



## **AGPT PROGRAM LEAVE POLICY 2017**

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<b>Responsible Section:</b>	GP Selection and Education Section, Health Training Branch
<b>Supporting documents, procedures and forms:</b>	AGPT Application - Program Leave and AGPT Application - Deferral of Training
<b>Audience:</b>	Registrars enrolled on the AGPT Program, Regional Training Organisations and Stakeholders

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## 1 Purpose of Policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to manage registrar leave and deferrals from the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Program while progressing registrars through training fulfilling education, training and assessment requirements.

## 2 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	The CEO of the Regional Training Organisation (RTO) or equivalent or their nominated delegate.
College Assessment	The College Assessment requirements to obtain fellowship as specified by the RACGP and/or ACRRM Colleges.
Commencement of Training	Commencement of Training is defined as the first day on which a registrar begins their training on the AGPT Program.  Registrars are able to commence their training on the AGPT Program in a number of different training terms, which are: hospital training, Core Clinical Training, GPT1, Primary Rural and Remote Training, Extended Skills, Mandatory Elective, Advanced Specialised Training and Advanced Rural Skills Training (for FARGP only).
Core Vocational Training	Core Vocational Training refers to GPT1, GPT2, GPT3, Mandatory Elective and Extended Skills Training for FRACGP registrars and Primary Rural and Remote Training and Advanced Specialised Training for FACRRM registrars.
Education and Training Requirements	The Education and Training Requirements placed on a registrar working towards fellowship of the RACGP, ACRRM or both. These requirements are specified the Relevant College(s), the RTO and the Department of Health.
Extension of Training Time Awaiting Fellowship	A one-off extension of up to 12 weeks to allow a registrar to submit their fellowship application to attain their fellowship award.
Extension of Training Time for Assessment Purposes	An extension of training of up to 12 calendar months to enable a registrar to satisfactorily meet the Education and Training Requirements for their stage of training or to sit or re-sit College required assessments.
Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances	Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances are defined as circumstances which were unforeseen and outside a registrar's control when they accepted a place on the AGPT Program. Examples of extenuating circumstances may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ill-health (other than minor illnesses);</li> <li>• Deterioration of an existing medical condition that can no longer be managed in the current location;</li> <li>• Bereavement;</li> <li>• Acute personal/emotional circumstances;</li> <li>• Hospitalisation;</li> <li>• Illness of an Immediate Family Member; or</li> <li>• An involuntary change in a spouse's employment.</li> </ul> <p>It does not include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A change in relationship status from single to partnered or married,</li> <li>• A change in Family circumstances (including starting a family and children's schooling).</li> </ul>
FACRRM	Fellowship of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
FARGP	Fellowship in Advanced Rural General Practice through the RACGP. Registrars must be enrolled in FARGP to undertake Advanced Rural Skills Training.

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
FRACGP	Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
Immediate Family Member	Immediate Family Member means the registrar's parents (mother, father, and step parents), siblings, spouse/partner/de facto/fiancé, child/children and anyone for whom the registrar has primary carer responsibility.
Mandatory Elective	Where a registrar training towards FRACGP receives Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) without time credit they are required to undertake training commensurate to that length of time. Training must be recorded by RTOs as Mandatory Elective. It is not an extension of training term. Mandatory Elective terms are still bound by pathway requirements.
Relevant College	The GP College to which the registrar is enrolled, RACGP, ACRRM or both.
Training Facility	Includes any facility accredited by the Colleges to provide training under the AGPT Program.

