

PhD top-up scholarships 2025 Information for Applicants

This document contains important information for applicants for RACGP Foundation PhD top-up scholarships. Applicants should read all the information included in this document, in conjunction with the application form.

Introduction

The RACGP Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the RACGP, delivering on the RACGP's charitable purpose of supporting general practice research and education. In collaboration with university departments/disciplines of general practice, the RACGP Foundation is pleased to offer PhD top-up scholarships (the 'scholarships') to support outstanding general practitioners and general practitioners in training wishing to pursue rigorous research relevant to general practice. Two top-up scholarships are available in 2025.

The scholarships will provide \$25,000 per annum (FTE), with an additional \$5,000 annual bursary (FTE) for use towards professional development and research translation activities. Applicants will be expected to hold a base PhD scholarship, or similar salary support, at an Australian university.

The PhD can be completed full time or part time, according to university protocols. Funding will be for a maximum of 3.5 years full time, or pro-rata for a maximum of seven years part time.

In addition to the financial award, there will be other support for scholarship recipients such as networking opportunities and a peer cohort experience. Where possible, relevant industry placements will be arranged within the RACGP.

The PhD subject matter should be directly relevant to general practice and RACGP priorities and strategic objectives.

Program objectives

The objectives of the program are to:

- encourage GPs and GPs in training to undertake higher degree research.
- reduce some of the financial barriers to undertaking a PhD.
- build capacity in general practice research in Australia.
- grow the pipeline of GP researchers in Australia, with particular emphasis on ensuring the viability of the next generation of GP researchers, and ultimately the broader GP workforce.
- support general practitioners with the potential to become future leaders in Australian general practice research.
- support research excellence among GPs and GPs in training.
- ensure future contributions to the profession through participation in RACGP committees, guideline development, policy and advocacy.
- build the general practice evidence base to contribute to the sustainability of the profession.

Application Timeline

Applications open 2 September 2024

Applications close 1 November 2024, 5.00pm (AEDT)

Outcomes notified by 20 December 2024

Funding agreements executed January 2025 Commencement by 31 March 2025

Shortlisted applicants may be invited to attend an interview as part of the selection process.

Eligibility criteria



All criteria must be met for applications to be eligible.

Applicants

- 1. The applicant must be:
 - A general practitioner who has attained FRACGP or FACRRM; or
 - A GP in training, or accepted into the GP training program commencing in 2025.
- 2. The applicant must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident.
- 3. The applicant must have applied for or received a primary scholarship or other salary support from their university.
- 4. The applicant must undertake a research project that is directly relevant to general practice and RACGP priorities and <u>strategic objectives</u>. The primary context of the research must be based in or on general practice. Medical education research must be situated in general practice.
- Applicants are eligible to apply if they are commencing the first year of a PhD by 31 March 2025, or if they commenced their first year of a PhD in 2024. The duration of the top-up scholarship will be reduced by the amount of time already undertaken towards the PhD prior to commencement of the top-up.
- 5. Applicants must undertake the PhD at an Australian university.

Supervision

An academic general practitioner at an Australian university must be actively involved in supervision of the PhD candidate.

Host university

- The host university is the enrolling university at which the PhD candidate will undertake the research project, and must hold an employment contract and/or affiliation agreement with the academic supervisor.
- An authorised representative of the host university will be required to certify that the organisation complies with the
 requirements of the scholarship and will provide appropriate infrastructure support for the applicant, and that the
 university is willing to enter into an agreement with the RACGP under the terms and conditions of the template
 contract provided.

Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria. The assessment rubric is available at Appendix 1.

Selecti	Weighting	
Suitability of the applicant: O Academic record O Relevant research experience		40%
0	Articulated capacity and motivation to contribute to academic general practice post completion of PhD Demonstrated intent to significantly contribute to future general practice research	
Resear	Ch project Quality and feasibility of the proposed research Demonstrated relevance of the research to general practice and at least one RACGP priority area Potential for the project to have outcomes that are translatable into general practice (policy and/or practice) and provide benefit to general practice and the health of its patients	30%
Academ	nic supervisor(s) Contribution of an academic GP to the project supervision Suitability of the intended supervisors Suitability of academic institution	30%



Terms and conditions

Applicants should read the <u>Grant Application Terms and Conditions</u>, included at the end of this document. In submitting an application, applicants agree to these Terms. Successful grant recipient's universities will be required to enter into a formal grant agreement on RACGP standard terms.

