



RACGP



AGPT ACADEMIC POST
PROGRAM 2020

RACGP APPLICATION GUIDE



General practice – Become a specialist in life



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RACGP

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

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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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ACRONYMS AND INITIALISMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| AAP | Academic Assessment Panel |
| AGPT | Australian General Practice Training |
| AIDA | Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association |
| AJGP | <i>Australian Journal of General Practice</i> |
| ARST | Advanced Rural Skills Training |
| FARGP | Fellowship in Advanced Rural General Practice |
| FRACGP | Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners |
| FTE | full-time equivalent |
| GP | general practitioner |
| GPT1 | General Practice Term 1 |
| ME | medical educator |
| PDF | professional development funding |
| RACGP | Royal Australian College of General Practitioners |
| RRF | registrar research funding |
| RTO | Regional Training Organisation |
| SME | senior medical educator |

1. OVERVIEW

Evidence is the foundation of everyday general practice. General practitioners (GPs) must be able to filter, critically appraise, interpret and apply the information available to them. The Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Program seeks to ensure general practice registrars have the opportunity to build their skills in the areas of teaching, research and critical thinking through 12-month part-time academic post training terms. Registrars in the 2020 cohort will hold academic posts from January–February 2020 to January–February 2021 concurrent with a clinical term.

Further information and updates on the application process for RACGP academic posts are available at www.racgp.org.au/education/registrars/fellowship-pathways/australian-general-practice-training-program-agpt/academic-posts

RACGP contact details and support

For further information, please contact the Education Research Program Coordinator, Dr Jill Byron, via gpedresearch@racgp.org.au or on 03 8699 0374.

Purpose

The academic post is an AGPT term in which registrars learn academic skills through individualised learning plans. The post provides exposure to research and teaching in an academic environment, and encourages registrars to consider how they may incorporate academic work into their careers.

Why do an academic post?

During an academic post, registrars develop skills in research, teaching, project work and critical evaluation of research relevant to the discipline of general practice.

Registrars undertaking academic posts will find these skills invaluable to the way they practise throughout their careers.

Academic posts provide the opportunity to:

- contribute to the evidence on which general practice is based
- gain experience in research and teaching
- disseminate research in professional journals and at conferences
- help build the foundation for a career as a general practice academic or medical educator (ME).

Some academic registrars will use the experience to prepare themselves for further postgraduate study in academic general practice (eg masters or PhD).

From being an academic registrar, I gained the confidence to begin in an academic career. I was able to identify that I really enjoy research and teaching and have now gone on to continue my teaching at the university medical school. I have started a PhD at the same institution. I would recommend this to anyone thinking about research or teaching in their future careers, as it is a unique opportunity to do research in your interest areas, in a paid position working towards your training time. It is a truly wonderful extended skills position.

— Dr Rebekah Hoffman, AGPT registrar and 2017 academic post holder

The experiences of past academic registrars have been profiled in *newsGP*, and links to the articles are available at www.racgp.org.au/education/registrars/fellowship-pathways/australian-general-practice-training-program-agpt/academic-posts

How does the academic post work?

An academic post is a 12-month part-time position typically completed at 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) within a university department of general practice or rural clinical school, concurrent with clinical training at 0.5 FTE. Academic posts are available on both RACGP Fellowship pathways – Fellowship of The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (FRACGP), and Fellowship in Advanced Rural General Practice (FARGP):

- FRACGP – academic post is part of core vocational training or as an extended skills term or elective
- FARGP – academic post is approved as an Advanced Rural Skills Training (ARST) term – refer to '**Academic post as FARGP Advanced Rural Skills Training**'.

The post includes research and teaching activities and commences January–February. The university will assign the registrar a research supervisor and a teaching supervisor.

The RACGP also provides academic input via workshops, webinars and an online learning management system. This input is facilitated by academics from a department of general practice and the activities provide registrars with an opportunity to network with their peers.



