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1. Introduction

1.1 The Government’s health workforce agenda is seeking to address structural and financial barriers that impinge on the capacity of individual health professionals to increase their skills, through training, to enhance the provision of services required by their communities.

1.2 The initiative to support General Practitioners (GPs), in rural and remote areas, to complete the procedural training program in anaesthetics is intended to help overcome workforce shortages and increase the availability of anaesthetics services in those areas.

1.3 These Guidelines are intended to provide an overview of the program, the application process and funding requirements (which may vary). The provision of funding to successful applicants will be regulated by a separate funding agreement.

2. Background

2.1 The Maternity Services Review report *Improving Maternity Services in Australia*, delivered in February 2009, identified the need to improve access to maternity services for women in rural and remote locations. There was little incentive for rural GPs to undertake additional training to broaden their skills base so that they can provide more comprehensive services to their communities.

2.2 In response, the Government announced in the 2009-10 Budget, a package of measures including a support program for GPs to complete the procedural training program in obstetrics and anaesthetics.

2.3 The initiative targets existing GPs in rural and remote areas and, accordingly, limits support to GPs practising in RA 2-5 locations.

3. Aim

3.1 The aim of the Program is to improve access to obstetric and anaesthetics services for women living in rural and remote communities by supporting GPs to attain procedural skills in obstetrics or anaesthetics.

4. Application Process

4.1 A total of 91 GPs will receive support during the six year project:

- 16 offers of support were made in round 1 (2011 training year)
- 15 offers of support were made in round 2 (2012 training year)
- 15 offers of support were made in round 3 (2013 training year)
- 15 offers of support will be made in round 4 (2014 training year)
- 15 offers of support will be made in round 5 (2015 training year)
- 15 offers of support will be made in round 6 (2016 training year)
- 15 offers of support will be made in round 7 (2017 training year)
4.2 Applications will be sought through a competitive selection process. The application period will be for at least 4 weeks.

4.3 An application form will be available on both the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and RANZCOG websites for those GPs wishing to apply for support. The application form will seek information on a range of matters, such as:

- GP Fellowship status;
- Medicare Provider Number;
- State or territory medical board registration;
- Location and RA of principal clinical practice;
- Location and RA of the practice where the applicant intends to use the skills of the program;
- Demonstrated need for a GP with procedural qualifications in anaesthetics in the applicant’s geographic area;
- Current visa held by non Australian citizens;
- The number of clinicians in the hospital in their locality;
- The number of GPs in the area for which the applicant is applying;
- Whether or not the applicant is a GP locum. Locums are required to:
  - Explain how they intent to use the skills of the Program
  - Indicate where they intend to use the skills of the Program
  - Demonstrate a commitment to rural and remote Australia (ASGC-RA 2-5), with a preference for locums committed to the more remote locations; and
- Registrars will also be required to indicate:
  - Their year of training;
  - If on AGPT – must indicate if they are on the Rural or Generalist Pathway
  - Current location of their training post;
  - The Regional Training Provider they are training with;
  - Total training time already completed in ASGC-RA 2-5.

5. Selection Process

5.1 An Assessment Committee will consider matters related to the eligibility and assessment criteria and ranking of applicants as outlined in these Guidelines (but subject always to the requirements of the Department of Health (DoH)).
5.2 Applicants wishing to apply for Support will need to satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

   a. They are a GP as defined in the Table 1; and

   b. The physical location of their principle clinical practice or current training post is in an ASGC-RA 2-5 location.

5.3 Only applicants who fully meet the eligibility criteria set out in Table 1 will be considered for Support.

5.4 The Assessment Committee will then categorise eligible applicants, in priority order. The first ranking of eligible applications will be on the basis of:

   i) Rurality / remoteness of their current training post or practice

   ii) Need for obstetrics or anesthetics skills in the GP’s geographic area of practice

   iii) If more than one applicant records the same score after the Assessment Committee considers the above than a higher ranking will be given to applicants that have obtained a training post in an accredited hospital.

