



Rural Generalist Coordination Unit

2023-26 Rural Procedural Skills Consolidation Term Grant Guidelines

November 2023

Introduction

The Rural Generalist Program South Australian (RGPSA) was introduced for the commencement of the 2021 training year and aims to coordinate and build on existing structures and services for the delivery of training.

The RGPSA responds to the Australian Government's Stronger Rural Health Strategy for the National Rural Generalist Pathway and the requirement for the implementation of Rural Generalist Coordination Units (RGCU) in each state and territory, linked to Commonwealth funding.

The RGPSA seeks to align with the National Rural Generalist Pathway, noting that South Australia has a range of variables that need to be considered, such as state junior medical workforce influences, the construct of rural postgraduate medical training programs and the unique geographical and demographical make up of SA.

Advanced Skills Training (AST)

Advanced or additional skills training (AST) is a key strategy of the RGPSA for both junior doctors and Fellowed GPs with the RGPSA increasing accessibility to these posts within rural locations. This increase in AST posts needs to be matched with access to skills consolidation posts to ensure both consolidation of new skills developed through AST training positions but also for upskilling of established rural GPs. To facilitate these positions, the RGPSA provides additional funding to regional local health networks (rLHN) to support skills consolidation positions in key rural locations. Primary care clinics may be considered in certain circumstances. This funding will be allocated to rural health services and rural general practices for hosting, resources and other costs for prospective medical practitioners to consolidate their advanced skills.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this document:

- Clinical Lead: Supports the advanced skills training for general practitioners in regional South Australia
- Funding body: refers to the Rural Support Service, Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network
- Funding Holder: Refers to the regional local health network receiving the nominated RPCT funding
- Primary location: refers to the primary site at which the trainee will be based
- Trainee: is the registrar or Fellowed GP requiring skills consolidation
- Training year: refers to the PGY2+ training year February to February annually



- Primary Mentor: refers to the actively practicing rural generalist with the required specialist skills (Rural Generalist Anaesthetist, Obstetrician or other) who will be working at the same location as the trainee for their skills consolidation placement; and
 - has agreed to oversee/supervise the trainee's skills consolidation placement including the development and review of their learning plan; and
 - Is the primary ongoing support person during the trainee's skills consolidation placement
- Training Organisation: The organisation that provides the training for the trainee undergoing skills consolidation. This may include Fellowed GPs or registrars within any of the following programs:
 - Australian General Practice Training Program (AGPT);
 - Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS);
 - Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) for their Independent Pathway (IP); and/or the
 - Rural Generalist Training Scheme (RGTS); and
 - Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

Trainee Eligibility

The RGPSA's Rural Procedural Consolidation Term (RPCT) Grant is available to support South Australian medical practitioners who have or will shortly have completed their AST, or require upskilling in an existing skill after significant time away from their advanced skills practice.

Where medical practitioners have completed departmentally funded advanced skills training outside of South Australia, their advanced skill must be recognised by a third party e.g. Diploma Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (DRANZCOG), Joint Consultative Committee on Anaesthesia (JCCA) (now known as Diploma of Rural Generalist Anaesthesia (DRGA)) certification or regional or rural hospital credentialing.

Medical practitioners eligible to be supported are:

- Rural generalist registrars on a recognised training pathway such as the:
 - Australian General Practice Training Program (AGPT);
 - Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS);
 - Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) for their Independent Pathway (IP); and/or the Rural Generalist Training Scheme (RGTS); and
 - Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) rural generalist pathway.
- Fellowed general practitioners obtaining advanced skills to sub-specialise as rural generalists. Including RACGP Fellows who have completed an advanced skill as part of obtaining the Rural Generalist Fellowship (FRACGP-RG)
- Rural generalists who have either:
 - significantly de-skilled in a previously obtained advanced skill and require upskilling to return to advanced skill practice; or
 - obtained a second (new) advanced skill and can demonstrate workforce need for the skill in their practicing location and can demonstrate they plan to stay and practice in that location following skills consolidation;

and

- currently reside and work within South Australia.



