



RACGP

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

*Representatives'
handbook*

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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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1. Introduction

Representatives of The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) play a critical role in shaping how healthcare in Australia is planned, funded and delivered.

As an RACGP representative, you are making an important contribution to your college, the profession and to the broader health sector.

This handbook provides information on the role and responsibilities of being an RACGP representative.

2. Appointment process

The RACGP Expert Committee – Quality Care oversees the RACGP's representatives' program and the majority of representative appointments.

Requests for representation come from various organisations, including from federal government committees. The RACGP's Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator will provide you with information regarding the committee to which you have been appointed. This includes tenure and background information.

The requesting organisation will then contact you directly to send meeting papers and arrange travel and sitting fees, as necessary.

The RACGP always advises requesting organisations that, because our representatives are not salaried members of staff and time away from practice comes at a personal financial cost, sitting fees are required and should be paid directly to each representative.

For appointments where the RACGP has agreed to cover sitting fees, the Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator will send a contract or Statement of Works (SoW) for your signature.

3. Support

The RACGP's Representative and Endorsements Coordinator is your first point of contact for any information you require, and as needed will direct you to other individuals within the RACGP for advice.

We also have a highly experienced representative available as a mentor.

A regular representatives' newsletter will keep you informed about recent appointments and developments within the RACGP.

You can contact the Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator at repsandendorsements@racgp.org.au or on 03 8699 0334.

4. *Role and expectations*

As a representative of the RACGP, you will:

- present the views of the RACGP and be familiar with key RACGP policies and publications (refer to [Section 7](#))
- contribute actively to discussions and decision-making processes
- be aware of the RACGP endorsement process (refer to [Section 6](#))
- comply with the RACGP [Member Code of Conduct](#)
- always consult with the RACGP before making any commitments on the RACGP's behalf
- provide feedback to the RACGP Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator after each meeting.

5. *Meeting preparation and participation*

It is important to be well prepared for meetings:

- Ensure you understand the aim and scope of the committee, including method of operation.
- Familiarise yourself with relevant RACGP submissions, policies and guidelines.
- Seek clarification from the RACGP on any matters or potential issues you are unsure about.
- Clarify any confidentiality requirements before you commence your appointment.
- If you believe you have a conflict of interest, or if one arises, advise the RACGP and the committee.
- If you cannot attend a meeting, contact the Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator to discuss alternative arrangements.
- Clarify positions and actions to be taken.
- Ensure you are given the necessary time to consult with the RACGP as required.

Carefully consider and be attentive to how the work of your committee will affect the:

- scope of general practice
- funding of general practice
- everyday practise of general practitioners (GPs) and their teams.

Tips

- In a manner that aids understanding and increases likelihood of success, explain the context of general practice as it relates to the work of the committee
- Use personal examples to bring your arguments to life
- Be prepared to calmly correct criticisms of the profession, which are often anecdotal and not evidence-based
- Know your own persuasion style and pay attention to group dynamics. See how others work and how you can add, personally and professionally, to the group dynamic
- Consider asking for any important points you have made to be minuted, and ensure this has been done
- Don't fall into the trap of voicing your personal opinion when this may be at odds with the position of the RACGP

6. RACGP endorsement/ approval process

Representatives are often asked to facilitate RACGP endorsement of committee outputs, such as clinical resources.

Having an RACGP representative involved in the development of a resource does not guarantee a resource will receive RACGP endorsement or approval.

There is a formal process for approving external clinical resources. The RACGP evaluates clinical resources against its assessment criteria ([RACGP guideline assessment tool](#)) to ensure the resource is relevant to general practice and of high quality. To cover the costs of this process, the RACGP usually charges the organisation a fee.

If this process reveals differences between the RACGP position and the requesting organisation's resource, collaboration will ensure an appropriate outcome is achieved. All requests for RACGP endorsement/approval must be sent to the RACGP Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator at repsandendorsements@racgp.org.au

There are three levels of RACGP approval:

Endorsement of guidelines



The RACGP only endorses clinical guidelines that are produced to National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) standards.

Approval as an accepted clinical resource



The RACGP provides approval as an accepted clinical resource when a resource is considered a useful contribution to general practice but it is not produced to NHMRC guideline standards.

Supported position



A document may be approved as an RACGP-supported position statement if the RACGP considers the resource:

- is a consensus and/or position statement
- does not contradict the RACGP's position in an existing resource, and
- has a favourable assessment using an RACGP appraisal instrument.

More information is available on the [RACGP website](#).

7. *Key RACGP policies and resources*

It is important that you are familiar with key RACGP policies and guidelines. They represent the RACGP's position in these areas. They are also an excellent source of information and demonstrate the breadth of the RACGP's interests and expertise.

Vision for general practice and a sustainable healthcare system

The RACGP [Vision for general practice and a sustainable healthcare system](#) articulates how a well-supported general practice team can deliver sustainable, equitable, high-value healthcare, benefiting patients, providers and funders. It is centred on evidence- and experience-based recommendations on how the entire healthcare system can be improved.

Position statements

RACGP [position statements](#) provide advice on the RACGP's position on issues relevant to general practice.

RACGP Standards

The RACGP [Standards for general practices \(5th edition\)](#) are a framework for quality improvement and risk management in general practice. Accreditation against the Standards is voluntary; however, more than 6500 practices in Australia are currently accredited.

Other [RACGP healthcare standards and resources](#) include:

- *Standards for after-hours and medical deputising services*
- *Standards for point-of-care testing*
- *Standards for Patient-Centred Medical Homes*
- *Infection prevention and control standards*
- *Standards for Garrison Health Facilities in the Australian Defence Force*
- *Standards for health services in Australian prisons*
- *Standards for health services in Australian immigration detention centres*

eHealth resources

The RACGP produces a range of [eHealth resources](#), including on:

- information security in general practice
- clinical software
- secure electronic communication
- [telehealth services](#)
- [My Health Record](#)
- mobile devices and health apps.

Practice tools

A range of practice management tools are located on the [RACGP website](#). These include the [General Practice Management Toolkit](#), which provides information and advice for practice owners and managers on practice ownership and management, from opening a practice, managing workforce and finances and implementing quality initiatives, through to selling or closing a practice.

Clinical guidelines

The RACGP has developed a [wide range of guidelines](#). Key guidelines include:

- [Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice \(Red Book\)](#)
- [National guide to a preventive health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#)
- [Management of type 2 diabetes: A handbook for general practice](#)

RACGP Curriculum

The [RACGP Curriculum for Australian General Practice 2016](#) articulates outcomes and criteria that address the unique nature of Australian general practice. The Curriculum consists of the core skills of general practice and the variety of contexts in which GPs practice.

8. Media enquiries

As an RACGP representative, you may receive calls directly from media outlets asking for comment on behalf of the RACGP. Before commenting, you should first direct journalists to the RACGP Content & Communications team. All media enquiries can be sent directly to media@racgp.org.au or 03 8699 0992.

9. Thank you

We hope that you find being an RACGP representative a rewarding and positive experience. Your contribution is greatly valued and appreciated.



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