

# Rural Generalist Fellowship (FRACGP-RG)

**Additional Rural Skills Training (ARST)  
Curriculum for Academic Medicine**



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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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## Introduction

The RACGP Rural Generalist Fellowship (FRACGP-RG) is a qualification awarded by The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) in addition to the vocational Fellowship (FRACGP). Completion of a minimum 12 months of Additional Rural Skills Training (ARST) in an accredited training post is an essential component of training towards FRACGP-RG. This additional training is designed to augment core general practice training by providing an opportunity for rural general practitioners (GPs) to develop additional skills and expertise in a particular area and enhance their capability to provide care to their community.

This curriculum sets out the competencies that candidates are required to develop to complete ARST in Academic Medicine. It also provides a framework for the teaching and learning of the critical knowledge, skills, and attitudes that rural generalists require to lead and work in academia and research.

## Objectives

Rural Generalists with additional training in academic medicine make an important contribution to comprehensive care in rural and remote communities, addressing their varied contexts and community needs.

Candidates undertaking an ARST in Academic Medicine will extend their research and education capabilities, improving care for rural and remote communities in the long-term by providing evidence to research and training to health professionals.

## Prerequisites

An ARST in Academic Medicine can be undertaken any time after the completion of General Practice Term 1.

To contextualise candidates' learning within rural general practice and provide a better understanding of where their additional skills will be practised, it is recommended (but not mandatory) they complete at least 12 months full-time equivalent (FTE) of community rural general practice terms before starting the ARST.

For AGPT registrars, the RACGP recommends that candidates work closely with their training team to plan the best training pathway for their individual circumstances. Completion of an academic post will likely be the most appropriate entry pathway to completing an ARST in Academic Medicine.

## Duration

The ARST in Academic Medicine requires a minimum of 12 months FTE in an accredited training post, in accordance with the vocational standards and requirements published by the RACGP.

## Context for the FRACGP-RG ARST Curriculum for Academic Medicine

Academic medicine includes research and education. The research element focuses on improving healthcare delivery in rural areas and addressing the unique health challenges faced by rural and remote communities and residents. The education element focuses on providing students with relevant education to their profession, stage, and context.

Candidates must spend time in an academic medicine post and in clinical practice.

Candidates must request approval from the RACGP Rural Censor to train in an academic medicine post and outline specific knowledge, skills, learning outcomes, and performance criteria for their post. The academic post can be in a rural health department, department of general practice, or another recognised research institute located in a rural area. The RACGP Rural Censor may consider other academic placements where there is a strong rural academic basis with appropriate support and supervision available to the candidate. Approval must be granted before the training post commences.

Appropriate academic posts would provide the following:

- The opportunity to engage in a research project of at least 12-months with rural or remote practice applicability
- Teaching opportunities for the candidate, such as teaching health professional students
- Supervision, including a GP academic supervisor and local supervision. These may be the same person, but there is the option of remote GP academic supervision if that is most appropriate to the context
- Professional development opportunities for the candidate

Candidates would also be expected to be engaged in clinical practice in a rural or remote location. For doctors on training programs (such as the Fellowship Support Program), the clinical placement must be consistent with any relevant rules and requirements of that program. For Fellows undertaking an ARST in Academic Medicine it is highly desirable that they would also be in concurrent clinical practice in a rural or remote area, however, the RACGP Rural Censor may waive that requirement based on demonstrated commitment to rural and remote clinical practice.

Whilst the division of time may vary each week, it would be expected that on average the candidate should spend:

- 0.3 FTE in research work
- 0.2 FTE in teaching work
- 0.5 FTE in clinical work.

If a candidate has extensive experience teaching in a similar academic environment, the RACGP Rural Censor may recognise that prior experience and approve an academic post with more research time and less teaching time.

## Research

Candidates are required to be involved in a research project with relevance to a rural and remote context. It can either be a project where the candidate is the lead investigator, or part of a larger project where the candidate is accountable for an identifiable part of the work. The application will need to include the following:

- A research proposal covering the title, background (including current literature review and the knowledge gap you'll be addressing), aims (including your research questions), proposed methods, timelines, and ethical considerations for the project
- A timeline and plan of how it will be completed
- Project duration and expected average fraction of applicant's time required each week
- An outline of how required resources, including funding, IT, research tools, etc will be provided
- Supervision plans and details of any co-investigators
- Declaration if the candidate expects to use the research as part of any higher research degree

## Teaching

Candidates are required to outline the teaching and educational activities they will be involved in and the expected fraction of their time required. Activities might include developing and reviewing curriculum resources or assessment materials, lecturing, small-group teaching, and mentoring.