TABLE 1  Primary Eligibility Criteria for the GPPSTP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>GP Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A practitioner who is vocationally registered under section 3F of the Health Insurance Act 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A practitioner who:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. is a Fellow of the RACGP; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. participates in the quality assurance and continuing medical education program of the RACGP; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. meets the RACGP requirements for quality assurance and continuing medical education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>A practitioner in relation to whom a determination is in force under regulation 6DA of the Health Insurance Regulations 1975 recognising that he or she meets the fellowship standards of the ACRRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>An eligible non-vocationally recognised medical practitioner as defined in rule 3(3) of the Health Insurance (General Medical Services Table) Regulations 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>A practitioner who is undertaking a placement in general practice as part of the Remote Vocational Training Scheme administered by Remote Vocational Training Scheme Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>A practitioner who is undertaking a placement in general practice that is approved by ACRRM or the RACGP:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. as part of a training program for general practice leading to the award of Fellowship of the RACGP; or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. as part of another training program recognised by the RACGP as being of an equivalent standard; or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. as part of a training program leading to the award of Fellowship of ACRRM.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1 does not list all applicable assessment protocols, which may vary based on the requirements of DoH.
6. **Conditions of the Program**

6.1 Successful Applicants are required to (without limitation):

- a. Complete the Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia;
- b. Enter into a funding agreement with ACRRM;
- c. Provide a progress report annually; and
- d. Be involved in evaluations on the program (both by ACRRM and DoH).

6.2 Successful Applicants will:

- a. Have commenced Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia or have six months (from the notification date) in which to secure an accredited training post the Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia; and
- b. Have two years (from the commencement of training) to complete the Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia. Failure to successfully complete the training within this time may result in a request to refund the money.

7. **Payments to Support Recipients**

7.1 Successful applicants will be paid directly by ACRRM.

- a. There will be a payment of $35,000 to the Support Recipient following acceptance into an accredited training post.
- b. There will be a final payment of $5,000 to the Support Recipient following their successful completion of the Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia (payments being regulated by the funding agreement).

8. **Publication of Support Recipients**

8.1 In accordance with DoH requirements, ACRRM will publish on its website the following information, no later than seven working days after a funding agreement takes effect.

- a. The information published will be:
  
  Program Title
  Program Component
  Support Recipient’s Name
  Purpose
  Value
  Approval Date
b. The information will remain on the website for at least 2 years. Other disclosures may be made in accordance with the terms of the funding agreement.

9. Reporting by Support Recipients

9.1 All Support Recipients will be required to report annually to ACRRM on progress towards completing the Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia.

9.2 A final report must also be submitted, on completion of the Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia (further details being found in the funding agreement).

10. Refund of Support Recipients

10.1 If a Support Recipient ceases to be enrolled in the Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia, the reasons for such action will need to be lodged by the Support Recipient with ACRRM. ACRRM would then consider, on a case by case basis, whether the support provided to the Support Recipient under the Program should be refunded, having regard to DoH requirements.

10.2 Support Recipients are expected to successfully complete the Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia within 2 years of commencing the training. If a Successful Recipient has not completed the anaesthetic training program within 2 years and has not been given an extension of time by ACRRM, consideration will be given to whether the support provided under the Program should be refunded.

11. Complaints about Unsuccessful Applications

11.1 An individual that has been unsuccessful in being offered Support may seek from ACRRM reasons behind the decision. ACRRM has the final decision in relation to awarding a place, the decision will be based on the eligibility and assessment criteria and ranking of the application.

a. At all times ACRRM will endeavour to provide unsuccessful applicants with feedback on their application.

b. If an applicant wishes to lodge a complaint or seek further information regarding the decision on their application, they should contact ACRRM, Director of Operations. See Section 12 for contact information.
12. Contact Details

For more information please contact:

ACRRM
GPO Box 2507
Brisbane Qld 4001
Phone: 07 3105 8200
Email: gpptsp@acrrm.org.au

Note: These Guidelines are made available for information purposes only and are merely intended as a guide. These Guidelines do not purport to contain all the information that may be required to evaluate the Program. ACRRM may update or supplement these Guidelines and determine funding processes and requirements.