### 3 Application and Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all registrars enrolled on the AGPT Program.
- 3.2 This policy supersedes the previous *AGPT Programme Leave Policy 2016* and will come into effect as of 1 January 2017.
- 3.3 The leave allowances specified in this policy refer to leave from the AGPT Program only. Annual/recreational leave, personal leave and study leave as agreed between the Training Facility and registrar in their work contract are not covered in this Policy.
- 3.4 Registrars must apply in writing to their RTO for leave from the AGPT Program except where Clause 5.2.2 apply (the RTO must seek approval from the Department of Health). All applications for leave must be negotiated and approved in advance by the RTO to ensure that it does not compromise a registrar's progress through training.
- 3.5 Leave is granted on a full-time basis regardless of the full-time equivalent status of a registrar.
- 3.6 Registrars who are training towards more than one fellowship award are not entitled to additional leave and will only receive leave allowances as specified in this Policy.
- 3.7 The leave allowances in this Policy cannot be used by a registrar to sit or re-sit College Assessments. If a registrar requires additional training time to sit or re-sit their College Assessments they can apply for an extension of their training time under the process specified in the *AGPT Extension of Training Time Policy 2017*.

### 4 Policy Principles

- 4.1 The Department of Health recognises that during the course of training on the AGPT Program circumstances may arise that require registrars to take leave from the Program.
- 4.2 Leave must not compromise a registrar's training.
- 4.3 Leave must not be extended over long periods of time. Registrars returning from leave greater than 12 calendar months may require RTO support to regain an appropriate level of competence prior to recommencing their training
  - 4.3.1 Registrars returning from extended leave must ensure that they hold general medical registration and will need to work with their RTO to ensure that they meet the Medical Board of Australia's registration standards.
- 4.4 Education and training continuity for registrars on the AGPT Program is important and must be supported to ensure all Education and Training Requirements are met.
- 4.5 Registrars generally should not commence their training on the AGPT Program with a period of leave.

- 4.5.1 The first training term or unit recorded into RIDE for a registrar cannot be leave unless deferral of the Commencement of Training has been approved as per clause 8 of this Policy.
- 4.6 Registrars can apply to defer the Commencement of Training under the circumstances outlined under Clause 8 of this Policy.

## 5 Types of Leave

- 5.1 Category 1 - Leave from the Program
  - 5.1.1 This leave is available to all registrars.
  - 5.1.2 Leave entitlements may vary between each State and Territory and may involve Federal law. Category 1 Leave includes, but is not limited to:
    - 5.1.2.1 Parental leave (with valid birth certificate, foster/adoption papers or permanent care orders);
    - 5.1.2.2 Sick leave with valid certificates; and
    - 5.1.2.3 5.1.2.3 Carer's leave with valid certificates.
  - 5.1.3 Category 1 Leave may only be approved by the RTO on the basis of the supporting documents and evidence provided by the registrar.
  - 5.1.4 It is expected that while a registrar is on approved Category 1 Leave they will not be undertaking paid employment.
- 5.2 Category 2 - Additional Leave From the Program
  - 5.2.1 This leave applies to all registrars and includes:
    - 5.2.1.1 Personal reasons; or
    - 5.2.1.2 Any other purposes not included under Category 1 Leave.
  - 5.2.2 An RTO must seek the prior written approval of the Department of Health, for Category 2 Leave if the registrar is unable to be matched to an appropriate Training Facility and the RTO has exhausted alternative options including transfers between RTOs, Extended Skills, Advanced Specialised Training and/or Advanced Rural Skills Training.
    - 5.2.2.1 Approval by the Department can be sought by completing the AGPT Application - Program Leave and submitting it to the Department of Health for consideration.
  - 5.2.3 Category 2 Leave is capped at a maximum of six calendar months (26 calendar weeks).
  - 5.2.4 Category 2 Leave must be approved in writing by the RTO CEO.
  - 5.2.5 Category 2 Leave must only be taken during Core Vocational Training.
  - 5.2.6 In Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances a request for an additional period of up to six calendar months (26 calendar weeks) can be submitted to the registrar's RTO for consideration.
    - 5.2.6.1 Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. Registrars are not automatically entitled to this additional six calendar months of leave.
- 5.3 Category 3 - Australian Defence Force (ADF) Service Leave
  - 5.3.1 Category 3 Leave is only available to registrars who are full-time members of the ADF.
  - 5.3.2 Where a registrar is required to take leave from the AGPT Program to meet ADF service requirements, this leave needs to be supported by their RTO.
  - 5.3.3 Where a registrar takes leave from the AGPT Program to meet ADF service requirements, the RTO must record the leave in the registrar's training record as 'ADF Service Leave.'