## Employment

For academic posts outside the AGPT Academic Registrar Program, the ARST applicant is required to identify (and have agreement from) a relevant academic department and detail how supervision, professional development and any employment will occur. It is noted that candidates using this direction for an ARST in Academic Medicine may have a variety of experiences and career goals. The RACGP Rural Censor will consider the details of any employment arrangement with respect to relevant comparators, which could include agreements by which others in the department are engaged for teaching or fractional appointments, candidates' PhD scholarship stipends, etc.

The RACGP has no capacity to fund the ARST in Academic Medicine outside the AGPT Academic Registrar Program.

## Clinical work

Candidates are expected to engage in clinical work in a rural or remote area.

If the candidate is a Fellow they can be engaged in their clinical work in any legal arrangement, not just employment arrangements.

If the candidate is not yet a Fellow they must be engaged as per any program requirements.

## Supervision

The required outcome is that the doctor is suitably supervised and supported in the elements of their academic post. It is expected that a GP academic is part of the supervisory team. One or more supervisors can be included, with local or hybrid supervision. If there are multiple supervisors, then a lead supervisor should be nominated who takes overall responsibility for supervision.

The proposed model should be suitable in the context of the research project, teaching role, and geographic context. If suitably qualified, one individual can fulfil more than one supervisory role.

The role of the research supervisor includes:

- observing the candidate's performance in research and providing regular constructive feedback and assistance
- meeting regularly with the candidate and evaluating their progress
- providing supervisory support to allow the candidate to successfully complete their research
- acting as a professional advisor and ensuring the project remains compliant with relevant approvals and standards, including remaining consistent with any ethical approvals
- assisting the candidate to understand the role of a GP researcher and how it may be part of their career pathway
- contributing to assessment of the candidate, where appropriate.

The role of the teaching supervisor includes:

- observing the candidate's performance in teaching and providing regular feedback and assistance, where appropriate
- assisting the candidate to understand the role of a GP academic or teacher and how it may be part of their career
- contributing to assessment of the candidate, where appropriate.

The role of the GP academic / mentor includes:

- acting as a professional role model and support person
- observing the candidate's performance and providing regular feedback and assistance, where appropriate
- contributing to assessment of the candidate, where appropriate.

The supervisory team also needs to include the ability to support the candidate with their wellbeing and any post-related issues (such as employment or OHS concerns).

The supervision arrangements can include any relevant and qualified professionals, other than the GP academic / mentor – who must be a specialist general practitioner. A Fellow is recommended for this role. It is expected that the supervisory arrangements include a local component.

For the clinical component, if the candidate has not already achieved Fellowship then supervision for the clinical component of the post must meet relevant program requirements. A Fellow does not require supervision for their clinical component.

## Approval criteria

When considering an application to commence an ARST in Academic Medicine outside the AGPT Academic Registrar program, the Rural Censor will consider the following criteria:

### *Criterion 1 – Demonstrated benefit to the doctor's learning and career plans*

- The proposal clearly demonstrates that the academic post is embedded within their professional development and career plans.
- The proposed research project will build the applicant's knowledge and skills in research.
- The proposed teaching plan will allow the applicant to possess the expected knowledge and skills in teaching and medical education.
- The doctor demonstrates an appreciation of the application of academic skills to clinical practice.

### ***Criterion 2 – Suitability of research proposal for an academic post***

- The research question is relevant to current or emerging national rural health priorities or issues.
- If the research proposal is part of a larger project, there is clear differentiation and ownership of the registrar's research component. Applicants should demonstrate they have significant involvement in the research design, the conduct of the research, and the analysis and interpretation of the data.
- The proposed research project is achievable within the nominated timeframe.

### ***Criterion 3 – Quality of research***

- The research proposal includes a synthesis of current literature and identifies a gap in the current knowledge that the research will address.
- The research question(s) is clear.
- The methodology (including data analysis) is clearly articulated and aligns with the research method.
- There is consideration and discussion of ethical issues included in the research proposal.
- The research proposal includes a plan for dissemination of findings.
- Research focussed on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander health or people must be culturally safe and align with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health cultural protocols, research methodologies, and perspectives. Please refer to the following recommended resources:
  - The RACGP's [introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health cultural protocols and perspectives](#) (see page 32 for guidance about terminology)
  - The National Indigenous Research and Knowledge Network's [guidance on different Indigenous methodologies and methods](#)
  - The NHMRC's [ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#)

### ***Criterion 4 – Quality of teaching experience***

- The proposal demonstrates how the doctor plans to contribute to teaching. Teaching should constitute about 0.2 FTE of their average week.
- The proposed teaching plan is clear and includes a broad range of teaching activities and opportunities.
- The teaching proposal demonstrates opportunities to undertake teaching training, and for there to be appropriate supervision for teaching activities.

### ***Criterion 5 – Demonstrated engagement with academic GPs and university rural departments of general practice, rural clinical schools, or other recognised research institutions***

- Evidence of meaningful consultation with the research supervisor in development of the research proposal.
- Evidence of meaningful consultation with the teaching supervisor in development of the teaching proposal.
- The supervisory team includes general practitioner expertise.
- The university or academic institution has a rural health focus.

