Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services

Helping to Close the Gap
Terminology

<table>
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<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training post</td>
<td>Refers to a training position undertaken by a GP registrar within an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) which has been accredited to deliver registrar training under the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accredited ACCHS</td>
<td>Refers to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) which has been accredited to deliver registrar training under the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program.</td>
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</table>
| ACCHS | The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) states: 

An Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) or an Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) is a primary health care service initiated and operated by the local Aboriginal community to deliver holistic, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate health care to the community which controls it (through a locally elected Board of Management). 


The term ACCHS is used throughout this brochure in reference to both ACCHSs and AMSs. 

Please note: Some State and Territory owned primary health care facilities, which provide health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, are also accredited as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training posts. |
| ACRRM | The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) is one of two professional general practice colleges in Australia. ACRRM sets the training standards, curriculum and assessments for those doctors pursuing the Fellowship of ACRRM through the AGPT program. |
| AGPT program | The Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program is a three-or four-year training program undertaken by medical doctors who are seeking specialist (general practitioner) registration with the Medical Board of Australia. |
| General practice | Where the term ‘general practice’ is used in this brochure it is, where context permits, deemed to include rural and remote medicine. |
| GPET | General Practice Education and Training Limited (GPET) manages and funds the AGPT program. GPET is a wholly owned government company, set up by the Australian Government in 2001 to establish and administer a regionalised approach to training, which is now delivered by 17 regional training providers (RTPs) across Australia. |
| GP registrar | A GP registrar is a registered doctor who is enrolled in the AGPT program. |
| RACGP | The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is one of two professional general practice colleges in Australia. The RACGP sets the training standards, curriculum and assessments for those doctors pursuing the Fellowship of RACGP through the AGPT program. |
| RTP | A regional training provider (RTP) is an organisation contracted by GPET to deliver the AGPT program within a designated area of Australia. |

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The AGPT program is an Australian Government initiative managed by GPET on behalf of the Commonwealth.

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GP Training – Helping to close the gap

The purpose of this brochure is to provide Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) with information on how to become accredited to train general practice (GP) registrars and the benefits registrars can bring to your service and community.

By becoming accredited to deliver general practice training an ACCHS will be able to employ GP registrars for set terms over a three-year period. These registrars will provide quality primary health care services to the people in your community while also learning how to be better, more culturally and clinically competent general practitioners. On a large scale this leads to better and more holistic health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION

“Durri AMS has found hosting GP registrars has brought a range of benefits to the organisation and the community.

Hosting registrars for six-month terms provides an opportunity for a much more intimate cross-cultural education experience for the staff and registrar. Sharing the great challenge of working in Aboriginal health between the Aboriginal Health Workers, nurses, GPs and GP registrars is good for all.”

- Noeline Brown, EEN and Aboriginal Cultural Mentor, and Dr Peter Fletcher, GP Supervisor – Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service, Kempsey, NSW.
What is a general practice registrar?

General practice (GP) registrars are doctors enrolled in the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program. As part of their ongoing training GP registrars can undertake an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training post in an accredited ACCHS. A post is usually for one term (six months), but 12-month placements can be negotiated.

What is the AGPT program?

The AGPT program is the main training program doctors undertake to become a registered specialist general practitioner in Australia. The entire training program takes three to four years to complete.

The AGPT program is managed and funded by General Practice Education and Training Limited (GPET), a wholly owned government company. GPET contracts 17 regional training providers (RTPs) to deliver the AGPT program in their geographical footprints (see the RTP map on page 8). This includes funding for GP registrar training in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, which occurs in an ACCHS that has been accredited for training.

What are the benefits of having a GP registrar undertake a training post in your organisation?

- A GP registrar is a registered doctor who will bring additional clinical and professional skills to your organisation and community
- Generate awareness amongst GP registrars of the culture and range of physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being issues experienced by the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- A significant proportion of the GP registrars’ salary is reimbursed by their RTP. This allows the Medicare billings (income) generated by a registrar to be retained by and for the use of the community
- GP registrars who undertake part of their training in an ACCHS are more likely to continue working in an ACCHS after they complete the AGPT program. This often allows an ACCHS to successfully attract long-term permanent doctors to meet the ongoing health service needs of their community.
When can a GP registrar undertake an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training post in an accredited ACCHS?

GP registrars enrolled in the AGPT program can undertake an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training post at any time during their general practice training. These training posts are arranged between the GP registrar, the registrar’s RTP and the ACCHS.

How long is the training post?