## 6 Where Leave Will Not Be Granted

- 6.1 Leave will not be granted:
- 6.1.1 Following an Extension Awaiting Fellowship;
  - 6.1.2 Following 52 calendar weeks allowance for Extension for Assessment Purposes;
  - 6.1.3 Immediately following a period of leave of a different leave Category (i.e. Category 1 leave immediately followed by Category 2 leave);
  - 6.1.4 During remediation, unless it is Category 1 or Category 3 Leave;
  - 6.1.5 Following completion of Core Vocational Training unless it is Category 1 or Category 3 Leave; and
  - 6.1.6 For dual curriculum registrars above the leave allowances specified in this policy.
- 6.2 A registrar with medical registration conditions and/or undertakings imposed by the Medical Board of Australia that preclude them from remaining on the AGPT Program will not be eligible for leave beyond the allowance specified in this Policy. These conditions include but are not limited to:
- 6.2.1 Not practising medicine until approved to do so by the Medical Board of Australia;
  - 6.2.2 Registrars requiring 100%, direct supervision or Level 1 Supervision; and
  - 6.2.3 Restrictions from seeing patients, which could be across all genders or ages.
- 6.3 Registrars with imposed conditions and/or undertakings as listed in 6.2.1 to 6.2.3 are unable to continue actively training on the AGPT Program until the conditions and/or undertakings are removed. These registrars may apply for Category 2 Leave from the AGPT Program to appeal Medical Board of Australia's decision to impose conditions and/or undertakings on their medical registration if they have leave allowances available under this Category.
- 6.4 Registrars with conditions and/or undertakings as listed in 6.2.1 to 6.2.3 will be subject to the *AGPT Withdrawal Policy 2017* if:
- 6.4.1 They choose not to appeal the Medical Board of Australia's decision to impose conditions and/or undertakings on their medical registration; or
  - 6.4.2 They exhaust the Category 2 Leave allowances available to them as specified in this Policy.

## 7 Registrars Returning From Leave

- 7.1 Registrars must notify the RTO when they plan to return to their training on the AGPT Program so that arrangements can be made by the RTO. This must be done within 20 business days of their intended return date.
- 7.2 When returning from leave exceeding 12 calendar months, a registrar may require support to ensure that they regain an appropriate level of competence prior to recommencing their training. The RTO will determine what level of support is required.
- 7.3 Registrars will need to work with their RTO to ensure that they meet the Medical Board of Australia's registration standards, particularly with regard to recency of practice, when returning to training following an extended period of leave.
- 7.4 For registrars requiring additional support following an extended period of leave, this must be in line with the *AGPT Extension of Training Time Policy 2017*. Allowances for Extension for Assessment Purposes may be used if there is a remaining balance.

## 8 Program Deferrals

- 8.1 Generally deferral of the Commencement of Training on the AGPT Program is not permitted. Deferral of the Commencement of Training will only be considered:
- 8.1.1 In Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances;
  - 8.1.2 In line with Category 1 Leave;
  - 8.1.3 To meet ADF service requirements; or
  - 8.1.4 If the registrar is unable to be matched to an appropriate Training Facility.