Funding

The scholarships will provide \$25,000 per annum (pro-rated for part-time candidates) as stipend support, paid to candidates through their university in accordance with the university's payroll schedule and policies. Applicants are expected to hold a base PhD scholarship, or similar salary support, at an Australian university.

Additionally, a \$5,000 annual bursary (pro-rated for part-time candidates) will be provided for professional development and research translation activities. The bursary will be disbursed by the RACGP directly to candidates following the submission and approval of annual progress reports.

Applicants are advised to obtain independent tax advice regarding the scholarships and bursaries. The RACGP will not provide compensation for or withhold any taxation components.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to have already received a primary scholarship?

Receipt of this scholarship will be contingent upon the applicant receiving a primary scholarship or other salary support from their university. If the outcome of a primary scholarship application is not known at the time of application or awarding, the top-up scholarship may be awarded subject to successful outcome of the primary scholarship application. Evidence that the applicant has applied for or secured additional funding must be provided in the statement from the primary supervisor.

What is meant by "other salary support"?

The top-up scholarships are not intended to be the only source of income for the PhD candidate. Other salary support means any contribution towards your salary by the university. For example, a department may agree to support a lecturer to use the research component of their academic role for their PhD part-time. A letter of support from the Department outlining how they intend to support the applicant must be provided in the statement from the primary supervisor.

I already have a top-up scholarship. Can I still apply?

Yes. We recognise that undertaking a PhD requires a significant reduction in salary and thus will allow more than one top-up to be held.

I have already started my PhD. Can I still apply? Will this affect the amount awarded?

If you have commenced your PhD during 2024 you may apply. The duration of a full-time or part-time top-up scholarship will be reduced by the amount of time already undertaken towards PhD.

When do I need to start my PhD?

Enrolment must commence no later than 31 March 2025. Applicants must be enrolled in a PhD prior to commencement of payments.

What if I do not have a supervisor who is a GP?

It is an essential requirement that at least one supervisor is a GP, and that they play an active role in supervising your project. This supports our objective to build capacity in general practice research by building supervisory capacity. In addition, issues relevant to general practice cannot be researched without a GP investigator who plays an active role in the project. Applications that do not meet this requirement will not be considered. The GP supervisor does not have to be the primary supervisor, however details of how the GP supervisor will be involved must be provided.

Does my GP supervisor have to be based in a department of general practice?

The GP supervisor does not have to be based in a department of general practice. They may, for example, be based in an institute or other department. They must, however be an academic GP with suitable university affiliation.

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What are the RACGP priority areas that the project must align with?

The research project must align to at least one RACGP priority area. The priorities are set out in the RACGP <u>2022-2025</u> <u>Operating Plan</u>.

Will a project in medical education research be considered?

The primary context of the research must be based in or on general practice. Medical education research that is situated in general practice is acceptable.

Do I need to have a track record in research?

No. While relevant research experience is part of the selection criteria, we understand that not everyone has had the opportunity to undertake research. If you have any relevant medals, prizes, awards, or publications relevant to general practice settings, please include them in your CV. However, these will be considered relative to opportunity and in the context of other factors such as your motivation to contribute to academic general practice post PhD, and intent to significantly contribute to future general practice research.

I am a GP registrar. Is there anything additional that I should consider?

If you are currently in, or about to enter, the training program, we recommend that you discuss your PhD plans with your Regional Director of Training. The RACGP Policy Position Statement on Higher Degree Research during General Practice Training outlines how the RACGP can support registrars to complete a PhD alongside general practice training and the principles that will be enforced.

Application Procedure

Before you start

Prior to commencing their application, applicants should read the award details, eligibility, selection criteria and terms of grants and awards as outlined in this handbook.

Applications must be submitted using the online application form. The application forms are available on the RACGP website at https://racgpfoundation.smartygrants.com.au/phd25.