Research

Registrars may complete their own research project or join an existing research project. If they join an existing project, the registrar is required to have a clear role and be accountable for a distinctive part of the existing work.

Registrars should discuss their research proposal with their Regional Training Organisation's (RTO's) senior medical educator (SME) and find a suitable university-based general practice academic supervisor before applying. Registrars must have at least one general practice academic supervisor in their supervisory team.

Many RTOs have relationships with universities in their region, and the registrar's ME may be able to suggest

suitable academic supervisors. Registrars may obtain from the RACGP a list of contacts for every Australian university general practice department.

Division of academic time between research and teaching may change from week to week and is dependent on university schedules; however, the split is approximately 60% research time (11.4 hours per week) and 40% teaching time (7.6 hours per week) averaged over the post. Registrars should consider the amount of time available over the 12 months in determining the breadth and scope of their research project.



Teaching

During the post, registrars are involved in general practice teaching at a university and/or training organisation. This teaching may involve delivery of lectures, facilitating small group teaching, conducting tutorials, assessments, curriculum development and being involved in departmental meetings.

Teaching should not include extensive administration work, or tasks that exceed the registrar's competence (eg writing high-stakes exams). The applicant is expected to provide a detailed teaching plan developed in conjunction with the proposed supervisor, including professional development in teaching.



Clinical

Registrars are required to complete clinical work concurrently with their academic post, with a minimum of 14.5 hours of clinical work per week.

Examples of academic posts

The following is an example of 2018 academic post projects. A full list is available at www.racgp.org.au/education/registrars/fellowship-pathways/australian-general-practice-training-program-agpt/academic-posts

- 'The effect of a new coaching model on anxiety, depression, and burnout in general practice registrars'
- 'Doctors in secondary schools: Experiences and perspectives of general practitioners involved'
- 'Exploring effects of providing consent information to parents on intention to vaccinate at six weeks'
- 'The effect of models of primary care on the quality of referrals to specialists'

Specialised academic posts

A 'specialised academic post' is a post where there is a defined research project to be completed and some objectives of the term are predetermined. Specialised posts are designed to facilitate access to research opportunities. These terms count towards training in the same way as a standard academic post. There are currently two types of specialised academic posts.

- *Australian Journal of General Practice (AJGP)* Editorial Fellow academic post – a training term with a focus on medical editing and research.
- The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) academic post – an identified training term for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander registrar to undertake policy research and teaching. This specialised academic post supports the Australian Government's commitment to 'Closing the Gap'.



AJGP academic post

Published by the RACGP, *AJGP* is a highly regarded peer-reviewed journal publishing original articles and reviews dedicated to meeting the ongoing educational requirements of GPs. The RACGP awards a maximum of two *AJGP* positions each intake.

The *AJGP* post incorporates a standard academic post with additional editing work. This post is a unique opportunity for a registrar to obtain medical editing experience during their academic training. The RACGP requires that the post be undertaken one day per week, currently each Thursday – either within the Publications Unit in the RACGP National Office, 100 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne, Victoria, or under a remote working arrangement negotiated with the successful candidate.

Within the 12-month, part-time (0.5 FTE) time constraint, an *AJGP* Editorial Fellow:

- undertakes editing work with *AJGP* as detailed in the *AJGP* Editorial Fellow role description, available at www.racgp.org.au/education/registrars/fellowship-pathways/australian-general-practice-training-program-agpt/academic-posts
- completes an academic research project, either an individual project or as part of a larger research project team, with a smaller scope than a standard post
- has few or no university teaching requirements, as negotiated with their university supervisor.

Registrars interested in the *AJGP* post are required to submit the standard academic post application form. Within the form, applicants should complete the extra *AJGP* post application fields as well as upload a response to the role description selection criteria.

When completing the academic post application form, *AJGP* applicants should indicate whether they wish to be considered for a standard academic post if they are unsuccessful in the *AJGP* application.

