



AGPT PROGRAM LEAVE POLICY 2019

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Supporting documents, procedures and forms:	AGPT Application - Program Leave
Audience:	Registrars enrolled on the AGPT Program Regional Training Organisations 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 their training while 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, Advanced Specialised Training and Advanced Rural Skills Training (for FARGP only).
Education and Training Requirements	The requirements placed on a registrar working towards fellowship of the RACGP, ACRRM or both. These requirements are specified by 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 calendar 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. These circumstances will not be considered as unforeseen if it can be determined that the circumstances were known or reasonably should have been known by the registrar prior to the acceptance of their place on the AGPT Program. Examples of extenuating circumstances may include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ill-health (other than minor illnesses); • Deterioration of an existing medical condition that can no longer be managed in the current location; • Bereavement; • Acute personal/emotional circumstances; • Hospitalisation; • Illness of an Immediate Family Member; • A major change to a registrar's personal circumstances; or • An involuntary change in a spouse's employment. <p>All applications and requests pertaining to Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances of the registrar will be considered on a case by case basis.</p>
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.
FRACGP	Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
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.
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.
Training Region	An area defined by The Department of Health in Australia within which an RTO is required to deliver training to registrars enrolled on the AGPT Program.
Training Time	The length of time required to complete training on the AGPT Program as specified by the Relevant College.

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 Program Leave Policy 2017* and will come into effect as of 1 January 2019.
- 3.3 The leave allowances specified in this policy refer to leave from the AGPT Program only. Annual/recreational leave and personal 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. All applications for leave should be negotiated and approved in advance by the RTO before the registrar commences leave to ensure that it does not compromise a registrar's progress through training.
- 3.4.1 If a registrar has to take unexpected Category 1 Leave, Category 2 Leave or ADF Service Leave, as per the *AGPT Australian Defence Force Registrars Policy 2019*, from the Program and was unable to apply for leave prior to it commencing they may do so.
- 3.4.2 In these instances it is expected that the registrar will submit an application including all relevant supporting documentation to their RTO within 20 business days of the leave commencing.
- 3.5 All applications for leave from the AGPT Program must include relevant supporting documentation as per clause 8 of the *AGPT Program Policies Overarching Document 2019*.
- 3.6 Leave is granted on a full-time basis regardless of the full-time equivalent (FTE) status of the registrar.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 The leave allowances in this Policy should not be used by a registrar for the express purpose 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 *AGPT Extension of Training Time Policy 2019*.
- 3.8.1 Registrars who wish to sit or resit College Assessments while on a period of leave can only do so if they comply with the requirements of the Relevant College and with the approval of their RTO.

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 AGPT 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 extended leave 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 cannot commence their training on the AGPT Program with a period of leave.
 - 4.5.1 However, if a registrar is unable to commence training they can apply to their RTO to defer the Commencement of Training as per clause 5.4 of this policy.
- 4.6 Registrars have the option of seeking advice and support in relation to any aspect of this policy if required. Clause 6 of the *AGPT Program Policies Overarching Document 2019* specifies organisations that can provide this support.

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 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 generally expected that while a registrar is on approved Category 1 Leave they will not undertake paid employment that is inconsistent with their reason for taking Category 1 Leave.
 - 5.1.4.1 There are certain instances where a registrar may undertake paid employment while on Category 1 Leave and this should be discussed and agreed with the registrar's RTO.
 - 5.1.5 Category 1 Leave will not contribute towards a registrar's Training Time and as such it will not be counted within the registrar's training time cap as specified in clauses 5.13.1 to 5.13.4 of the *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2019*.
- 5.2 Category 2 - Additional Leave From the Program
 - 5.2.1 This leave applies to all registrars and reasons include:
 - 5.2.1.1 Personal reasons;
 - 5.2.1.2 If a registrar is unable to be matched to an appropriate Training Facility and all alternative options have been exhausted by the RTO including, transfers between RTOs, Extended Skills, Advanced Specialised Training and/or Advanced Rural Skills Training; or
 - 5.2.1.3 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.