A training post is usually for one term (six months), however shorter or longer training posts (12 months max.) may be negotiated. Once a registrar has completed their training post they will usually move onto another placement in another area of general practice while they complete their training. The ACCHS is then able to speak with the RTP to see if another registrar is available to undertake a training post in their service.

Part-time or shared training posts can be arranged, where this is arranged, the registrar can undertake their training by working between the ACCHS and another health service accredited for training.

How does an ACCHS become accredited to train GP registrars?

All organisations that train GP registrars must be accredited to meet the training standards of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), or the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), or both. The colleges’ training standards can be found on their respective websites at www.racgp.org.au and www.acrrm.org.au

The accreditation process ensures that GP registrars will receive training that meets the relevant college standards wherever they train.

A registrar cannot train in your organisation unless it is accredited and provides appropriate supervision. The process to gain accreditation is not difficult and is managed by the RTPs (see RTP map and contact details on pages 8-9 for the RTP closest to you).
Steps to becoming accredited

Step 1: Decide if your ACCHS would like to become accredited to deliver training to GP registrars.

Step 2: Contact the local RTP in your region and express an interest in becoming an accredited training facility. The RTP will advise what your options are and what is needed. To locate your local RTP view the map on page 8 or visit the GPET website: gpet.com.au

Step 3: Your local RTP will provide you with ongoing support throughout the application process. There are some administrative steps involved. However, the administrative load is kept to a minimum.

Once your organisation is accredited, a GP registrar may be employed as a member of your staff.

Accreditation is current for three years, at which time your organisation will need to reapply for accreditation.

Please note: accreditation does not guarantee the immediate placement of a registrar in the accredited ACCHS.

What are the costs involved for an ACCHS?

There is no cost to become accredited. However, prior to a GP registrar commencing a training post in an ACCHS, some support areas are required. These requirements usually include:

- An accredited GP training supervisor
- Adequate consulting space
- Training resources
- Administrative requirements
- Practice orientation packages, i.e. training in your software, referral lists of the specialists your organisation uses
- Cultural mentoring as accepted by your community.
Who pays the GP registrar’s salary?

RTPs are able to provide funding to an accredited ACCHS to support the salary and on-costs of a registrar who is undertaking an approved training post at the ACCHS.

Your organisation is responsible for negotiating an employment contract with the GP registrar (including their salary and on-costs) prior to their commencement. This is an important part of understanding both your organisation’s and the GP registrar’s expectations and to assist in establishing a productive relationship. The RTP can provide information regarding salary support and other matters related to employing a GP registrar.

Who provides clinical supervision to the GP registrar?

An ACCHS must have an accredited GP supervisor on staff who meets the training standards of either the RACGP or ACRRM, or both. An application for the accreditation of an ACCHS and a supervisor can be managed by an RTP and can be done at the same time.

The role of the supervisor is to provide supervision for the GP registrar throughout the post that is in line with the college training standards. This ensures your organisation has a GP registrar who can provide high quality and safe health services in accordance with their level of training and registration.

A GP registrar starting their first six months of core GP training will need significant supervision and possibly a higher level of cultural mentoring support. A more experienced GP registrar will require less supervision and will work more independently. Your local RTP can provide further advice in this area.
Who provides cultural mentoring to the GP registrar?

Cultural mentoring is an important part of the GP registrar learning process while they are training in an ACCHS. A cultural mentor is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who has knowledge of their traditional lands and culture, and is accepted by the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Cultural mentors help GP registrars to bridge the cultural divide between them and communities. Cultural mentors support GP registrars to develop culturally safe clinical practice to enable them to provide culturally appropriate, holistic health care to their patients.

The ACCHS is responsible for employing a cultural mentor. The ACCHS may be reimbursed by the RTP for the agreed remuneration of the cultural mentor. Support and appropriate remuneration for cultural mentors should be discussed with the RTP, along with any other terms and conditions which require negotiation.

“I stressed about not having enough knowledge about Aboriginal culture, and really putting my foot in it. Instead, I have found patient and thoughtful Cultural Mentors in my Aboriginal colleagues (and sometimes, my patients too) who teach me things every day that I just couldn’t learn anywhere else.

My patients are wonderful – warm and welcoming, stoic, and devoted. I witness strong family and community in a way that many other aspects of Australian society just don’t seem to have anymore.”