- 8.2 Registrars will need to demonstrate the Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances, including:
- 8.2.1 Provide supporting documents and evidence of the Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances; and
  - 8.2.2 Provide evidence to show that their circumstances were unforeseen when they accepted their place on the AGPT Program.
- 8.3 In order to apply to defer the Commencement of Training, registrars must:
- 8.3.1 Complete the AGPT Application - Deferral of Training and submit it to their RTO along with any evidence or supporting documentation as specified in this Policy for consideration a minimum of 20 business days prior to the Commencement of Training.
    - 8.3.1.1 Exceptions to this timeframe may be considered by the RTO in Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances.
  - 8.3.2 If Clause 8.1.4 applies, the RTO will need to submit the Form and any evidence or supporting documentation to the Department of Health for consideration.
    - 8.3.2.1 The RTO will need to provide the reasons why they were unable to find a suitable Training Facility for the registrar and the efforts made to seek a suitable Training Facility (including seeking a transfer to another RTO/Training Region if appropriate).
    - 8.3.2.2 The Department of Health will consider the request to defer the registrar's Commencement of Training and provide an outcome to the RTO within 20 business days of receipt of a complete application.
- 8.4 Registrars can apply to defer the Commencement of Training as follows:
- 8.4.1 An initial period of six calendar months (26 calendar weeks) approved by the RTO; and
  - 8.4.2 In Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances a request for an additional period of up to six calendar months (26 calendar weeks) can be submitted to the RTO for consideration.
    - 8.4.2.1 Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. Registrars are not automatically entitled to this additional six calendar months of deferral.
- 8.5 If after deferring the Commencement of Training for 12 calendar months the registrar is still not able to commence their training on the AGPT Program, they may be withdrawn under the *AGPT Withdrawal Policy 2017*.
- 8.6 RTOs must notify the Department of Health via [AGPTManagement@health.gov.au](mailto:AGPTManagement@health.gov.au) and [AGPTreporting@health.gov.au](mailto:AGPTreporting@health.gov.au), the Relevant College and, for ADF registrars, Joint Health Command, of any registrars who are approved to defer the commencement of their training on the AGPT Program within 20 business days of the deferral being approved.
- 8.7 ADF registrars will need to provide posting orders and/or letters of support from Joint Health Command to support a request to defer the Commencement of Training to meet ADF service requirements.

## 9 Policy Exceptions

- 9.1 Exceptions to this policy must be applied for in writing by emailing a completed AGPT Application – Program Leave to the Department of Health at [AGPTManagement@health.gov.au](mailto:AGPTManagement@health.gov.au).
- 9.2 A registrar can lodge a written submission to the Department seeking consideration for leave or deferral beyond the allowances specified in this policy. A written submission may be made by a registrar through their RTO, or by an RTO on behalf of a registrar.
- 9.3 Any submissions for the Department of Health's consideration must be supported by the RTO.
- 9.4 Submissions will require, whether the exception is for leave or the deferral of the Commencement of Training, the category of leave if applicable, the reasons for leave/deferring training, the supporting evidence/documentation and any further information as requested by the Department of Health.

- 9.5 Decisions can only be made upon the evidence available and failing to respond to a request for further information may lead to a determination to decline the exception request.
- 9.6 Registrars are not automatically entitled to allowances in addition to those specified in this policy.
- 9.7 Any exceptions to the allowances specified in this policy will only be considered when all provisions allowed under this policy have been exhausted.
- 9.8 The Department of Health will advise the registrar and/or RTO of a decision regarding the exception within 20 business days of the receipt of a completed application.