- 5.2.2.2 For registrars who are placed on Category 2 Leave due to being unable to be matched to an appropriate Training Facility, this Category 2 Leave will not count towards their Category 2 Leave allowance or the training time cap as specified in clauses 5.13.1 to 5.13.4 of the *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2019*.
- 5.2.3 Category 2 Leave can only be accessed after the Commencement of Training. If a registrar is unable to commence training, then a deferral of the Commencement of Training should be applied for as per clause 5.4.
- 5.2.4 Category 2 Leave is capped at a maximum of six calendar months (26 calendar weeks).
- 5.2.5 Category 2 Leave must be approved in writing by the RTO CEO.
- 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.
- 5.2.7 Category 2 Leave (with the exception of clause 5.2.2 above) will contribute towards a registrar's Training Time and will be counted towards the registrar's training time cap as specified in clauses 5.13.1 to 5.13.4 of the *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2019*.
- 5.3 Category 3 - Australian Defence Force (ADF) Service Leave
 - 5.3.1 Further information on ADF Service Leave can be found in the *AGPT Australian Defence Force Registrars Policy 2019*.
- 5.4 Category 4 – Deferral of the Commencement of Training
 - 5.4.1 Generally the deferral of the Commencement of Training on the AGPT Program is not permitted.
 - 5.4.2 Deferral of the Commencement of Training will only be considered:
 - 5.4.2.1 In Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances;
 - 5.4.2.2 For Category 1 Leave;
 - 5.4.2.3 To meet ADF service requirements (see the *AGPT Australian Defence Force Registrars Policy 2019* for further details);
 - 5.4.2.4 If the registrar is unable to be matched to an appropriate Training Facility; or
 - 5.4.2.5 If a Medicare Provider Number is not issued in time for the Commencement of Training.
 - 5.4.3 Registrars seeking to defer the Commencement of Training due to Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstance will need to demonstrate these circumstances, including:
 - 5.4.3.1 Provide all relevant supporting documentation and evidence of the Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances; and
 - 5.4.3.2 Provide evidence to show that their circumstances were unforeseen when they accepted their place on the AGPT Program.
 - 5.4.4 In order to apply to defer the Commencement of Training, registrars must:
 - 5.4.4.1 Complete the AGPT Application - Deferral of Training and submit it to their RTO, along with all relevant evidence and supporting documentation for consideration, a minimum of 20 business days prior to the Commencement of Training.
 - 5.4.4.1.1 Exceptions to this timeframe may be considered by the RTO in Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances.
 - 5.4.5 Registrars can apply to defer the Commencement of Training as follows:
 - 5.4.5.1 An initial period of up to six calendar months (26 calendar weeks) approved by the RTO; and

5.4.5.2 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 and approval.

5.4.5.2.1 Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. Registrars are not automatically entitled to this additional six calendar months of deferral.

5.4.5.3 Registrars deferring the Commencement of Training for the purposes of Category 1 Leave are able to apply for longer than 6 calendar months initially, provided the requested period of deferral is reflective of the state and territory leave entitlements relevant to the Training Region in which the registrar is enrolled.

5.4.6 If after deferring the Commencement of Training for a maximum of 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 2019*.

5.4.7 A registrar's deferral of the Commencement of Training will not count towards their Category 2 Leave allowances or their training time cap specified in clauses 5.13.1 to 5.13.4 of the *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2019* and as such the Training Time cap will commence once the registrar commences training on the AGPT Program.

5.4.8 RTOs must notify the Department of Health via both AGPTManagement@health.gov.au and AGPTreporting@health.gov.au of any registrars who are approved to defer the Commencement of Training on the AGPT Program within 20 business days of the deferral being approved. The Relevant College and, for ADF registrars, the Director Health Capability Coordination at Headquarters, Joint Health Command should also be notified.

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 During remediation, unless it is Category 1 Leave or ADF Service Leave as specified in the *AGPT Australian Defence Force Registrars Policy 2019*; and

6.1.3 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 and/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 the 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 may be subject to the *AGPT Withdrawal Policy 2019* 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 a minimum of 30 business

days, where possible, before their intended return date to allow for a Training Facility to be found and a Medicare Provider Number to be applied for.

- 7.2 When returning from extended leave, a registrar may require support to ensure that they regain an appropriate level of competence and have the capacity to train, prior to recommencing their training on the AGPT Program. 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.

8 Policy Exceptions

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Any submissions for the Department of Health's consideration must be supported and submitted by the registrar's RTO. Any application submitted to the Department of Health which is not supported by the registrar's RTO will not be considered.
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 Decisions can only be made based on the evidence available, and failing to respond to a request for further information may lead to a determination to decline the exception request.
- 8.5 Registrars are not automatically entitled to allowances in addition to those specified in this policy.
- 8.6 Any exceptions to the allowances specified in this policy will only be considered when all provisions allowed under this policy have been exhausted.
- 8.7 The Department of Health will advise the RTO of a decision regarding the exception within 20 business days of the receipt of a completed application.

