

1. Rationale

Doctors wishing to join the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) were previously required to hold or anticipate holding full/general medical registration, with no conditions attached to their medical registration by a Medical Board, in any Australian State or Territory by the commencement of their initial training year.

The 2005 annual selection review highlighted matters regarding equity, fairness and natural justice and other possible unintended impacts of the requirement for full and unconditional medical registration of applicants for AGPT. The review recommended a revision to the selection eligibility criterion. This recommendation was supported by external advice. The GPET Board subsequently adopted a revised eligibility criterion for the AGPT selection enabling conditionally registered Doctors to apply for AGPT and for an assessment of suitability for entry into AGPT to be completed by RTPs.

Some attached medical registration conditions have little or no impact on an applicant's suitability for General or Rural and Remote Practice or for entry into the AGPT program and the automatic exclusion of such applicants could be deemed as unreasonable, unfair and or contrary to equal opportunity legislation. However, it is recognised that attached conditions may impose an unjustifiable burden on AGPT and in turn the regional training providers, or may expose patients, staff and others to potential risk.

This document describes the procedural guidelines for assessment of applicants' conditions that would historically render them ineligible for consideration for selection into the AGPT. It draws upon the *RACGP – Assessment of Eligibility of Applicants to the RACGP Training Program who have conditions attached to their medical registration in any state of Australia (or who anticipate that they may have attached conditions at the commencement of training – Appendix 7 – RACGP Training Program Operating Procedures 2001*. The guidelines have been revised for a regionalised training environment and formulated on the basis that initial numbers of applicants with conditions of any kind on their registration would be small.

2. Definitions

AGPT:	Australian General Practice Training.
RSAP:	RTP Selection Assessment Panel: a panel constituted by the RTP to assess and determine a conditionally medically registered applicants suitability for AGPT.
GARP:	GPET Assessment and Review Panel: an expert panel constituted by GPET to provide a final avenue to review and resolve disputes between parties involved in AGPT.
NGMPIW:	National General Manager- Program Improvement and Workforce: a GPET employed senior staff member who oversees the development and implementation of the AGPT selection process.

Natural Justice: is concerned with ensuring that a fair decision is reached by an objective (Procedural Fairness) decision maker. It requires that two rules be observed:

1. The hearing rule, which states that a person or body deciding a particular matter must give the affected person the opportunity to present their case and have that material considered before any decision is made.
2. The rule against bias, which states that a decision maker should have no personal interest in the matter to be decided, have no bias as to the outcome and act in good faith through out the process.

Medical Board: A Medical Board is a statutory authority established under the relevant state legislation. Its principal purpose is to protect the health and safety of the public by providing mechanisms designed to ensure that medical practitioners are fit to practice medicine.

3. Guidelines

The Guidelines apply to Applicants who have, or anticipate having, conditions attached to their medical registration **due to health or disciplinary reasons** at the time of commencement of the training year in AGPT.

Conditional Registration does **NOT** apply to doctors who have provisional registration due to:

- having recently graduated and undertaking 12 months supervised training as interns
- having completed the AMC examinations and undertaking 12 months of supervised training
- practising in an area of need

Acceptance of an applicant for entry into AGPT will not limit, reduce or in any way minimise the required actions of the conditional registered Doctor as stipulated by the relevant Medical Board.

3.1 Applicant Declaration

Applicants are required to declare within their AGPT program application if they have or anticipate having conditions applied to their medical registration by the commencement of the initial entry-training year in AGPT. Failure to declare any conditions may lead to exclusion from the AGPT selection process or the AGPT program.

All applicants are required to provide certified documentary evidence of their current medical registration status with their AGPT application. Conditionally registered applicants are required to provide a statement of good standing or equivalent from the relevant medical board, and include this statement within the application for AGPT.

Additionally applicants with attached conditions on their medical registration are required to provide consent for the release of Medical Board and/or Medical Tribunal information to GPET and RTPs to enable an assessment of their registration conditions inline with the process described in section 3.3 of the guidelines. Failure to provide documentation or consent will lead to an inability of GPET and the RTP to assess the applicants application and result in the applicant not be considered for selection into the AGPT.

3.2 Applicant Responsibilities and Notification

It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that the condition/s attached to their medical registration present no barriers to practising in the General Practice environment and the successful completion of all aspects of the AGPT program and associated training standards.