As a guide, significant de-skilling would generally be considered applicable if the applicant has been absent from advanced practice for a period of greater than 12-months and/or where a practitioner has been unable to utilise existing professional development programs such as the Commonwealth procedural grant. Guidance may be sought from the relevant college with regards to recency of practice and continuing professional development requirements as to whether the RGPSA's Skills Consolidation program is suitable for these applicants.

Fellowed GPs and Rural Generalists

Fellowed GPs and rural generalists who have undertaken advanced skills training and are seeking to consolidate their skills or require upskilling may apply to access the RGPSA RPCT grant where they have the intention to:

- Meet an identified community and workforce need (details to be provided upon application)
- Provide quality care and safe practice
- Support succession planning for delivery of health services within a rural and remote local community
- Maintain advanced skills; or
- Seek to support, as a primary mentor future training of rural generalists in regional South Australia.

Trainee identification

Trainees may be selected for a skills consolidation post in a number of ways:

- a) The prospective trainee may approach the rLHN seeking a skills consolidation post and the RPCT Grant application may then be completed by all parties. The RGCU may be able to assist with this process;
- b) The rLHN may identify that they would like to host a skills consolidation post and seek provisional RPCT Grant approval subject to sourcing a suitable trainee, submitting the trainee's details and learning plan to finalise the application once the trainee has been identified. The trainees may be identified by a recruitment and selection process or through case management of a suitable applicant into the position;
- c) The trainee may approach the RGPSA to request assistance in identifying a skills consolidation post. The RGPSA will then work with a suitable rLHN or primary care clinic to create a position and commence the RPCT Grant application.

Eligible Applicants

Applications for a RGPSA RPCT grant can only be made by the following:

- A South Australian local health network; or
- A regional primary care clinic or health service

Trainee's wanting to undertake a skills consolidation placement are advised to seek the support of the LHN and/or primary care clinic or health service in the development of the application. If a trainee is unsure who to contact please contact the RGPSA for advice and support.

Requirements

RGPSA RPCT applications will be required to:



- Identify the broad training and support the trainee requires to develop independent practice in their advanced skill;
- Outline how the RPCT grant will be used to provide support to the trainee;
- Identify in which community the trainee intends to practice their skills (primary location) during and/or following skills consolidation; and
- Identify the community where the trainee will be undertaking their skills consolidation during their training if different from their primary location of practice (secondary location)

It is anticipated that the majority of support needed for the trainee will be learning to use their skills independently within a small health service context (primary location) and therefore the distribution of funds should reflect this. Where further training or skill development is not able to be obtained in the smaller health service, then it is appropriate for trainees to return to their initial site of training or regional health service for ongoing training (secondary location).

Funding

The maximum amount of RGPSA RPCT grant is **\$25,000 per trainee**. Management of the funds is the responsibility of the identified regional local health network (Fund Holder), in line with the approved budget and guidance from RGPSA.

Placements may cover multiple health services and multiple activities as agreed by the Fund Holder and the trainee prior to the skills consolidation placement commencing.

All funds must be used towards training and development of independent practice and are not to be used to address workforce shortages in a health service.

Funding Period

RGPSA RPCT grant is allocated for the training period as requested by the application. Should additional time be required this should be negotiated between the Fund Holder, trainee, training organisation, any secondary location health services and the RGPU and is subject to availability of funding up to the maximum funding amount.