Navigating the online application form

On every screen (page of the form) you will find a Form Navigation contents box, this links directly to every page of the application. Click the link to jump directly to the page you want. You can also click 'next page' or 'previous page' on the top or bottom of each page to move forward or backward through the application.

Saving your draft application

If you wish to leave a partially completed application, press 'save' and log out. When you log back in and click on the 'My Submissions' link at the top of the screen, you will find a list of any applications you have started or submitted. You can reopen your draft application and start where you left off. You can also download any application, whether draft or completed, as a PDF. Click on the 'Download' button located at the bottom of the last page of the application form.

Submitting your application

You will find a **Review and Submit** button at the bottom of the Navigation Panel. You need to review your application before you can submit it. Once you have reviewed your application you can submit it by clicking on 'Submit' at the top of the screen or on the navigation panel. You will not be able to submit your application until all the compulsory questions are completed. Once you have submitted your application, no further editing or uploading of support materials is possible. When you submit your application, you will receive an automated confirmation email with a copy of your submitted application attached. This will be sent to the email you used to register.

If you do not receive a confirmation of submission email, then you should presume that your submission has NOT been submitted.

Attachments and support documents

You will need to upload/submit attachments to support your application. This is very simple but requires you to have the documents saved on your computer, or on a storage device. You need to allow enough time for each file to upload



before trying to attach another file. Files can be up to 25MB each; however, we do recommend trying to keep files to a maximum of 5MB – the larger the file, the longer the upload time.

Technical assistance

If you need more help using the form, download the Help Guide for Applicants or check the Applicant Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's). Links to these are also provided on the online form.

Submission of applications

Prior to submitting the application, ensure all questions have been answered.

Applications close on Friday 1 November 2024 at 5.00 pm Australian Eastern Daylight Saving Time (AEDT). Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.

Assessment process

Eligibility Check

RACGP staff check all applications on receipt to ensure compliance with eligibility criteria and conditions of award. Applicants may be contacted to confirm details or provide required documentation, however it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all eligibility criteria and conditions are met, and that any supporting documentation is included prior to submitting an application. The RACGP reserves the right to exclude from contention any application that is incomplete or does not meet the eligibility criteria.

Review by the National Research Awards Committee (NRAC)

NRAC members, or a delegated panel, will review the applications against the selection criteria, as specified for each grant. Please note that all decisions are final, and there is no mechanism for appeal.

Management of Conflicts of Interest

As the general practice research community is relatively small, there is a possibility of conflicts of interest arising during the review process. The NRAC has an established process for declaring and managing conflicts of interest. All NRAC members and partner reviewers must declare their conflicts of interest prior to accessing confidential information, including grant applications in full. Conflicted NRAC members will not participate in a discussion in which there is a real or perceived conflict of interest, and they are required to excuse themselves from that aspect of a meeting and any relevant application review(s). No reviewer will be assigned an application on which they have a conflict of interest.

Notification of outcome of applications

Applicants will be notified by email of the outcome of their applications by 20 December 2024. An official announcement will be made on the RACGP website following notification.

Feedback

Applicants may receive brief feedback on their application. Please note that it is not possible to provide detailed feedback. No correspondence will be entered into regarding any feedback provided.

Successful applicants

Letter of offer

Successful applicants will receive a letter of offer. Awarding of the grant will be subject to the RACGP entering into a formal agreement with the administering organisation.

Grant Agreement

The successful grant recipient's administering organisation will be required to enter into a formal grant agreement on standard RACGP terms. The agreement will include reporting requirements and dates, payment schedule and required wording for acknowledgement of funding.

Payment of Award

The RACGP will make payments to the recipient's administering organisation on an annual basis. The administering organisation is to pay the full scholarship value directly to the recipient. Payments will be made within the terms and

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conditions specified in the agreement. The university will be responsible for the proper administration and expenditure of the funds and for ensuring that all reports required by the RACGP are provided on time.