- Dr David Chessor – GP Registrar, North Coast General Practice Training, undertaking an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training post at Durri AMS.
Interested in training a GP registrar? What to do next

- Find your local RTP (see pages 8-9)
- Contact your local RTP to discuss your options and what you need to do to become accredited to train a registrar
- Speak with and build a relationship with your RTP and discuss the needs of your ACCHS and community
- Work with your local RTP to make any necessary changes to your ACCHS in preparation for the accreditation process
- Your RTP will organise for your ACCHS to be accredited by the RACGP, ACRRM or both colleges
- Once accredited, start making arrangements with your local RTP to employ a GP registrar

For further information

For further information and to discuss becoming an accredited ACCHS please contact your local RTP (see pages 8-9).

Further information regarding the AGPT program and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health training posts can also be found on the GPET website at www.gpet.com.au.

To read more about training posts from a registrar’s perspective download the Registrars - A Journey of Healing brochure, also available on the GPET website.

OPPORTUNITY

“We see hosting a registrar as an opportunity to showcase the AMS community-control model, and promote understanding of Aboriginal Health issues. We’ve seen a number of Registrars continue working in AMSs following terms as a registrar, thus addressing the ever-present GP workforce issues. The registrar is another worker on the team to help us achieve our goal of closing the gap – there’s lots of work to do!”

- Noeline Brown, EEN and Aboriginal Cultural Mentor, and Dr Peter Fletcher, GP Supervisor
Note: Some areas of Australia are designated ‘shared’ or ‘transitional’ zones. These areas are currently shared by or in transition between RTPs. For further information contact the relevant RTPs directly.

* General Practice Training Queensland (formerly Central and Southern Queensland Training Consortium).
**Australian Capital Territory/New South Wales**

Beyond Medical Education (NSW and Victoria)
W: www.beyondmedical.com.au
T: (02) 6334 4359 or (03) 5441 9300

Bogong Regional Training Network (NSW and Victoria)
W: www.bogong.org.au
T: (02) 6057 8600
E: bogong@bogong.org.au

Coast City Country General Practice Training (ACT and NSW)
W: www.ccctraining.org
T: (02) 6923 5400
E: admin@ccctraining.org

General Practice Training Valley to Coast (NSW)
W: www.gptvc.com.au
T: (02) 4968 6753
E: gptraining@gptvc.com.au

GP Synergy (Sydney and northern NSW)
W: www.gpsynergy.com.au
T: (02) 9818 4433
E: info@gpsynergy.com.au

North Coast GP Training (northern NSW)
W: www.ncgpt.org.au
T: (02) 6681 5711
E: info@ncgpt.org.au

WentWest (western Sydney)
W: www.wentwest.com.au
T: (02) 8811 7100
E: wentwest@wentwest.com.au

**South Australia**

Adelaide to Outback GP Training Program
W: www.adelaidetooutback.com.au
T: (08) 8366 3100
E: info@adelaidetooutback.com.au

Southern GP Training (SA and Victoria)
W: www.southerngptraining.com.au
T: (03) 5132 3100 or (03) 5562 0051
E: east@sgpt.com.au or west@sgpt.com.au

Sturt Fleurieu Education and Training
W: www.sfet.com.au
T: (08) 8172 7600
E: sturt.fleurieu@sfet.com.au

**Tasmania**

General Practice Training Tasmania
W: www.gptt.com.au
T: (03) 6215 5000
E: inquiries@gptt.com.au

**Victoria**

Beyond Medical Education (Victoria and NSW)
W: www.beyondmedical.com.au
T: (03) 5441 9300 or (02) 6334 4359

Bogong Regional Training Network (Victoria and NSW)
W: www.bogong.org.au
T: (02) 6057 8600
E: bogong@bogong.org.au

Southern GP Training (Victoria and SA)
W: www.southerngptraining.com.au
T: (03) 5562 0051 or (03) 5132 3100
E: west@sgpt.com.au or east@sgpt.com.au

Victorian Metropolitan Alliance
W: www.vma.com.au
T: (03) 9822 1100

**Western Australia**

Western Australia General Practice Education and Training
W: www.wagpet.com.au
T: (08) 9473 8200
E: admin@wagpet.com.au

**Northern Territory**

Northern Territory General Practice Education
W: www.ntgpe.org
T: (08) 8946 7079
E: reception@ntgpe.org

**Queensland**

General Practice Training Queensland (formerly Central and Southern Queensland Training Consortium)
W: www.csqtc.qld.edu.au (gptq.qld.edu.au from January 2014)
T: (07) 3552 8108

Queensland Rural Medical Education
W: www.qrme.org.au
T: (07) 4638 7999

Tropical Medical Training
W: www.tmt.org.au
T: (07) 4729 5000