Eligible funding items:

Funding accessed via the RGPSA RPCT grant can be utilised for the following expenses:

- Salary support for the skills consolidation trainee (some restrictions apply)
- Payment for the primary mentor e.g. GPO, where no other training program funding is already being accessed to provide supervision to the trainee
- Payment for resources and activities that have been included in the Learning Plan for the trainee
- Travel and accommodation for the trainee where they are required to travel for their skills consolidation

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of regional local health network/primary care clinic (Fund Holder)

- All recruitment and employment requirements for the trainee position;
- Ensure all accreditation and supervision requirements are met as per the applicable college and training organisation requirements;



- Review with the trainee both their learning plan and how the funds will be disbursed at the beginning of the placement;
- Coordination of the training placement as per the learning plan across multiple health service sites (where applicable);
- Distribution of the funds across health service sites (where applicable)
- Reporting on the funding expenditure to the RGCU and the trainee's progress;

Trainee

- Work with the training organisation on the development of a learning plan, with identified training needs determined by the trainee and the training organisation and submitted as part of this application;
- Meet all obligations under the learning plan
- Sign up to the Rural Generalist Program South Australia. Visit <https://www.ruralgeneralist.sa.gov.au/> for all the details on the RGPSA and how to sign up.

Primary Mentor

- Meet all primary mentor obligations as per the applicable college and training organisation requirements;
- Formal monitoring of the trainee's progression according to the learning plan;

Training Organisation

- Work with the trainee on development of their learning plan that clearly states the learning outcomes to be achieved during the placement;
- Monitoring progress of the trainee against their learning plan; and
- Notify the RGCU in a timely manner of any concerns in relation to a trainee's progression towards completing the learning plan.

RGCU

- Provide the funding as outlined in these guidelines for RPCT training posts;
- Provide guidance on disbursement of funds
- Provide assistance and/or intervention as required for any issues or barriers for trainees in completing their learning plan.

Applications

Applications are to be submitted using the RGPSA RPCT grant application form and learning plan template and must be made by the regional local health network.

These RGPSA RPCT Grant Guidelines, application and learning plan forms can be found on the RGPSA website: <https://www.ruralgeneralist.sa.gov.au/training-stages/advanced-skills-and-skills-consolidation/rural-procedural-consolidation-term-grants/>

Regional Local Health Network

As the fund holder, the regional local health network should submit the application (primary care clinics may apply in certain circumstances, please contact the RGCU to discuss) along with the learning plan. Provisional approval may be given prior to the identification of a suitable trainee and development of a learning plan.



Final approval will be subject to identification and engagement of a suitable trainee and submission of their learning plan.

Trainees

Trainees should consider identifying their skills consolidation placement prior to successful completion of a 12-month full-time AST. Support can be provided by the RGPU through the RGPU Rural Generalist Lead and Advisors for general advice and to assist with the identification of trainees and placement sites. Please note it is not automatic that a skills consolidation grant will be available, following completion of chosen AST.

The trainee should work with their training organisation, college and primary location health service to develop skills consolidation placement and RGPU RPCT grant application. Please contact the RGPU to discuss your needs and for assistance.

Assessment Criteria

Each application will be assessed on a case by case basis. Assessment criteria include:

- Community need for the skill set;
- Trainee's training requirements and commitment to working in regional South Australia;
- Overall medical workforce skills needs for regional South Australia;
- Proposed planned funding expenditure

Learning Plan Details

The learning plan details should outline how the training will progress, supervision structure and review timelines to work towards independent practice and should be submitted on the learning plan template.

Example of timeline for a learning plan:



Further information

Visit the RGPU website for further information about the RGPU and rural generalism in South Australia:

<https://www.ruralgeneralist.sa.gov.au>

Further information can also be obtained by speaking to the RGPU's Rural Generalist Lead and Advisors or the Rural Support Service's Trainee Medical Officer Unit:

- RG Lead – Dr Mike Beckoff
- RG Advisor Emergency – Dr Angela Travis
- RG Advisor Anaesthetics – Dr Pete Gilchrist



RURAL GENERALIST PROGRAM

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RURAL PROCEDURAL CONSOLIDATION TERM GRANT GUIDELINES

- RG Advisor Obstetrics – Dr Kris Bascomb
- TMO Manager – Kylee Nuss

Email health.SARuralGeneralistTraining@SA.gov.au to set up a time to discuss your needs.

Application Submissions

Check the [RGPSA website](#) for any applicable application opening and closing dates.

Submit applications and learning plans to:

health.SARuralGeneralistTraining@sa.gov.au.