



RURAL PROCEDURAL GRANTS PROGRAM

APPLICANT GUIDELINES



Australian Government
Department of Health

Australian College of
Rural & Remote Medicine
WORLD LEADERS IN RURAL PRACTICE



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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document has been prepared by The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) to assist you in determining whether or not you are eligible for the Rural Procedural Grants Program and how to apply for financial support.

RURAL PROCEDURAL GRANTS PROGRAM (RPGP)

The RPGP supports you as a Vocationally Recognised (VR) GP (or enrolled in a Pathway to Fellowship with either ACRRM or the RACGP) practising in a rural or remote area, to attend relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities, focusing on maintenance and enhancement of your procedural and/or emergency medicine skills.

The RPGP has 2 components. It can support you if you are:

- a procedural GP practising in surgery, anaesthetics or obstetrics in Modified Monash Model 3-7 (MM3-7) regions, and/or
- a GP practising emergency medicine in MM 3-7 regions.

If you provide services in rural and remote areas but live in an urban area (including locums and Royal Flying Doctor Service doctors), you may also be eligible for the RPGP.

Locum doctors need to provide at least 28 days of procedural or emergency medicine locum service in MM 3-7 per financial year to qualify for the program.

The RPGP is designed to assist you as a procedural GP and/or a GP practising in emergency medicine with the cost of attending CPD to maintain and/or enhance your procedural or emergency medicine skills. Grants provided under the RPGP are intended to offset expenses associated with attending CPD activities, such as course costs, travel and accommodation, and locum costs.

From 1 July 2020, additional support has been available to emergency medicine GPs to maintain and/or enhance skills in emergency mental health.

The RPGP is administered by the two GP Colleges:

- the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM); and
- the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

You can choose which college you wish to enrol with for the RPGP. The College you choose will assess your eligibility to claim support payments.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR EACH COMPONENT

COMPONENT 1 – PROCEDURAL GPs

You must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- You are a VR GP or enrolled in a Fellowship pathway with either ACRRM or the RACGP
- Your principal clinical practice is physically located in a MM 3-7 region
- You hold unsupervised clinical privileges in an eligible discipline at a hospital, and
- You participate in a regular roster or general on-call roster
- GP registrars must 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).

You are NOT eligible under component 1 if you:

- undertake only minor procedural work in your rooms
- are not already a procedural GP
- are a Non-VR GP and you're not working towards GP Fellowship
- do not have unsupervised clinical privileges

COMPONENT 2 – EMERGENCY MEDICINE GPs

You must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- You are a VR GP or enrolled in a Fellowship pathway with either ACRRM or the RACGP
- You have unsupervised clinical privileges and experience and necessary skills to practice emergency medicine at a hospital located in MM3-7
- You currently hold a position in emergency medicine at the facility nominated
- You participate in a regular roster or general on-call roster.
- Your principal clinical practice is physically located in a MM 3-7 region
- You provide clinical care for emergencies in MM3-7, and

- (to access the additional mental health component) you provide emergency mental health services as part of your duties¹.
- GP registrars must have completed a 12-months Advanced Specialist Training (AST) post in Emergency Medicine and their relevant college (ACRRM or RACGP) must confirm this as part of the registration process

You are NOT eligible under component 2 if you:

- are seeking to attend activities to obtain initial credentialing in emergency medicine
- only perform emergency medical services, such as suturing of small wounds, x-ray, assessment and treatment of unscheduled presentations, in a medical practice treatment room or at an attached outpatients clinic
- you provide less acute mental health consultations in practice rooms or in planned appointment consultations at an outpatient clinic attached to a hospital or health care service delivery facility.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Re-entering RPGP

If you have previously been registered for the RPGP and your clinical privileges lapse, you are eligible for grant support to regain this privileging. In this situation, you will be permitted to claim retrospectively, within the same financial year. You would not have clinical privileging at the time of the training but would attain this on completion of the training and could then lodge your claim.

If you hold another speciality

If you hold fellowship of a non-GP specialist college, you are excluded from the RPGP, even if you are also a GP.

Already receiving financial support

As an RPGP participant, no matter which component you're registered for, you won't be able to claim funding for any training activity if you are already receiving funding from the Commonwealth or State and Territory governments for that activity.