In the event that an applicant is assessed as eligible for entry into the AGPT program, GPET does not guarantee that an applicant with conditions attached to their medical registration will be offered a training place, be engaged by the RTP, employed by a hospital or other training practices despite their eligibility for entry into the training program.

3.3 Procedural Guidelines

AGPT applications on which an applicant has indicated that they have or expect to have conditions on their medical registration will be reviewed by NGMPIW or his/her representative with a particular focus on the criteria for eligibility as contained within section 3.1 of the guidelines.

NGMPIW or his/her representative may contact the relevant Medical Board to obtain further information regarding the applicant's medical registration, registration status or details of conditions.

Where the required documentation is provided by the applicant, that application will be processed in accordance with accepted AGPT selection eligibility assessment processes.

Where the conditionally registered applicant fulfils the eligibility criteria, the applicant will be included in the selection ranking and allocation process, and may be subsequently allocated to interview under the AGPT merit allocation process.

Conditionally registered allocated applicants will undertake the "standard" national selection interview with the RTP to which they have been allocated. The interview will be completed against the published AGPT selection criteria.

To ensure natural justice principles are followed the RTP interviewers will not be provided details of the conditionally registered applicant's conditions at this stage of the selection process. Where the applicant performance at interview is considered suitable for entry into AGPT, the applicant will be invited to a sitting of the RSAP.

The RSAP panel, via a medical board/medical tribunal documentation review and applicant interview, will assess an application from an applicant with condition/s attached to their medical registration. A determination will be made regarding the applicant's suitability for AGPT. Additional information may be sought by the RSAP from the relevant medical board at this stage.

The RSAP panel will undertake a review of the applicant's documentation regarding the conditions applied by the relevant medical board following the standard selection interview.

The panel will also interview the applicant to:

- Provide the applicant the opportunity to demonstrate that the condition/s attached to their medical registration present no barriers to practicing in the general practice environment or

would limited their ability to successfully complete all aspects of the AGPT program and associated program standards or areas contained within section 3.4 of the guidelines.

- Assist in determining an applicant's suitability for AGPT based upon the relevant documented information and interview.

3.4 RSAP Assessment

In order for GPET to discharge its duty of care to the registrars, RTPs, training practices and the community this determination will be made by assessing the effects of the condition/s across the following areas:

- Ability to carry out the requirements of the AGPT program, hospitals, RTPs, general practices and other agencies providing or involved in training;
- Risk to patients and staff in the various training locations;
- Special requirements for training;
- Adverse effects on other registrars; and
- Other issues which may make it difficult for GPET or RTPs, hospitals, general practices or other training agencies to accommodate the applicant.

Where one or more of the assessment areas are determined by RSAP as representing a significant barrier or risk or would result in the applicants inability to successful complete AGPT the applicant will be deemed unsuitable for AGPT, and excluded from further participation in the selection process.

Where the RSAP determine an applicant as suitable for entry into AGPT, the applicant will be considered in competition with other applicants for a training position with the RTP.

The final determination of the RSAP will be notified to the applicant and GPET in writing including an explanation of the decision taken by the RSAP panel.

The applicant, in line with the GPET Complaints and Appeals process, may appeal determinations of the RSAP panel.

3.5. RSAP Panel Composition

The RSAP panel will comprise up to four members including:

- RTP senior medical educator and
- RTP chief executive officer or his/her nominated representative

And one from

- RTP Board member and/or
- An experience RLO and/or
- An experience SLO and/or
- An independent lawyer and/or
- A representative of RACGP or ACRRM (as appropriate)

And

- GPET National General Manager – Program Improvement and Workforce or his/her nominated representative (Official observer)

4. Scope and Application

The guidelines apply to all applicants for AGPT who have conditions (as defined in Section 3 above) attached to their medical registration.

5. Responsibilities

Policy Approval: GPET Board of Directors
Implementation: RTPs, GPET CEO & NGM - PIW.
Review: NGM - PIW
Improvement: NGM - PIW

6. Resources

- Additional GPET resources available to RTPs conduct RTP assessment panels
- Additional financial and training resources requirements for successful applicants (with conditional registration) will be assessed and negotiated between RTPs and GPET NGM – PIW on a case by case basis

7. Review Schedule

The Guidelines will be reviewed biannually.

8. Review Date

November 2010

10. Document Control

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11. Procedural Guidelines – Process Flow Chart

