT	Registrar
Orientation and Initial Progress Report	30 March 2018	Completed by registrar with ME signature.
Attendance at conference (Primary Health Care Research Conference (PHCRC))	1-3 August 2018	Registrar
2-day workshop following PHCRC	3-4 August 2018	Registrar
Submit Mid-Term Report	30 June 2018	Completed by registrar, ME and University supervisor.
Attendance at GP18 Conference, including registrar presentations and AP workshop	11-13 October 2018 (Conference) Workshop - TBA	Registrar
Second webinar	Late Jan/early Feb 2019	Registrar
Final Administrative Report to RACGP	28 February 2019	Completed by registrar, ME and University supervisor.
Final Research Findings Report to RACGP	28 February 2019	Completed by registrar, ME and University supervisor.
Learning Management System - Moodle	Throughout the AP term	Registrar
Conclude academic post	January/February 2019	Registrar
Financial reconciliation report to RACGP	15 March 2019	RTO

Academic post reports

Academic registrars are required to complete four reports whilst completing an academic post: 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 medical educator must read and sign off all reports. University supervisors must also complete a section of the mid-term and final administrative reports before medical educator sign-off.

Reports will be submitted via Smarty Grants and a link will be distributed via email four weeks before the reporting due date. RACGP will make available a copy of the report formats in the online learning platform, Moodle (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 2018. 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 2018. 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 2019. Its purpose is to:

- Follow up on academic achievements;
- Ensure 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 2019. 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

To support academic registrars with their research, RACGP will provide a number of activities across the AP year, including webinars, online learning, face-to-face workshops and a dedicated session at GP18. Topics covered across these activities 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.

Academic registrars will receive a cohort experience, with regular communication and opportunities to both troubleshoot and share their work in a supportive environment. Academic post activities will be developed and facilitated by activity partner staff from a university Department of General Practice (contact details to be confirmed) along with other presenters with skills in specific areas. This may include quantitative and qualitative researchers, statisticians, ethics specialists, former academic registrars, and a range of allied health practitioners and GPs with primary care research expertise.

Webinars

The RACGP and its AP activity partner will co-host up to three webinars for AP registrars in 2018, based on the cohort's needs.

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, Monash University, will co-host three face-to-face workshops during the post. Please see Table 2 for a schedule of workshop dates. RACGP designed 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 in Melbourne on 20-21 November 2017. 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

The second workshop will be held after the PHC conference and 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.

Workshop 3

The third workshop will be held in conjunction with GP18 and will cover training needs identified by registrars. Registrars may also present a conference paper or three-minute thesis to the group.

Conferences

RACGP provides AP registrars with the opportunity to attend a minimum of two conferences during their post. Registrars are NOT required to submit a research poster or paper for the PHCRC or GP18, but may do so if they wish. Abstracts for GP18 close on Sunday 4 March 2018. Further information can be found at http://gp18.com.au/abstracts/ .

Primary Health Care Research Conference (PHCRC)

PHCRC is organised by the Primary Health Care Research and Information Service (PHCRIS). The conference focuses on the latest quality research and innovations in the PHC sector, and fosters collaborative relationships and networks between researchers and research users.

Information can be found at http://www.phcris.org.au/events/conference/.

RACGP National Conference, GP18

The RACGP GP18 conference will be held 11 - 13 October 2018. This conference provides three days of education, networking, fellowship and collegiality for RACGP members and other interested parties. For more information, please see the GP18 website http://gp18.com.au/ .

Registrars should not register for GP18 until advised by the RACGP education research team of the correct process.

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 will not 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 2018 academic post training term in September 2017. 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 RACGP National Conference in October 2018; and
- Completion and submission of orientation, mid-term and final reports.

Detailed information regarding program activities is provided in the Table 2 of this guide. Registrars will receive further information regarding these activities over the coming months; however, Table 2 contains a tentative schedule. Registrars must inform RACGP immediately should they anticipate difficulties attending any of these activities. Note: RACGP will fund 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

Registrars must use the following wording to acknowledge funding and support for the AP research project:

"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."

Support during the academic post

The academic post 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 Activity Partner Q&A section of the Moodle online learning platform. RACGP and the support partner regularly monitors the Q&A forum.
- Registrars who would like advice regarding program logistics are encouraged to post questions in Moodle's RACGP 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 research and teaching proposal 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

Contract overview

The RACGP has sent a Funding Agreement to each RTO responsible for a successful applicant in the 2018 AP cohort. The Funding Agreement forms a contract between RACGP and the academic registrar's RTO. By signing this document, the RTO agrees to:

- Complete an AP budget template;
- 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. Funding is paid 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.

Budget template

Along with the Funding Agreement, the RTO will receive a budget template, which includes the state regulated statutory on-cost entitlement percentage (payroll tax, superannuation and workers' compensation). The RTO is required to submit a completed budget template with their proposed funding structure for the registrar.

The RTO must negotiate the registrar's entitlements with the registrar's university, including a-12 month contract to cover the academic term. The RTO must keep the registrar informed of this process. The RTO must then submit the final budget on the prescribed template to RACGP. If RACGP does not receive the budget template by the 18th October 2017, this may jeopardise the registrar's participation in the AP program.

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. A funding agreement template has been provided for the RTO to use with the university, if desired. This template may be modified to suit the RTO and their partner university; however, please note that the template has been designed to align with the terms outlined in the funding agreements between RACGP and RTO, and RACGP and the Department of Health.

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 15 March 2019 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 worked with the prospective academic registrar to develop their research proposal, as part of the academic post application. This may include a suitable 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.

Contract overview

The RTO enters into a contract with the university regarding its employment of the academic registrar. The RTO's medical educator 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 receives their salary on commencement of the post.**