9 Roles and Responsibilities

- 9.1 Registrars are responsible for:
 - 9.1.1 Applying in writing to their RTO for leave, including submitting all relevant supporting documentation and evidence if required or requested;
 - 9.1.2 Applying in writing to their RTO for leave within 30 business days, where possible, of the commencement of a period of leave in the instance that the registrar has had to take a period of unexpected leave and was unable to apply for leave in advance.
 - 9.1.3 Applying in writing to their RTO to defer the Commencement of Training;
 - 9.1.4 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;
 - 9.1.5 Working with their RTO with the intention of finding and being placed at an appropriate Training Facility; and
 - 9.1.6 Communicating with their RTO while on leave, advising any changes to their contact details during their leave and notifying them of their expected return to training date.
- 9.2 RTOs are responsible for:
 - 9.2.1 Managing registrar leave;
 - 9.2.2 Managing registrar training placements and notifying the registrar in writing in the event that a suitable placement cannot be found;
 - 9.2.3 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;

- 9.2.4 Working with registrars to ensure education and training continuity for registrars taking extended leave;
 - 9.2.5 Supporting a registrar's return to training following a period of extended leave;
 - 9.2.6 Ensuring that all leave is approved by the RTO's CEO;
 - 9.2.7 Documenting decisions regarding registrar leave requests and retaining evidence provided with leave requests;
 - 9.2.8 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;
 - 9.2.9 Advising the Relevant College of any periods of leave greater than 12 calendar months;
 - 9.2.10 Giving careful consideration to any requests for leave that, if approved, will result in registrars exceeding their training time cap as specified in clauses 5.13.1 to 5.13.4 of the *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2019*;
 - 9.2.11 Ensuring that if approved leave leads to a registrar's Training Time exceeding the training time cap, the leave is approved in writing by the RTO's CEO as per clause 5.18 of the *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2019*; and
 - 9.2.12 Notifying the Department of Health, the Relevant College, and the Director Health Capability Coordination at Headquarters, Joint Health Command (where applicable) of any deferrals of the Commencement of Training within 20 business days of approval of the request.
- 9.3 The Department of Health is responsible for:
- 9.3.1 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;
 - 9.3.2 Considering and approving requests for Category 2 Leave in situations where the registrar is unable to be matched with an appropriate Training Facility; and
 - 9.3.3 Notifying the Relevant College and the Director Health Capability Coordination at Headquarters, Joint Health Command (where applicable) of any concerns regarding a registrar's progress through training.

10 Compliance and Monitoring

- 10.1 The Department of Health will monitor:
 - 10.1.1 The number of registrars taking Category 2 Leave that exceeds 52 calendar weeks in total;
 - 10.1.2 The number of registrars deferring Commencement of Training on the AGPT Program; and
 - 10.1.3 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 Entering Data into RIDE

- 11.1 Entering training units into RIDE regarding Clause 8, the deferral of the Commencement of Training.
- 11.2 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:
 - 11.2.1 Deferral for maternity leave should be recorded as Category 1 Leave with 'Maternity' as the unit sub-type.
 - 11.2.2 Deferral for ADF Service Leave should be recorded as Category 3 Leave with 'ADF service requirements' as the unit sub-type.

- 11.2.3 Deferral due to Extenuating and Unforeseen Circumstances should be recorded as Category 4 with 'Other Circumstances' as the unit sub-type.
- 11.2.4 All other deferrals should be recorded as Category 4 and the appropriate unit sub-type chosen from:
 - 11.2.4.1 'Registrar Unable to Secure Training Post';
 - 11.2.4.2 'RTP Unable to Identify Training Post';
 - 11.2.4.3 'Registrar not Selected by a Training Practice' or
 - 11.2.4.4 'Late Selection Process'.

12 Related Documents

- 12.1 *AGPT Program Policies 2019 Overarching Document*
- 12.2 *AGPT Australian Defence Force Registrars Policy 2019*
- 12.3 *AGPT Appeals Policy 2019*
- 12.4 *AGPT Extension of Training Time Policy 2019*
- 12.5 *AGPT Rural Generalist Policy 2019*
- 12.6 *AGPT Training Obligations Policy 2019*
- 12.7 *AGPT Withdrawal Policy 2019*
- 12.8 The Relevant College Leave Policies
- 12.9 National Employment Standards
- 12.10 AGPT Application – Program Leave

13 Version Control and Change History

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