¹ For the purpose of this program, emergency mental health is defined as:

- Urgent assessment, investigation and/or management of an acute mental health problem, including acute psychosis, severe depression, threatened or attempted self-harm or harm of others, or where a patient is brought to hospital under an involuntary detention order for urgent mental health assessment.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN UNDER THIS PROGRAM

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES¹

ACRRM is responsible for assessing the eligibility of CPD activities for grant support under the RPGP. CPD activities are assessed against the following criteria:

- must be for skills maintenance and/or skills enhancement
- can be both formal (e.g. courses) and informal (e.g. clinical attachments) delivery modes
- must include a (physical) face to face component to assess the practical skills of the relevant course (unless the claim is being made specifically for online training, under the COVID-19 flexibilities addendum)
- assessed by the GP Colleges as meeting the required academic, practical/clinical standards of CPD, training and education, as well as being of sufficient length (time/hours)
- must be related to the relevant program discipline which is being claimed under
- all courses, workshops, seminars, conferences or clinical attachments must be a minimum of six hours of procedural upskilling contact time (excludes breaks, etc.). Blended courses with online content should have a minimum of four hours of in-person training delivery.
- Emergency mental health training must contain content relevant to mental health presentations to an emergency facility, with a primary focus on acute mental health issues. This can include training that helps to broaden the practitioners' understanding of the contextual assessment, treatment, and ongoing clinical support of acute mental health presentations.
- Many ACRRM courses are eligible for procedural grants. See the [College courses page](#) for more detail.

ACRRM also accredits a range of activities from other course providers. You can search all accredited activities [here](#) and filter by the specific grant component using the Procedural Grants filter option in the left hand panel of the search page.

Ultrasound Courses

- All ultrasound activities (except those that are musculoskeletal-focused) are approved under all disciplines of the program (i.e. anaesthetics, obstetrics, surgery and emergency medicine). Musculoskeletal-focused ultrasound activities will be assessed for eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Activities will be considered ineligible for grants if:

- it is delivered wholly online
- it is completed outside Australia
- it does not meet the required length of time (minimum six hours a day excluding breaks)
- the interactive and/or assessment components are online only.

Note that the COVID-19 flexibilities addendum provides capacity to complete some activities that are normally considered ineligible activities.

COVID-19 FLEXIBILITIES

In response to the social distancing and movement restrictions that have been put in place to respond to COVID-19, temporary adjustments to the eligibility requirements for CPD activities have been put in place. A partial grant payment of \$1,000 per day will be paid for online CPD activities that have been deemed eligible by the college you have registered with. Courses must include an interactive component and/or assessment and meet all other course eligibility requirements of the RPGP. This arrangement has been extended to **30 June 2022**

Further details on these flexibilities are outlined in a [COVID-19 addendum](#) to the RPGP guidelines.

¹ See COVID-19 flexibilities section on page 5.

MODIFIED MONASH MODEL (MMM)

The **Modified Monash Model (MMM)** is how the Department of Health defines whether a location is a city, rural, remote or very remote.

The model measures remoteness and population size on a scale of Modified Monash (MM) category MM 1 to MM 7. MM 1 is a major city and MM 7 is very remote.

Understanding the MMM classifications helps the **Department of Health** distribute the health workforce better in rural and remote areas.

MMM classifications are based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard - Remoteness Areas (ASGS-RA) framework.

RPGP is available to you if you work in an MM 3 to MM 7 region (alongside other eligibility criteria) – this generally means working in a rural community with a population of less than 50,000. A full description of the MMM classifications is available on the the Department of Health website.

Grant payments remain the same for all MM 3-7 categories.

DEFINITION OF A “REGULAR” ROSTER

GPs who work in rural hospitals are not always on an on-call roster because their hospital does not provide it. Instead the hospital may have a 24-hour roster. For the purpose of this program, 'regular' is defined as providing the service at least once each month under normal circumstances.

PAYMENT RATES

All grant payments are calculated at a flat rate of \$2,000 per day regardless of:

- the cost of the course
- travel and accommodation costs, or
- charges relating to a locum.

The procedural GP component provides you with a grant for up to 10 days of CPD for procedural skills, to a total of \$20,000 per financial year. You are eligible to access the payment multiple times per financial year up to this maximum.

The emergency medicine GP component provides you with a grant of \$2,000 per day for 3 days of

CPD in emergency medicine to a total of \$6,000 per financial year.

Additionally, the emergency mental health GP component provides you with a grant of \$2,000 per day for an additional 3 days of CPD in mental health to a total of \$6000 per financial year.

Depending on your eligibility, you may be able to receive up to \$32,000 per financial year under the RPGP.

As outlined above, a partial grant payment of \$1,000 a day is available while COVID-19 flexibilities are in place.

REGISTRATION AND CLAIMING PROCESS

1. HOW TO REGISTER

Before you attend a course, you must register for the relevant component of the RGP:

- Component 1: procedural GPs
- Component 2: emergency medicine GPs

You will be required to submit the following evidence when you register for the RGP:

- Scope of Clinical Practice (SoCP), or other documentation demonstrating your current unsupervised practice in anaesthetics, obstetrics, surgery and/or emergency medicine.
- If you are an emergency medicine GP seeking to access the additional support available for CPD in mental health, you are also required to provide evidence from your employer verifying that you are providing emergency mental health services. If evidence from your employer is not available, a statutory declaration will also be accepted.
- If you are a GP registrar, evidence of your existing procedural qualification and/ or Emergency Medicine AST

If you are not currently a member of ACRRM further information will be required, such as evidence of residence and employment.