The full *AJGP* Editorial Fellow role description is available on the RACGP website at www.racgp.org.au/education/registrars/fellowship-pathways/australian-general-practice-training-program-agpt/academic-posts

AIDA academic post

As part of the 'Closing the Gap' strategy, the Department of Health has earmarked a specialised academic post referred to as the 'Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) academic post'. The post is offered to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander general practice registrar and aims to enhance the registrar's training via exposure to, and experience in, policy research and teaching.

For further information, please contact the Education Research Program Coordinator, Dr Jill Byron, via gpedresearch@racgp.org.au or on **03 8699 0374**; or AIDA via aida@aida.org.au or on **02 6273 5013**.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR AN ACADEMIC POST

Registrars undertaking an academic post with the RACGP must be training full time, with 0.5 FTE being the academic component and 0.5 FTE being the clinical component. The components must be undertaken concurrently.

Registrars are eligible to apply to undertake an academic post at any time throughout their AGPT term, and are eligible to commence an academic post once they have successfully completed their General Practice Term 1 (GPT1) training term and have at least three months of clinical work remaining for FRACGP. If the registrar has not completed GPT1 at the time of application, the RACGP requires that they provide a letter from their ME indicating their satisfactory progress to date.

Registrars are responsible for checking their eligibility to apply for an academic post. The Department of Health AGPT Academic Post Policy 2019 document at www.agpt.com.au/About-Us/Policies/AGPT-Policies defines eligibility. Registrars unsure of their eligibility to apply should email gpedresearch@racgp.org.au

An extension to undertake an approved academic post will be granted only if a registrar has six FTE months of a core vocational training term remaining, and such extensions are restricted to six calendar months.

Other important points:

- Registrars must remain enrolled in the AGPT Program for the duration of their academic post term and must not Fellow prior to the completion of their academic post.
- The RACGP gives preference to applications for posts that will contribute to the registrar's vocational training for Fellowship (ie first-year applications will be given preference). Second-year candidates may apply if they have sufficient time remaining within their training; these registrars are expected to demonstrate a greater depth of research and act as mentors to first-year students.

Academic post as FARGP Advanced Rural Skills Training

A core requirement of the FARGP is the completion of at least 12 months of ARST in an accredited training post. ARST is designed to augment core general practice training by providing an opportunity for registrars looking to build, refresh or develop more specialised skills and/or a broader range of skills and knowledge to meet the needs of their rural or remote community.

It should be noted that acceptance in to the FARGP program is not approval of your intended ARST.

The latter is a separate process completed prior to the academic post submission deadline.

To ensure it meets the requirements of the FARGP program, the RACGP Rural Censor must approve the academic post proposal if the registrar wishes to undertake it as a FARGP ARST.

The RACGP Rural Censor will consider whether the academic post is suitable as an ARST on a broad range of conditions, including but not limited to:

- an explanation of the rural general practice context of the program
- sufficient clinical placement time to provide appropriate volume of patients
- supervision by an appropriate specialist specific to the discipline area
- details of the assessment criteria and assessment process
- a training post being supported by the registrar's RTO.

Applications to the RACGP Rural Censor will be reviewed and a response provided within six weeks of receipt. The prospective approval by the RACGP Rural Censor must be granted prior to the academic post submission deadline. Registrars are encouraged to apply to the RACGP Rural Censor as early as possible to ensure that, if required, they have sufficient time to refine their research proposal before submission to the AGPT Academic Post Program.

3. ACADEMIC POST APPLICATION FORM

The application submission window is open from 1 March 2019 to 31 May 2019. Registrars are required to submit applications via an online form. A link to the form will be available at www.racgp.org.au/education/registrars/fellowship-pathways/australian-general-practice-training-program-agpt/academic-posts during the submission window.

The academic post application form requires comprehensive information on all aspects of the registrar's proposed post, including logistical information, learning objectives and the research and teaching proposal.

The RACGP encourages registrars to start completing the application form with assistance from their ME and university supervisor as soon as the application form is available. For a response to questions about the process, please contact the Education Research Program Coordinator, Dr Jill Byron, via gpedresearch@racgp.org.au or phone 03 8699 0374.