### ***Criterion 6 – Learning outcomes of an academic post expected to be achieved overall at the end of the post***

- In the case of an applicant requesting to decrease teaching time to increase research time; demonstration that the expected teaching outcomes have already been attained by previous learning and experience.
- In the case of an applicant requesting not to do concurrent clinical practice; demonstration that there is a commitment to rural and remote clinical practice based on their work history.

### *Criterion 7 – The proposed agreements are equitable and support the doctor’s wellbeing*

- Evidence that proposed employment or engagement arrangements for the academic post are consistent with relevant comparators and peers.
- The academic role arrangements (including supervision plan) support the doctor’s wellbeing and can effectively address any problems that arise.

The RACGP Rural Censor may seek advice as relevant from RACGP research and academic staff, the RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Censor or other RACGP staff with relevant expertise as part of the considerations.

## Content of the FRACGP-RG ARST Curriculum for Academic Medicine

### Learning outcomes and performance criteria

The 2022 RACGP curriculum and syllabus for Australian general practice bases lifelong teaching and learning on the five domains of general practice. The domains represent the critical areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for competent, unsupervised general practice. They are relevant to every general practice patient consultation and form the foundation of rural GPs’ skills. Candidates undertake the ARST Curriculum for Academic Medicine in conjunction with the general practice curriculum. The following information covers additional knowledge and skills that GPs completing their ARST in Academic Medicine must develop in order to provide comprehensive academic expertise for healthcare in rural and remote communities. The learning outcomes are arranged under the five domains of the general practice curriculum:

1. Communication and the patient–doctor relationship
2. Applied professional knowledge and skills
3. Population health and the context of general practice
4. Professional and ethical role
5. Organisational and legal dimensions

By the end of their ARST in Academic Medicine, the candidate will have expanded upon the assumed level of knowledge of the vocational registrar in these areas.

## 1. Communication skills and the patient-doctor relationship

Learning outcomes ARST	Performance criteria
1.1 Synthesise scientific and statistical information and communicate it effectively in a written format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.1.1 Complete a literature review suitable for an academic audience</li> <li>• 1.1.2 Prepare a summary of research evidence that meets the needs of rural and remote GPs</li> <li>• 1.1.3 Compose an academic paper to be considered for publication, following any publication requirements</li> </ul>
1.2 Synthesise scientific and statistical information and communicate it effectively in a verbal format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.2.1 Describe the research evidence in an area to a clinical peer</li> <li>• 1.2.2 Present your research to an academic audience</li> </ul>
1.3 Effectively communicate research evidence to patients and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.3.1 Compose information that clearly explains research evidence to patients and communities, and its relevance to their needs</li> </ul>
1.4 Demonstrate effective communication in education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.4.1 Employ a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to manage learning environments and facilitate learning</li> <li>• 1.4.2 Prepare clear and effective written educational materials suitable for the audience</li> </ul>
1.5 Provide effective feedback and coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.5.1 Demonstrate effective feedback (verbal and written) that allows the learner to understand performance and opportunities for improvement</li> <li>• 1.5.2 Demonstrate coaching to assist learners</li> </ul>

## 2. Applied professional knowledge and skills

Learning outcomes ARST	Performance criteria
2.1 Demonstrate a sound understanding of research methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.1.1 Discuss research methodologies and their strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• 2.1.2 Identify appropriate research methods to answer a research question</li> </ul>
2.2 Evaluate research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.2.1 Identify relevant quality statements for the development, conduct, and publication of research</li> <li>• 2.2.2 Appraise research</li> </ul>
2.3 Engage in the process to develop a research project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.3.1 Conduct a literature review</li> <li>• 2.3.2 Identify relevant answerable research questions</li> <li>• 2.3.3 Construct a research project to answer the question</li> <li>• 2.3.4 Formulate the proposal and budget</li> <li>• 2.3.5 Justify the research project and its relevance to rural and remote community health</li> </ul>
2.4 Design effective education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.4.1 Develop a plan for an education session or program</li> <li>• 2.4.2 Construct learning outcomes</li> <li>• 2.4.3 Use a range of teaching and learning methods</li> <li>• 2.4.4 Describe how you will ascertain learners' comprehension</li> </ul>

Learning outcomes ARST	Performance criteria
2.5 Construct assessments that align with learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.5.1 Describe different types of assessments, their purposes, strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• 2.5.2 Employ assessments that align to learning outcomes</li> </ul>
2.6 Evaluate the performance of learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.6.1 Judge the performance of learners</li> <li>• 2.6.2 Justify the assessment outcome</li> </ul>