You can find registration, claim forms and information about supporting documentation on the:

- [ACRRM website](#)
- [Department of Health website](#)

Lodge your completed registration forms with ACRRM. Once you have been notified about the outcome of your registration, you will be able to attend eligible activities and receive support payments.

Please note you can only be registered for the RGP with one GP College at a time. You may be asked to provide a Statutory Declaration confirming that you will only claim payments from us. You will need to inform us in writing if you would like to change your RGP registration to the RACGP.

2. COURSE ELIGIBILITY CHECKING

You can access the eligible activities for this program [here](#) by filtering on Procedural Grants in the left hand panel. If the CPD activity you are

interested in attending and claiming for is not listed, please contact us directly at grants@acrrm.org.au for approval.

3. LODGING A CLAIM

Once you are registered and have completed eligible training, you will be able to claim a support payment by submitting a claim at www.acrrm.org.au. You will be required to submit evidence of completion as part of the claiming process.

Payments are made directly to your nominated bank account usually within fourteen days of your claim being verified.

The college you have registered with will forward a statement to you with details of each payment.

Claiming period

For new claims and CPD activities attended after 1 January 2021, a claiming period of 12 months from the financial year the CPD activity was undertaken will apply. You must be enrolled in the program to make a claim.

If you are enrolled in the program and have attended eligible activities prior to

31 December 2020, you are eligible to claim even if the changes to the program's eligibility criteria will exclude you from 1 January 2021. Your eligibility and claim will be assessed against the previous program guidelines. You must be enrolled in the program before 31 December 2020 to be eligible to make a claim.

You will have until 1 July 2021 to make a claim under the previous program guidelines. All other claims must be made up to 12 months after the end of the financial year in which the activity was undertaken.

Activities taken over two financial years

When an activity is run over two financial years, the grant is to be paid in the financial year that it is claimed.

False and misleading claims

ACRRM will conduct a thorough assessment of claims to ensure you are eligible for the payment you are claiming. If ACRRM identifies that an incorrect payment has been made as a result of false or misleading information provided by you, ACRRM will take appropriate action to investigate and recover the payment.

OTHER INFORMATION

UPDATING YOUR BANK DETAILS AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

You are required to inform us if your personal information changes. Contact ACRRM or [log into your My College portal](#) to update your details.

APPEALS

You are able to appeal a decision to ACRRM. ACRRM is responsible for making the final decision and notifying you of the outcome of this process. ACRRM may seek advice from its advisory committee and/or the Department of Health in making its decision.

PRIVACY

ACRRM will require your personal information to be able to administer this program. The types of personal information that ACRRM may ask for can include, but is not limited to, your name, address, date of birth, contact details, qualifications medical registration, and bank account details..

ACRRM will not collect, use or disclose information about you unless it is reasonably necessary to provide you with a product or service, unless legally required or permitted to collect, use or disclose that information.

Your registration and claims information may be shared with the RACGP for the purposes of verifying that you are only registered with one college, or (in the event that you change your registered college) to verify your claims eligibility. This is to avoid any duplication of payments.

ACRRM will abide by The Privacy Act 1988 (Cth.) in relation to the handling of your personal information.

RESOURCES

For more information about the program visit any of the following:

- [ACRRM website](#)
- [Department of Health website](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Rural Procedural Grants Program Management Guidelines](#)

APPLICATION PROCESS AND ACCESSING GRANTS

APPLICATION PROCESS

1

You apply using the Application form on the ACRRM website and contact ACRRM if you have any questions regarding the form or the program.

2

You complete the Application Form and provide the required supporting evidence (for all eligible components). Supporting evidence may include on call rosters and contracts.

3

ACRRM will assess your eligibility to participate in the program.

4

ACRRM will advise you of the outcome of the assessment, including which components you have been approved for.

Note: you must register to participate in the Program prior to undertaking any CPD activities which you would like to claim. CPD activities undertaken prior to registration are not eligible for payment.

ACCESSING THE GRANT

1

You are required to contact ACRRM to confirm your proposed CPD activity meets the 'Eligible Activities' criteria.

2

Once you have completed the eligible activity, you will provide evidence of successful completion of the CPD activity to ACRRM by applying for a grant via your My Grants portal.

3

ACRRM determines whether the CPD activity meets the eligibility criteria. Where the CPD activity does not meet the criteria, ACRRM will let you know.

4

If the CPD activity meets the eligibility criteria, ACRRM processes the grant payment directly into your nominated bank account.

Once you have been assessed as eligible for the program, you will be eligible for grants up to the available maximum each financial year.

Note: You must advise ACRRM of any changes to your eligibility status and provide updated documentary evidence to confirm your ongoing eligibility for the program.

Note: you can only be enrolled with one college at a time and must advise in writing if you wish to change.