The PhD Top-up scholarship will be awarded for one year in the first instance and will be renewed annually (for a maximum of 3.5 full-time equivalent years) subject to the recipient performing satisfactorily in their research, remaining enrolled in the PhD degree, and meeting reporting requirements. In addition, the university, supervisors and scholarship recipient must remain compliant with all eligibility criteria.

The professional development and research translation bursary will be held and managed by the RACGP and disbursed directly to candidates each year following submission and approval of annual progress reports.

Recipients are advised to refer to a financial or taxation advisor to ascertain the taxability of the scholarship and bursary.

Reporting

Grant recipients are required to provide reports on their work to the RACGP Foundation. The reporting requirements and due dates are set out in the *Grant Application Terms and Conditions*, and will also be confirmed in the Grant Agreement.

Award presentation

Grants and awards may be presented at an event hosted by the RACGP faculty where the grant/award winner resides, such as the annual RACGP Fellowship and Awards Ceremony.

Acknowledgement of support

Grant recipients must acknowledge the support of the RACGP Foundation in all publications, presentations, summary findings, websites, newsletters and media announcements relating to the research. The required wording, as provided in the Grant Agreement, must be used. RACGP Foundation logos must be utilised where appropriate and will be provided upon request.

Publicity

Grant recipients will be expected to assist the RACGP Foundation, if required, by being featured in media articles/releases and public announcements related to a grant or award from the Foundation. The RACGP Foundation will work with recipients on media releases at the time of final report or publication, and when findings are presented at the RACGP Annual Conference.

Program Evaluation

The scholarships will be evaluated against the Program's purpose and objectives. The RACGP will perform this evaluation in collaboration with the host university, supervisors, and the PhD candidate. This may include face-to-face meetings for which all parties will be required to make themselves available. Feedback received will be used to inform future programs.

Further information

Please contact foundation@racgp.org.au if you have any queries.



GRANT APPLICATION TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 1. These terms apply to all RACGP or RACGP Foundation grant applications unless otherwise indicated. By submitting an application, Applicants agree to these Terms.
- 2. In these Terms, the following words have these meanings:
 - "Applicant" means the parties listed on an application for a Grant.
 - "Grant Agreement" means the formal grant agreement signed by the RACGP and the Grant Recipient. b)
 - "Grant" means any grant, scholarship, award or other form of funding provided by the RACGP. c)
 - d) "Grant Recipient" means the organisation that will receive the funds and enter into a Grant Agreement with
 - e) "NRAC" means the RACGP's National Research Awards Committee.
 - "Offer Date" means the date of the letter which notifies the Grant Recipient of the successful outcome of f) their application.
 - "RACGP", "us" or "our" is a reference to The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Ltd. g)
 - "Terms" means these Grant Application Terms & Conditions. h)
 - "Uncommitted Funds" means any grant funds awarded that have not been legally committed for spending and that are not payable by the Grant Recipient to the RACGP as a current liability.
 - "you", "your", "they" or "their" is a reference to the Applicant.
- 3. The RACGP is committed to protecting your privacy. By applying for a Grant, Applicants consent to RACGP's collection of the information provided by them in their application(s) for the purpose of assessing their application and, if successful, publicising their name(s), institution and title of their research project. You also consent to the sharing of your information with our funding partners, if necessary, for the purposes of assessing your application. If you do not complete the application in full, then your application for a grant will be excluded from assessment. You may access the information RACGP collects from you, or you may make a complaint about breaches of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), by contacting the Privacy Officer (privacy@racqp.org.au). Further information about our collection, use, storage and disclosure of your personal information is available on our privacy policy which can be found at www.racgp.org.au/privacy-policy If you no longer consent to the use of your personal information, please contact us on 1800 198 586 or by email at privacy@racgp.org.au
- 4. These Terms are governed and construed by the laws of the State of Victoria, Australia.
- There will be no legally binding agreement between the RACGP and any Applicant in relation to a Grant unless 5. and until a formal grant agreement is signed by the RACGP and the Grant Recipient.
- 6. The Grant process is overseen by NRAC on behalf of the RACGP.
- The NRAC is responsible for the independent, objective evaluation and review of Grant applications. The NRAC 7. may establish subcommittees to support its processes.
- 8. All decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into. Decisions made in relation to grants are not subject to reconsideration, review or appeal.
- 9. The NRAC may ask Applicants to clarify in writing information contained in their application in order for the NRAC to assess their application.
- 10. The NRAC may remove an application from consideration during the selection process if it is considered uncompetitive, incomplete, incorrect or if the application does not meet the eligibility criteria.
- 11. Unsuccessful Grant Applicants will be advised in writing; however detailed feedback will not be provided.
- The NRAC in its sole discretion may decide not to award any Grants if the applications received are assessed as 12. not meeting the required standard.
- 13. Successful Grant Applicants may be required to attend an event hosted by the relevant RACGP state faculty to receive their award.
- 14. Grant Recipients must be incorporated bodies in Australia that have an ABN and ACN and not individuals, unless the Grant letter of offer specifies that individual support will be provided.
- 15. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by RACGP, Grant Recipients will be required to provide reports as detailed in the helow table by the stinulated due date