The application form contains three sections:

- Part A – Academic post application
- Part B – Registrar research funding
- Part C – Declarations

4. APPLICATION PROCESS



Figure 1. AGPT Academic Post Program: Application process

5. SELECTION CRITERIA

The RACGP Academic Assessment Panel (AAP) assesses applications from registrars seeking to undertake an academic post against the criteria specified in the AGPT Academic Post Policy 2019, available at www.agpt.com.au/About-Us/Policies/AGPT-Policies

Registrars are encouraged to discuss the criteria with their university supervisor before commencing their application form. The RACGP acknowledges that the process of undertaking a post provides registrars with the skills to more clearly articulate a research plan; however, the application form is an opportunity for registrars to demonstrate their understanding of the required commitment and their potential to gain maximum benefit from the post. The panel requires the scope of the proposed research and teaching plan to be clearly described, so that they can assess whether the plan is achievable.

RACGP receives more applications than posts available, so registrars are encouraged to allow plenty of time to prepare the application. The criteria that the AAP use to assess applications is detailed on the following pages.

Criterion 1 – Demonstrated benefit to the registrar’s learning and career plans

- The proposal clearly demonstrates that the academic post is embedded within the registrar’s learning plan.

Criterion 2 – Impact of research

- The AAP assesses application in terms of:
 - relevance of the research question to current or emerging national health priorities or issues in Australian general practice and/or primary care
 - research that may focus on clinical care, general practice education, policy, service delivery, or any other topic relevant to Australian general practice
 - research that has the potential to produce answers of value to the Australian community
 - research that has the potential to produce innovation in general practice and/or primary care, or general practice education, training or policy
 - research projects that have the most potential to improve the registrar’s knowledge and skills in research.

Criterion 3 – Quality of research

- The AAP assesses:
 - the registrar having, in consultation with their supervisor, developed an appropriate research plan
 - clarity of the research question
 - synthesis of current literature and evidence of where the research project will address a gap in current knowledge
 - match between methodology and the research question
 - research projects that have clear research methods, including analysis
 - research projects that have considered the ethical implications
 - research that is likely to be achievable in the time available
 - research projects that have built in time for dissemination
 - if the registrar is embedding their research in an existing larger project, that the registrar has ownership of their study.
- Applicants should demonstrate that they have significant involvement in the research design, in the conduct of the research and in the analysis and interpretation of data.

Criterion 4 – Quality teaching experience

- The application demonstrates how the registrar plans to contribute to teaching at their academic institution:
 - teaching should constitute a minimum of 40% of the registrar’s academic post time
 - teaching activities are overseen by a nominated supervisor.

Criterion 5 – Demonstrated engagement with academic GPs and university departments of general practice or rural clinical schools

- The supervisory team contains sufficient GP presence.
- The university/academic institution has a general practice focus.

Criterion 6 – Second-year applications will be considered against additional criteria

- Additional criteria include:
 - the need to demonstrate a greater depth of research than first-year applicants
 - demonstrated superior skills and commitment to a future in academic general practice during their first year, compared with their peers
 - the expectation to contribute to a peer education program.

Second-year applicants will be expected to be enrolled in, or working towards enrolling in, a higher research degree.

Note: Posts that will count towards vocational training for Fellowship (FRACGP and/or FARGP) will be preferred over posts that do not count towards Fellowship. This means that suitable first-year applications will have preference over suitable second-year applications.

6. SELECTION PROCESS

Academic Assessment Panel

The AAP is a selected group of RACGP and external representatives. The main function of the AAP is to assess the suitability of registrar applications for academic posts. The AAP consists of the following organisations/members:

- a representative from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, with experience in general practice research
- the RACGP
- Australian Association of Academic Primary Care
- RTO SMEs.