### 3. Population health and the context of general practice

Learning outcomes ARST	Performance criteria
3.1 Engage with learners to promote improving rural and remote community health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.1.1 Identify learners who are at risk of being left behind and utilise strategies to support them</li> <li>• 3.1.2 Be a positive role model who helps inspire interest in working in rural and remote communities</li> </ul>
3.2 Identify where research can help rural and remote community health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.2.1 Identify research priorities to improve community health</li> <li>• 3.2.2 Support the contextualisation of research evidence to rural and remote communities and practice</li> </ul>

### 4. Professional and ethical role

Learning outcomes ARST	Performance criteria
4.1 Advocate for research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.1.1 Advocate for ethical research and structures that support it occurring in rural and remote communities</li> </ul>
4.2 Apply high standards of ethical practice and behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.2.1 Manage boundaries with learners and those involved in research</li> <li>• 4.2.2 Manage different roles and responsibilities in education and research</li> </ul>
4.3 Establish positive relationships with colleagues and others engaged in research and teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.3.1 Support and mentor peers</li> <li>• 4.3.2 Establish and maintain positive relationships with team members and colleagues</li> <li>• 4.3.3 Establish and maintain positive relationships with recipients of education</li> <li>• 4.3.4 Establish and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders (including participants) in research</li> </ul>
4.4 Practise personal and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.4.1 Monitor own health and well-being</li> <li>• 4.4.2 Manage personal and professional time effectively</li> <li>• 4.4.3 Identify and address professional development needs and opportunities</li> <li>• 4.4.4 Participate in professional development activities</li> <li>• 4.4.5 Practise critical self-reflection</li> </ul>

## 5. Organisational and legal dimensions

Learning outcomes ARST	Performance criteria
5.1 Work effectively in a research situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5.1.1 Develop research proposals</li><li>• 5.1.2 Demonstrate understanding of and ability to apply for ethics approvals</li><li>• 5.1.3 Participate in applications for funding</li><li>• 5.1.4 Identify and utilise data and systems that may already exist for more efficient research</li></ul>
5.2 Work effectively as part of an education team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5.2.1 Ensure the smooth functioning of an educational program by participation in organisational elements</li><li>• 5.2.2 Identify the elements of the educational program and how they contribute to the required end point</li></ul>
5.3 Manage the legal aspects of academic work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5.3.1 Identify relevant legal issues and requirements in your academic work</li><li>• 5.3.2 Identify how intellectual property and copyright laws may impact your teaching, research, and information dissemination.</li></ul>

## Assessment

Satisfactory completion of the ARST in Academic Medicine will be assessed by a combination of approaches during the candidate's 12-month FTE placement. These will include:

- supervisor reports
- logbook / reflective journal
- research project
- teaching / education portfolio.

### Supervisor reports

The candidate and their supervisor will meet half-way through the training (eg at six months for full-time training) and at the end of the training period (eg at 12 months for full-time training) to complete a supervisor report.

These reports should provide a global assessment of performance against the outcomes outlined in this curriculum. The candidate and supervisor will meet to discuss the candidate's performance, identify areas for further learning and development, and ensure that the candidate is progressing adequately in their training.

Progression, or lack thereof, should be documented and discussed, with the intent of formulating a plan to remedy any gaps identified – either through additional learning, or experiences, or a combination of both.

### Logbook / reflective journal

Candidates may choose to maintain a logbook / reflective journal throughout their training. This involves self-reflecting on learning needs and competence across specific curriculum outcomes. The range of skills that are logged, and any proposed professional development in this area, should take into consideration the community requirements.

The reflective journal component should capture personal reflections of working within academia. This can be documented in any format, such as copies of news articles from local events, and journal entries of lessons learnt from interactions with patients, community groups, local governments, and health departments.

The logbook will need to be regularly reviewed with the supervisor and/or mentor, and with the medical educator at each medical educator meeting.

## Research project

Candidates will be required to provide evidence of their research project's progress towards completion. If the scope of the project has evolved since making the application, this should be explained. The research supervisor should provide documentation to support this change and that it was necessary due to factors outside the candidate's control.

The types of evidence provided may vary and preferably would include things already developed as part of the research. This could include papers submitted or published, reports for funding or other relevant organisations, abstracts submitted, or presentations on the completed research at conferences or seminars.

The research supervisor is also asked to confirm the project has been completed.

## Teaching / education portfolio

Candidates are expected to develop a teaching portfolio over the course of their post, demonstrating their range of experience and skills across multiple formats. It may also include evidence relating to performance of education, assessment activities, and professional development.

## List of acronyms and initialisms

**ARST** - Additional Rural Skills Training

**FRACGP** - Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

**FRACGP-RG** - RACGP Rural Generalist Fellowship

**FSP** - Fellowship Support Program

**FTE** - full-time equivalent

**GP** - general practitioner

**RACGP** - Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

**RG** - Rural Generalist

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