the below table by the supulated due date.					
Annual report	12 months from the commencement of the PhD research project, and every 12 months thereafter.				
Final report and financial acquittal	Within three months of completion of the PhD				
Outcomes reports	12 months and 5 years after completion of the PhD				

Appendix 1: Assessment rubric

Adapted from NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarship 2023 Category Descriptors

Score	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3
	Suitability of the Applicant (40%)	Research Project (30%)	Academic Supervision (30%)
7 Exemplary An application which clearly and strongly supports the aims of the scheme and meets all the assessment criteria with no weaknesses.	Exemplary suitability signified by (for example): academic record relevant research experience and/or training articulated capacity and motivation to contribute to academic general practice post PhD demonstrated intent to significantly contribute to future general practice research medals, prizes and awards relevant to the general practice setting publications and presentations, including posters and seminars, relative to opportunity	The Research Project: is extremely high quality is highly feasible demonstrates extremely high relevance to general practice demonstrates extremely high relevance to at least one RACGP priority area has extremely high potential to have outcomes that are translatable into general practice (policy and/or practice) and provide benefit to general practice and the health of its patients	 The Supervisor(s) and academic institution: include an academic general practitioner who is actively involved in supervision of the applicant are extremely well matched to the applicant's proposed project provide exemplary mentoring and training arrangements include extremely high quality research support systems for the applicant offer exceptional collaborative opportunities for the applicant offer exemplary opportunity to extend the applicant's knowledge and skills.
6 Outstanding An application which clearly and strongly supports the aims of the scheme and meets all the assessment criteria with negligible weaknesses.	Outstanding suitability signified by (for example): academic record relevant research experience and/or training articulated capacity and motivation to contribute to academic general practice post PhD demonstrated intent to significantly contribute to future general practice research medals, prizes and awards relevant to the general practice setting publications and presentations, including posters and seminars, relative to opportunity	The Research Project: is very high quality is highly feasible demonstrates very high relevance to general practice demonstrates very high relevance to at least one RACGP priority area has very high potential to have outcomes that are translatable into general practice (policy and/or practice) and provide benefit to general practice and the health of its patients	The Supervisor(s) and academic institution: include an academic general practitioner who is actively involved in supervision of the applicant are very well matched to the applicant's proposed project provide outstanding mentoring and training arrangements include very high quality research support systems for the applicant offer outstanding collaborative opportunities for the applicant offer outstanding opportunity to extend the applicant's knowledge and skills.
5 Excellent An application which supports the aims of the scheme and meets the assessment criteria with only some minor weaknesses.	Excellent suitability signified by (for example): academic record relevant research experience and/or training articulated capacity and motivation to contribute to academic general practice post PhD demonstrated intent to significantly contribute to future general practice research medals, prizes and awards relevant to the general practice setting publications and presentations, including posters and seminars, relative to opportunity	The Research Project: is high quality is very feasible demonstrates high relevance to general practice demonstrates high relevance to at least one RACGP priority area has high potential to have outcomes that are translatable into general practice (policy and/or practice) and provide benefit to general practice and the health of its patients	The Supervisor(s) and academic institution: include an academic general practitioner who is actively involved in supervision of the applicant are well matched to the applicant's proposed project provide excellent mentoring and training arrangements include high quality research support systems for the applicant offer excellent collaborative opportunities for the applicant offer excellent opportunity to extend the applicant's knowledge and skills