Assessment process for academic posts

AAP members individually assess and score each of the registrar applications against the selection criteria listed in **Section 5: Selection criteria**. At a meeting of the AAP, the panel discusses assessments and decides whether an application meets the minimum criteria for a post. The RACGP will offer up to 20 academic posts in 2020. In the event that there are more suitable applications than posts available, the panel will rank the applications based on the registrar's demonstrated understanding of the required commitment and potential for the registrar to gain maximum benefit from the post.

AJGP selection process

Applications for the *AJGP* post are reviewed by the AAP against the standard post criteria, and if successful the application is forwarded to the RACGP National Publications Manager for consideration.

The National Publications Manager and senior members of the *AJGP* editorial team will assess interested applicants for the *AJGP* post against the Editorial Fellow role description and determine whether the applicant/s meet the minimum requirements. Each suitable candidate is invited to:

- attend an interview to discuss the position and proposed plan (may be conducted via Skype)
- complete a practical exercise to assess editorial capacity.

Up to two *AJGP* posts are available each year. If required, the National Publications Manager will rank the applicants to determine the most suitable for the editorial role. Should applicants be unsuccessful in applying for the *AJGP* post, they have the option to accept a standard post.

AIDA selection process

Applications for the AIDA specialised academic post will be considered by the AAP and a representative from AIDA.

Outcomes

Standard and specialised academic post applications follow the same outcome process.

Decisions of the AAP are final and are not subject to appeal.

7. CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS AND FUNDING

The RACGP is able to fund up to 20 registrars to undertake an academic post in 2020, including specialised post places. The RACGP transfers funding for the post to the RTO, as with any AGPT training term.

Remuneration

The terms of remuneration are as follows:

- registrar's salary equivalent to their university's 'Lecturer Level A' at 0.5 FTE
- clinical loading equivalent to that of an academic staff member 'with significant responsibility for patient care' at 0.5 FTE
- appropriate statutory on-costs of superannuation and workers compensation
- payroll tax (as per state requirement)
- ability for reimbursement of extra expenses associated with undertaking the *AJGP* or *AIDA* post.

The RACGP will not cover any costs over these statutory requirements forming part of university employment conditions for its academic staff.

The RACGP offers registrars access to a total of \$8000 for professional development and research costs in addition to salary funding, as per the category descriptions that follow. The registrar's RTO holds and manages these funds.

Registrar research funding and professional development funding

Registrar research funding (RRF) is for the academic registrar costs in undertaking the research project, and professional development funding (PDF) is for activities relevant to academic training. Registrars should discuss their projected RRF and PDF needs with their ME and university supervisor, and provide details in their application form. The budget on the application form is considered indicative, and may be changed by approval from the ME providing the items are consistent with the following list.

Inclusions:

- expenses related to research, including transcription and research assistant services, recruitment expenses, specialist software procurement, data analyst services, travel to undertake research
- 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 registration fees, accommodation and travel (all Australia-only), or relevant university subjects or other courses.

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 licenses.

8. PROGRAM TIMELINES AND MILESTONES

| Milestone | Time frame |
|---|-----------------------|
| Academic post application period | 1 March – 31 May 2019 |
| Review of applications by AAP | July 2019 |
| Application outcomes provided to academic post applicants | Late July 2019 |
| Contracting | August–September 2019 |
| Academic post two-day orientation workshop in Melbourne | November 2019 |
| Commence academic post | January–February 2020 |
| Webinar – held at 7.00 pm AEDT on a weeknight | February–March 2020 |
| Orientation progress report due | 31 March 2020 |
| Webinar – held at 7.00 pm AEST on a weeknight | May–June 2020 |
| Mid-term progress report due | 30 June 2020 |
| Academic post two-day workshop | August–October 2020 |
| Webinar | January 2021 |
| Final research findings report due | 28 February 2021 |
| Conclude academic post | January–February 2021 |

9. RTO AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

This section identifies the responsibilities and requirements of the RACGP, RTO and university supporting an academic registrar.

