

FELLOWSHIP



ACRRM REGISTRAR SUPPORT COVID-19 PANDEMIC

GUIDE

Australian College of
Rural & Remote Medicine
WORLD LEADERS IN RURAL PRACTICE



ACRRM REGISTRAR SUPPORT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The College understands the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on all ACRRM registrars and is committed to ensuring the proper support channels are in place to assist with professional and personal wellbeing as well as training progression.

This document, along with the continually updated [ACRRM Registrar FAQs](#), outlines the supports in place for all ACRRM registrars, including the College's [COVID-19](#) support and support for registrars. The College is confident the already established online functionality and flexibility of training for our rural and remote registrars will continue to provide the relevant resources for all training pathways – 'we are all in this together'.

Training flexibility to ensure registrar progression

ACRRM's current flexible training policies are in place to ensure we can continue to support you during this unprecedented time.

If you are concerned you will be unable to maintain or meet your training program requirements or undertake assessments, the College and/or your training organisation will work with you to review and update your training plans during and following COVID-19. Remember, the [Fellowship Training Handbook](#) and College Policies will guide you in planning your training.

Telehealth consultations

Telehealth consultations associated with a registrar's accredited training post will count towards training time. The College is continuing to update and develop a range of telehealth resources in this area and encourages all registrars to access these.

Registrars nearing completion

Registrars approaching the end of their training time with outstanding assessment, training and education requirements will be considered individually to minimise delays in achieving Fellowship due to the pandemic.

Registrars requiring further advice, guidance or support are encouraged to contact their [training organisation \(RTO/RVTS\)](#) and/or the [ACRRM Training Team](#) if you are on the Independent Pathway.

College Assessments

ACRRM is experienced at conducting assessments in virtual format and will continue to offer all scheduled assessments using online formats during the pandemic.

Registrars currently enrolled for an ACRRM assessment have already been contacted to discuss updated arrangements.

Registrars who are considering enrolment should refer to the [assessment page](#) on the web or the [ACRRM Fellowship Assessment Handbook](#) for information on specific assessments. The ACRRM [assessment team](#) is also available to assist.

Education requirements

There will be no interruption to the weekly ACRRM education program for Independent Pathway registrars. Regional Training Organisations have been encouraged to consider innovative and virtual methods to ensure ongoing delivery of the curriculum and teaching program.

Emergency courses and other face to face skills courses will resume once it is appropriate to do so. ACRRM will schedule additional REST and emergency courses to ensure registrars are able to meet these requirements quickly, with priority given to registrars requiring course completion to finalise their training.

AGPT Training Time and Leave entitlements

We recognise that COVID-19 may put pressure on AGPT registrars' leave or training time requirements. The College has worked with the Department of Health and Regional Training Organisations to put measures in place to assist registrars experiencing constraints on their leave entitlements. New policies have been agreed to allow the College to grant COVID-19 Leave and COVID-19 Extension of Training Time where needed.

Further information on training flexibility can be found in the [ACRRM Registrar FAQs](#).

Medicare Provider Number access

Registrars requiring [access to a Medicare Provider Number](#) will be able to do so without significant delay.

Registrar Wellbeing

The wellbeing of our registrars is a high priority of the College. The additional workload facing frontline workers, as well as pressure from external influences, can bring additional stresses. Registrars should monitor their own mental and physical health needs and watch out for colleagues during this time. It's important to seek help early if needed.

Access to the College's [EAP service](#) is free of charge and available to all College registrars.

Connecting with your colleagues and peers is also encouraged through either the [Registrar Committee Facebook](#) group or the College's discussion forum [CONNECT@ACRRM](#).

Pregnant health care workers and other at-risk workers can find some useful [information](#) through RANZCOG. The Department of Health is also running an online 30-minute module on [COVID-19 infection control](#) for health care workers in all settings covering the fundamentals of infection prevention and control.

Rural Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs

The College is in discussion with the Federal Department of Health regarding the shortage of PPEs nationally. Issues surrounding supply levels are due to international competition for PPE, however PHNs are re-supplying PPE approximately every two weeks. It is critical that doctors caring for patients with, or under investigation of, or under suspicion of being infected with COVID-19, do so only with access to PPE.

Visit the College's webpage on [Infection Control: Basic Hints](#) for your practice for further information.

Employment security

As with Australians in all fields of work, the College understands that changes in staffing arrangements may occur during the current economic climate. Clinics facing hardship should investigate options through the Government's [JobKeeper](#) payment scheme.

The National Terms and Conditions [for Employment of Registrars](#) (NCTER) sets out the agreed minimum acceptable terms by which registrar employment changes can occur. The Fair Work Act provides advice on rights for employees facing termination or other changes to employment.

If you have concerns speak with the College or your training organisation (for AGPT or RVTS registrars). You may wish to seek specific workplace-based advice from the [Rural Doctors Association of Australia](#) (RDAA) or the [Australian Medical Association](#) (AMA).

Advocating for you

The College President and Chief Executive Officer are meeting regularly with the Rural Health Minister, the Chief Health Officer and key Department officials federally and in the states and territories. If there are issues in your community that you feel should be raised with them, please let us know by contacting the College policy team on 1800 223 226 or at policy@acrrm.org.au

REGISTRAR RESOURCES

COVID-19

- [ACRRM COVID-19 Registrar FAQs](#)
- [ACRRM COVID-19 Support](#)
- [Weekly Rural and Remote Response webinar series - ACRRM COVID-19](#), currently held on – Tuesdays @ 8pm (AEST)
- [FAQs – ACRRM Training Program Advice](#)
- [Dept of Health](#)

Support networks

- ACRRM Training Officers – 1800 223 226
- CONNECT@ACRRM
- [ACRRM Support for Registrars](#)
- Registrar Committee - registrarchair@acrrm.org.au
- Training Organisation [Registrar Liaison Officers](#)
- [EAP – 1800 818 728](#)
- [Doctors Health Advisory Services](#) (state based)
- [The Doctors Clinic](#)
- [CRANAPlus – 1800 805 391](#)
- [Drs4Drs](#)
- [Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636](#)
- [Lifeline – 13 11 14](#)
- [JobKeeper](#) payment scheme

Registrars are also encouraged to use the support network of their supervisors and training organisations.

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