

## Fellowship of ACRRM (FACRRM) Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that GPET has received about the Fellowship of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine qualification, following the decision by the Australian Medical Council to grant initial accreditation to ACRRM to deliver general practice training.

### 1. Background

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) announced in July 2006 that:

“In order to attract more general practitioners with procedural skills to rural areas, and subject to the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine’s training program being accredited by the Australian Medical Council, the Commonwealth will provide rural medicine with formal recognition under Medicare as a **generalist discipline** by April 2007”.

The Minister for Health and Ageing, Mr Tony Abbott, announced in February 2007 that:

“The Australian Medical Council has granted [initial accreditation](#) to the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) to provide general practice training. The decision paves the way for the Commonwealth Government to recognise Fellows of ACRRM as general practitioners under Medicare from April 2007. Services provided by recognised Fellows of ACRRM will attract higher A1 Medicare benefits.

“The recognition of ACRRM provides an alternative pathway to vocational recognition for general practitioners.”

### 2. What is ACRRM?

ACRRM is a professional medical college, whose members include rural practitioners from a wide range of specialties. ACRRM delivers training towards the Fellowship of ACRRM (FACRRM). ACRRM is now accredited to

provide general practice training (see above) leading to vocational recognition for general practice level rebate access under Medicare. For more information about ACRRM go to [www.acrrm.org.au](http://www.acrrm.org.au) .

### **3. What is the FACRRM?**

Fellowship of ACRRM (FACRRM) will be one of two vocational endpoint qualifications for registrars in the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program from 2008. From 2008 registrars training in AGPT will be able to choose to do FACRRM **or** the Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners **or** both as vocational endpoints. The ACRRM qualification aims to produce doctors who are capable of working with a high degree of professional independence across the primary and secondary health care continuum, with a broad range of procedural and cognitive skills with a particular focus on rural and remote medicine. Under the AGPT, this vocational training toward the FACRRM will be in the specialty of general practice.

For more information about the FACRRM training and curriculum go to <http://www.acrrm.org.au/main.asp?NodeID=90hes>

### **4. Will the FACRRM qualification be part of the existing Australian General Practice Training program?**

Yes – the FACRRM training qualification is offered as part of the AGPT program, delivered through a regionalised training environment that allows registrars to work with ACRRM-accredited regional training providers (RTPs) to gain access to training, education and support at private practices, hospitals and community settings.

### **5. Who delivers the training for the FACRRM qualification?**

The FACRRM training program and qualification is offered as part of the AGPT program, delivered through **ACRRM accredited** regional training providers (RTPs), to gain access to training, education and support at private practices, hospitals and community settings.

**NB:** Most, but not all, RTPs are currently accredited with ACRRM. Please refer any specific inquiries regarding RTP status to ACRRM.

### **6. If I attain the FACRRM qualification can I be vocationally recognised as a general practitioner under Medicare (as is currently the case for RACGP Fellows)?**

Yes - it is expected that from April 2007 once you attain FACRRM, you will be able to apply to Medicare Australia for recognition as a general practitioner. As a general practitioner, the services you provide would attract Group A1 Medicare benefits (as outlined in the Medicare Benefits Schedule). These arrangements will come into effect in April 2007.

## **7. Would my patients receive higher Medicare rebates if I had the FACRRM qualification than they would with the FRACGP qualification?**

FACRRM will provide access to the GP schedule of the Medicare Benefits Schedule, as does the FRACGP.

## **8. How do I apply to do the FACRRM?**

For registrars interested in pursuing FACRRM via the AGPT you will need to apply through the AGPT selection and enrolment process then subsequently enrol with ACRRM and be invited to join ACRRM as a registrar member.

## **9. Can I apply to do both the FACRRM and the FRACGP?**

Yes. Candidates enrolled in the AGPT can elect to train to both FACRRM and FRACGP. FACRRM training is open to both rural and general pathway registrars.

**NB:** General pathway candidates who wish to pursue FACRRM will need to undertake training in ACRRM-accredited posts including no less than two years in posts located in RRMA 4-7 areas.

## **10. If so, can I do both qualifications at the same time?**

Yes, but requirements for placement, duration of training and completion of training are different between FACRRM and FRACGP. Candidates seeking both fellowships will need to refer to each college's completion of training requirements, including formative and summative assessment.

## **11. What is the difference between the FACRRM training and FRACGP training?**

The ACRRM program is an integrated program which usually takes four years post-internship.

While some posts are suitable for both ACRRM and RACGP candidates this is not automatic and cannot be assumed. ACRRM has different requirements for accreditation of training posts and ACRRM candidates must train in posts

which are accredited by ACRRM, just as RACGP candidates must train in posts which are accredited by the RACGP.

For information about successful completion of FACRRM training go to <http://www.acrrm.org.au/main.asp?NodeID=90>

## **12. When can I start training for FACRRM?**

You can apply for FACRRM training via the AGPT program during your first postgraduate year (intern year).

## **13. Who sets the standards and curriculum for FACRRM?**

The standards and curriculum are set by ACRRM. These standards and curriculum requirements were developed by rural and remote doctors for rural and remote doctors and are accredited by the AMC.

The ACRRM standards and curriculum are maintained and developed by the ACRRM Board via ACRRM's censorial processes.

## **14. How much does the training cost?**

AGPT is funded to cover costs required for your vocational training. There will also be a fee charged for sitting the FACRRM exam.