Roles and responsibilities in academic post process

RACGP

It is the RACGP's role to:

- manage the academic post application and selection process
- allocate post places according to the recommendation of the AAP
- enter into a funding agreement with the registrar's RTO
- provide academic support activities throughout the post
- ensure progress and financial reporting is completed on time.

RTO – Finance and SME

As the academic post is an AGPT training term, the RTO ensures the following is completed.

At application stage, the SME:

- ensures that the proposal meets the registrar's development needs as per their learning plan
- guides prospective academic registrars in selecting a university supervisor
- advises on the suitability of the proposed research project and teaching plan, and signs off to support the academic post application.

At acceptance stage, the RTO's finance department:

- negotiates a fair employment contract, submits the proposed budget to the RACGP for approval, then enters into an agreement with the university
- ensures the registrar has signed a fair contract with their university and that the registrar is paid for their work in a prompt manner.

During the post-term, the:

- SME ensures the registrar's learning plan and development requirements are met
- SME guides and supports the registrar, in conjunction with the registrar's main university supervisor
- SME advises and approves use of RRF and PDF
- RTO's finance department manages the salary funding, RRF, PDF and related reconciliations
- SME completes mid-term and end-of-term reports, actions any identified issues and ensures the registrar submits the reports to the RACGP by the due date
- SME records and reports on the training, following AGPT Program guidelines.

University supervisor

The university supervisor's role in the academic post is to:

- work with the prospective academic registrar to develop a research and teaching proposal
- provide advice on the appropriate scope and breadth of the research project, its applicability to general practice, feasibility and timeline
- ensure that the registrar's supervisor team includes an academic GP and a nominated teaching supervisor
- meet regularly with the registrar to monitor progress of research, allocate appropriate teaching tasks, provide guidance and feedback on research and teaching, and involve the registrar in daily departmental activities
- complete mid-term and end-of-term reports by the required due date.

Contracts and funding

Agreements

The RACGP advises successful applicants by email and requests that they sign and return the Letter of Offer. At the same time, the RACGP notifies the RTOs of successful applicants by email with a Letter of Notification and a budget template.

RTO–university agreement and budget template

The RTO receives a state-specific budget template, which includes the state-regulated statutory on-cost entitlement percentages for payroll tax, superannuation and workers compensation.

The RTO must negotiate a fair employment contract with the university, equivalent to the applicable university 'Lecturer Level A' classification plus clinical loading, up to the relevant cap. The registrar must be kept informed of this process.

Once the figures have been finalised, the RTO uses the information to complete the budget template and submits it to the RACGP.

RACGP–RTO funding agreement

The RTO must submit the budget template to the RACGP by the specified date, along with the signed Letter of Agreement. The RACGP will approve or decline the budget template. If declined, the RACGP will ask the RTO to provide justification for the costs and provide the RTO with an opportunity to resubmit. Once approved, the RACGP uses the information to prepare the RACGP–RTO funding agreement.

The funding agreement is a contract between the RACGP and the RTO that contains the obligations and responsibilities of both parties, and the funding obligations for the academic post training term.

RTOs should ensure they understand their responsibilities before signing and returning the funding agreement to the RACGP by the specified date. The RTO's chief executive officer, or delegate, must sign the agreement.

The RACGP allocates funding for the post to the RTO. As with any AGPT training term placement, the RTO must then enter into an agreement with the university for the registrar's academic placement (training post).

The RACGP will fund salary, RRF and PDF for up to 20 registrars per year to undertake an academic post, paid to each registrar's RTO.

RTOs receive funding in three stages:

1. Fifty per cent of the total funded amount on execution of the funding agreement
2. Forty per cent of the total funded amount on receipt and approval of the mid-term report completed and signed by the academic registrar, their academic supervisor and SME
3. Ten per cent of the total funded amount on receipt and approval of:
 - the final report completed and signed by the academic registrar, their academic supervisor and SME
 - a completed financial reconciliation for salary, RRF and PDF.



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