



**Australian College of
Rural and Remote Medicine**

Rural Procedural Grants Program (RPGP)

FAQs

Question: *What is the Rural Procedural Grants Program?*

Answer: The Rural Procedural Grants Program provides financial support to doctors providing services in rural and remote locations to attend upskilling and skills maintenance activities.

ACRRM has been contracted by the Department of Health and Ageing to administer the Rural Procedural Grants Program.

The Program has two components:

- Component 1: Grants for GPs practicing in Surgery, Anaesthetics and/or Obstetrics
- Component 2: Grants for GPs practicing in Emergency Medicine

Question: *Can GPs register in both components of the Program?*

Answer: Yes, providing they meet the eligibility criteria for both components.

Question: *Am I eligible for the grant?*

Answer: This Program supports suitably credentialed procedural rural doctors in ASGC-RA 1*- 5 (Component 1). Please note that doctors in ASGC-RA 1 may be eligible dependent on approval by the Procedural Grants Collaboration.

Suitably credentialed GPs practising emergency medicine in ASGC-RA 2-5 (Component 2) may also be eligible for the grant.

Question: *How much can I expect to receive?*

Answer: Eligible participants in the Program can receive a grant of up to \$20,000 per doctor per financial year based on 10 days' training at \$2,000 per day (Component 1); and up to \$6,000 per doctor per financial year based on 3 days' emergency medicine training at \$2,000 per day (Component 2).

Question: *How do I register into the Program?*

Answer: Simply download the official registration form (go to the ACRRM website, Programs and then Rural Procedural Grants Program), and complete the registration form, attach supporting documentation and fax or post back to ACRRM.

Question: *How do I submit a claim?*

Answer: Simply sign the attendance form at the course or download the Procedural Grants Claim Form or Clinical Attachment Form from the ACRRM website and complete the claim form, attach supporting documentation and fax to ACRRM.

Question: *When will I get paid after submitting a claim?*

Answer: All claims for payment must be received at ACRRM no later than the 20th of each month if you want them to be processed in that month. Once approved by ACRRM, claims are forwarded to Medicare ONCE per month (on the 26th of each month). You should expect to receive your payment directly from Medicare within 2-3 weeks of processing.

Question: *What types of educational activities can I claim?*

Answer: There are two methods of claiming.

1. You can claim educational activities such as workshops, courses, or scientific conferences by completing the attendance register supplied by the course convener or by completing the Procedural Grants Claim Form and supplying your evidence of attendance; or
2. You can claim for a supervised clinical attachment by completing the Clinical Attachment Claim Form.

Question: *How is an educational activity assessed for accreditation?*

To be deemed eligible, an educational activity must be at least 6-hours in duration. Additionally at least half of the 6-hours of content time must be directly related to the specific discipline, with the remaining half directly related to educational activities that support the ongoing development of skills required to maintain procedural practice in rural and remote communities.

Question: *What is the definition of surgery?*

To be eligible as a doctor performing surgery, doctors must meet specific criteria. For this reason, there is a specific definition for surgery under the Program:

Abdominal surgery (including appendectomy), gynaecological surgery (including dilatation and curettage, termination of pregnancy, ectopic pregnancy, abdominal masses and cysts) requiring general anaesthetic, endoscopy. Orthopaedics requiring major regional blocks or GA including definitive treatment of fractures, dislocations and tendon repairs.

Please note that removal of simple cysts or aspiration of pleural effusions and skin surgery (including flap or graft repairs) are **not covered** under the Rural Procedural Grants Program.

Question: *Do I have to be a member of ACRRM to apply for the Rural Procedural Grants Program?*

Answer: No you do not, but to receive the full benefit of ACRRM's services to our rural and remote GPs, we do encourage you to become a member of ACRRM. Please contact ACRRM College Services to find out more on freecall 1800 223 226 or acrrm@acrrm.org.au.

Question: *I am a locum. Can I still participate in this Program?*

Answer: Rural locums only need to obtain clinical privileges in one hospital to be eligible for the Program. Rural locums will be deemed eligible for the Program if they EITHER:

- a) undertake a minimum of one month (28 days) of locum work per financial year; or
- b) undertake locum placements on 8 occasions per financial year.

Evidence can be a letter from their employer or a declaration from the locum listing the **placements and dates**. Locums can be based in any geographical location, however, need to practice as a locum in ASGC-RA 2-5 localities in order to be eligible for registration in the Program.

Question: *I am a registrar. Can I still participate in this Program?*

Answer: GP registrars in ASGC-RA 2-5 may be considered eligible for the grant if they:

- hold clinical privileges in the discipline in which they wish to register and are working **unsupervised** in that discipline (certification must be obtained from a **hospital credentialing committee**);
- have pre-existing qualifications in one or more disciplines. Pre-existing qualifications may include a recognised qualification in the procedural components of Anaesthetics, Obstetrics, or Surgery (such as a DRANZCOG certificate);
- provide additional documentation as part of their registration for the emergency medicine component, namely:
 - GP registrars must have completed a 12-months Advanced Specialist Training Post in Emergency Medicine and their relevant college (ACRRM or RACGP) must confirm this as part of the registration process; and
 - GP registrars must provide evidence of regular participation in an on-call roster providing emergency medicine cover.

Question: *What are clinical privileges?*

Answer: Clinical privileges are usually awarded by the Area Health Service or hospital credentialing committee. Clinical privileging letters certify the procedural areas of practice that a doctor is allowed to provide in a specific locality as a registered medical practitioner.

To be considered for this Program, doctors must be currently providing procedural or emergency medicine services and their evidence of clinical privileging must be current.

Question: *I don't work in a hospital, so I don't have clinical privileging. What do I do?*

Answer: If your employer such as Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) or the Antarctic service can provide you with clinical privileges certification, this may be accepted.

For facilities other than hospitals that are supplying emergency services, then you must provide ACRRM with a letter from your Area Health Service stating that the facilities and your qualifications meet the requirements of the Program.