## **15. Do I have to do all my FACRRM training in rural areas?**

You will need to undertake your training in ACRRM accredited training posts. Most of the practices accredited for the primary training are in rural and remote communities where the broad scope of generalist practice is possible. Other posts include hospital posts in metropolitan, regional and rural settings, community posts in rural and remote communities, Aboriginal Medical Services and other settings such as Royal Flying Doctor Service.

## **16. Can I do the FACRRM qualification if I am in the general pathway of the AGPT program?**

Yes but please note that general pathway candidates who wish to pursue the FACRRM qualification will need to undertake training in ACRRM accredited posts (see above).

## **17. If I am in the rural pathway of the AGPT program do I have to do the FACRRM?**

No, registrars in the rural pathway can train to the FACRRM or FRACGP or both. They can also train to a combination of the FRACGP, Fellowship in

Advanced Rural General Practice and RACGP Graduate Diploma in Rural General Practice.

**18. Can I train in areas of special interest and/or procedural medicine as part of the FACRRM training?**

Yes. ACRRM requires one year of training in an advanced rural skills post (ARSP) including procedural training options. ACRRM advanced skills training is available in any of the following disciplines: surgery; obstetrics; anaesthetics; aboriginal health; emergency medicine; psychiatry; adult internal medicine; population health; paediatrics; remote health.

**19. If I am already enrolled in general practice training (AGPT) can I enrol in the FACRRM qualification?**

Yes. ACRRM will negotiate recognition of prior learning arrangements with candidates and RTPs. However ACRRM can not guarantee full recognition of training time spent in non-accredited posts.

**20. Will the FRACGP training that I have already done be recognised by ACRRM if I decide to switch to the FACRRM qualification?**

All registrars entering AGPTP from 2007 onwards who wish to gain FACRRM will be required to undergo the FULL FACRRM ASSESSMENT.

Transitional arrangements will apply to registrars currently enrolled in AGPTP who are well advanced in current programs:

- Registrars in this category who successfully complete all ACRRM training requirements and the RACGP examination by 31 December 2008 will be awarded FACRRM.
- Those electing to sit ACRRM Assessment only (i.e. not RACGP exam) will be considered on a case-by-case basis through the censorial process. These candidates will be required to complete a number of assessments (depending on stage of training).

Registrars currently in AGPTP as of Jan 2007 who have not completed ACRRM training requirements and FRACGP exam before 31 December 2008 will be required to undertake full FACRRM Assessment.

**21. Will my FACRRM training be recognised by the RACGP if I decide to switch Fellowships before completing the FACRRM?**

The RACGP will negotiate recognition of prior learning arrangements with candidates. However the RACGP does not guarantee full recognition of training time spent in non-accredited posts. You should discuss your plans with your medical educators in your RTP as soon as possible. After review of your training plans by your medical educator, the educator may require further advice from the RACGP State Censor or the College's Rural Censor. After review of your training plans by your medical educator, the educator may require further advice from the RACGP State or Rural Censor

## **22. If I do the FACRRM can I work in the city when I've finished my training and if I do the FRACGP can I work in the country?**

Both qualifications, FACRRM or FRACGP, will enable you to work anywhere in Australia as a general practitioner (subject to government regulation, e.g. '10-year moratorium').

## **23. How long will it take to complete the FACRRM qualification?**

The FACRRM training usually takes four years to complete, although there are also options for part-time training and provisions for experienced doctors to have prior learning recognised and credited against their training requirements. Applications for recognition of prior learning will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the College Censors Committee.

## **24. Is there a final examination? If so, at what stage of training is it held?**

There is a summative assessment process, one or more components of which may be undertaken at completion of training.

## **25. Will I be eligible for rural incentive schemes if I undertake the FACRRM qualification?**

The Government will assist all registrars in the rural pathway with financial incentives of up to \$60,000 via the Rural Registrar Incentive Payments Scheme (RRIPS). For further information please call Medicare Australia on (free call) 1800 700050.

## **26. If I am rurally bonded, or a John Flynn scholar, do I have to do the FACRRM qualification?**

All general practice registrars may choose to undertake the FACRRM, FRACGP or both qualifications as an endpoint of training. They may also choose to undertake the RACGP Fellowship of Advanced Rural General

Practice (FARGP) and the RACGP Graduate Diploma in Rural General Practice in combination with the FRACGP.

**27. If I am a rurally bonded, or a John Flynn scholar, do I receive preferential selection for FACRRM training?**

No, however AGPT is keen to attract doctors who have demonstrated an interest in rural practice.

**28. How many FACRRM places are available each year?**

AGPT allocates a certain number of places per year to regional training providers, **not** to fellowship qualifications. Applicants nominate one or more fellowship qualifications after being selected into the AGPT program.

**29. What is the difference between the FACRRM and the RACGP's Fellowship in Advanced Rural General Practice (FARGP)?**

These are two different programs with different curricula, assessment and placement options. The FARGP is offered only in combination with the FRACGP, and is an RACGP qualification beyond vocational fellowship. The FACRRM is ACRRM's vocational fellowship. Intending registrars should examine the training programs and requirements carefully before enrolling to ensure it offers maximum flexibility and suitability for your future career aspirations. For more information about FACRRM go to <http://www.acrrm.org.au/main.asp?NodeID=90>; for FARGP go to <http://www.racgp.org.au/fargp>.

**30. Are the terms and conditions the same for FACRRM registrars as for FRACGP registrars?**

The AGPT terms and conditions are the same for FACRRM and FRACGP candidates; however, the colleges' training and education requirements are different. Please see the ACRRM Training Handbook for specific information about FACRRM training.