4 Very good An application which supports the aims of the scheme and meets the assessment criteria, but with numerous minor weaknesses.	Very Good suitability signified by (for example): academic record relevant research experience and/or training articulated capacity and motivation to contribute to academic general practice post PhD demonstrated intent to significantly contribute to future general practice research medals, prizes and awards relevant to the general practice setting publications and presentations, including posters and seminars, relative to opportunity	The Research Project: is very good quality is feasible demonstrates very good relevance to general practice demonstrates very good relevance to at least one RACGP priority area has very good potential to have outcomes that are translatable into general practice (policy and/or practice) and provide benefit to general practice and the health of its patients	The Supervisor(s) and academic institution: include an academic general practitioner who is actively involved in supervision of the applicant are suited to the applicant's proposed project provide very good quality mentoring and training arrangements include very good quality research support systems for the applicant offer very good collaborative opportunities for the applicant offer very good opportunity to extend the applicant's knowledge and skills
3 Good An application which supports the aims of the scheme and meets the assessment criteria, but with at least one moderate weakness.	Good suitability signified by (for example): academic record relevant research experience and/or training articulated capacity and motivation to contribute to academic general practice post PhD demonstrated intent to significantly contribute to future general practice research medals, prizes and awards relevant to the general practice setting publications and presentations, including posters and seminars, relative to opportunity	The Research Project: is of adequate quality is likely to be feasible demonstrates good relevance to general practice demonstrates good relevance to at least one RACGP priority area has good potential to have outcomes that are translatable into general practice (policy and/or practice) and provide benefit to general practice and the health of its patients	The Supervisor(s) and academic institution: include an academic general practitioner who is actively involved in supervision of the applicant are adequate to the applicant's proposed project provide good quality mentoring and training arrangements include good quality research support systems for the applicant offer good collaborative opportunities for the applicant offer good opportunity to extend the applicant's knowledge and skills
2 Satisfactory An application which partly meets the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria with noticeable deficiencies or shortcomings evident by some moderate weaknesses.	Sound suitability signified by (for example): academic record relevant research experience and/or training articulated capacity and motivation to contribute to academic general practice post PhD demonstrated intent to significantly contribute to future general practice research medals, prizes and awards relevant to the general practice setting publications and presentations, including posters and seminars, relative to opportunity	The Research Project: raises some concerns with respect to quality raises some concerns with respect to feasibility demonstrates good relevance to general practice demonstrates some relevance to at least one RACGP priority area has some potential to have outcomes that are translatable into general practice (policy and/or practice) and provide benefit to general practice and the health of its patients	The Supervisor(s) and academic institution: include an academic general practitioner who is actively involved in supervision of the applicant are somewhat suited to the applicant's proposed project provide satisfactory mentoring and training arrangements include satisfactory research support systems for the applicant offer satisfactory collaborative opportunities for the applicant offer satisfactory opportunity to extend the applicant's knowledge and skills
1 Weak An application which marginally meets the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria. Shortcomings or deficiencies against most criteria or aims predominate	Limited suitability signified by (for example): academic record relevant research experience and/or training articulated capacity and motivation to contribute to academic general practice post PhD demonstrated intent to significantly contribute to future general practice research medals, prizes and awards relevant to the general practice setting publications and presentations, including posters and seminars, relative to opportunity	The Research Project: raises major concerns with respect to quality raises major concerns with respect to feasibility demonstrates limited relevance to general practice demonstrates limited relevance to at least one RACGP priority area has limited potential to have outcomes that are translatable into general practice (policy and/or practice) and provide benefit to general practice and the health of its patients	The Supervisor(s) and academic institution: include an academic general practitioner who is actively involved in supervision of the applicant are not suited to the applicant's proposed project provide limited mentoring and training arrangements include limited research support systems for the applicant offer limited collaborative opportunities for the applicant offer limited opportunity to extend the applicant's knowledge and skills