## 10 Roles and Responsibilities

- 10.1 Registrars are responsible for:
  - 10.1.1 Applying in writing to their RTO for leave, except where Clause 5.2.2 applies, including the category of leave, the period of leave, the reasons for leave and supporting evidence if required or requested;
  - 10.1.2 Applying in writing to their RTO to defer the Commencement of Training;
  - 10.1.3 Working with their RTO to ensure that they meet the Medical Board of Australia's registration standards, particularly with regard to recency of practice, when returning to training following an extended period of leave or deferring the commencement of training; and
  - 10.1.4 Communicating with their RTO and advising any changes to their contact details during their leave.
- 10.2 RTOs are responsible for:
  - 10.2.1 Managing registrar leave;
  - 10.2.2 Managing registrar training placements and notifying the registrar in writing in the event that a suitable placement cannot be found;
  - 10.2.3 Seeking written approval from the Department of Health for Category 2 Leave if the registrar is unable to be matched with an appropriate Training Facility ;
  - 10.2.4 Working with registrars to ensure education and training continuity for registrars taking extended leave;
  - 10.2.5 Supporting registrars returning from extended leave to ensure the registrar regains an appropriate level of competence before recommencing training on the AGPT Program;
  - 10.2.6 Ensuring that all leave is approved by the RTO's CEO;
  - 10.2.7 Documenting decisions regarding registrar leave requests and retaining evidence provided with leave requests;
  - 10.2.8 Notifying the registrar of a leave request determination within 15 business days of the request and, if declined, provide the reasons for declining, the considerations factored into the decision and information on the registrar's right to appeal the decision;
  - 10.2.9 Notifying the Relevant College of any periods of leave greater than 12 calendar months;
  - 10.2.10 Ensuring that any approved leave does not lead to a registrar's Training Time exceeding the training time cap without written approval from the RTO's CEO as per clause 5.19 of the *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2017*;
  - 10.2.11 Notifying the Department of Health, the respective College, and Joint Health Command (where applicable) of any deferrals of the Commencement of Training within 20 business days of approval of the request;
  - 10.2.12 Seeking written approval from the Department of Health for deferral of the Commencement of Training if the registrar is unable to be matched with an appropriate Training Facility; and
  - 10.2.13 Assessing a registrar's competence following a period of extended leave.

- 10.3 The Department of Health is responsible for:
  - 10.3.1 Considering submissions for policy exceptions and notifying the RTO and registrar of the outcome and, if declined, provide the reasons for declining the request within 20 business days;
  - 10.3.2 Considering and approving requests for Category 2 Leave and Deferrals of Training in situations where the registrar is unable to be matched with an appropriate Training Facility; and
  - 10.3.3 Notifying the Relevant College and Joint Health Command (where applicable) of any concerns regarding a registrar's progress through training.

## **11 Compliance and Monitoring**

- 11.1 The Department of Health will monitor:
  - 11.1.1 The number of registrars taking Category 2 Leave that exceeds 52 calendar weeks in total;
  - 11.1.2 The number of registrars deferring Commencement of Training on the AGPT Program; and
  - 11.1.3 The number of registrars placed on Category 2 Leave or deferring the Commencement of Training because the registrar is unable to be matched to an appropriate Training Facility.
- 11.2 The Department of Health will send a written request for response to RTOs in the event that data discrepancies are found during monitoring activities. The RTO will be expected to reply to the Department of Health's request within 20 business days with reasons for the discrepancies and the actions that will be taken to prevent them from recurring.

## **12 Entering Data into RIDE**

- 12.1 Entering training units into RIDE regarding Clause 8, the deferral of the Commencement of Training.
- 12.2 It is expected that all deferrals be entered into RIDE under a category of leave appropriate to the reasons a deferral has been sought. This can include, but is not limited to:
  - 12.2.1 Deferral for maternity leave should be recorded as Category 1 Leave with 'Maternity' as the unit sub-type.
  - 12.2.2 Deferral for ADF Service Leave should be recorded as Category 3 Leave with 'ADF service requirements' as the unit sub-type.
  - 12.2.3 Deferral because the registrar is unable to be matched with a suitable Training Facility should be recorded as Category 2 Leave with 'RTP unable to identify training post' as the unit sub-type.

## **13 Related Documents**

- 13.1 *AGPT Program Policies 2017 Overarching Document*
- 13.2 *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2017*
- 13.3 *AGPT Extension of Training Time Policy 2017*
- 13.4 *AGPT Withdrawal Policy 2017*
- 13.5 *AGPT Appeals Policy 2017*
- 13.6 The Relevant College Leave Policies
- 13.7 National Employment Standards
- 13.8 AGPT Application – Program Leave
- 13.9 AGPT Application - Deferral of Training



## 14 Version Control and Change History

<b>Version Control:</b>	2
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