

2010 training year changes – FAQs

The information contained in this document is current as at 23 September 2009 but may be subject to minor change.

Simplifying the AGPT Program Rules

1. What is changing and when?

From 1 January 2010 registrars training on the general pathway will have greater flexibility to fulfil their training placement obligations. General pathway registrars will now be able to nominate how they fulfil their 12 month training pathway obligations, by electing one of the following options:

- 12 months training in a RRMA 3-7 or RA2-5 location or
- 12 months training in an Outer Metropolitan location or
- 6 month training in a RRMA 3-7 or RA2-5 location plus 6 months training in an Outer Metropolitan location

From 1 July 2010 the remoteness classification structure underpinning the pathways will change from Rural Remote Metropolitan Area (RRMA) to Australian Standard Geographic Classification - Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA).

The General training pathway will apply in Remoteness Area (RA) 1-5 locations, and the rural pathway will apply in RA 2-5 locations. Any rural training from 1 July 2010 will need to be undertaken in a RA 2-5 location.

Details of the classification structure changes and specific locations can be found at FAQ 3-4.

2. How will the change to the pathway rules be implemented?

The change to the AGPT pathway obligation rules in relation to general pathway obligations will take effect from the beginning of the 2010 training year for all commencing and continuing registrars.

However, continuing general pathway registrars (2009 cohort and earlier) and 2010 cohort entry registrars that are (or will be) training with a non-capital city RTP that previously had only a 6 month pathway obligation (i.e. no Outer Metropolitan requirement) will still only have a 6 month obligation. All general pathway registrars entering the AGPT program from 2011 onwards will have a 12 month pathway obligation that can be fulfilled in one of three ways as outlined in FAQ 1.

Continuing registrars (2009 cohort and earlier) who have already committed to a training placement for the first 6 months of the 2010 training year will be required to meet this commitment to ensure certainty of training and supervision over this period.

General pathway registrars wishing to undertake their rural training obligation as one 12-month placement will need approval from their RTP to do so for all training commencing before 1 July 2010; this is to ensure the registrars' rural obligation will still be met under both the RRMA and ASGC-RA structures, given the change to ASGC-RA commences on 1 July 2010. RTPs may consider and approve the commencement of a 12 month placement, rather than a 6 month placement, in either a rural or outer metropolitan location in the program.

3. What is ASGC-RA?

From 1 July 2010, the Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) system will be replaced by the Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) system.

The ASGC-RA has been developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, uses 2006 Census data, and is widely used by Commonwealth and state agencies.

Moving to the ASGC-RA will improve structures for attracting health services to areas of genuine need. The ASGC-RA has been developed as part of broader health reforms supporting 'the more remote you go, the greater the reward'.

The ASGC-RA groups regions that share remoteness characteristics into RA groups. RA 1 is major cities and can be defined as urban locations; RA 2 to 5 is grouped in progressively more remote locations, and can be defined as regional or remote.

For more information about how the ASGC-RA categories are calculated, please refer to the ABS website - <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/lookup/0D204FD3DCD90564CA256F19001303A2?opendocument>.

4. How do I know the RA classification of a training location?

A location's RA classification and attached incentives can be searched using the RA locator on the DoctorConnect website - <http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/Publishing.nsf/Content/RA-locator>.

5. What training requirements will apply to general pathway registrars?

From 1 January 2010 general pathway registrars will now be able to fulfil their 12 month training pathway obligation by electing one of the following options:

- 12 months training in a RRMA 3-7 or RA2-5 location or
- 12 months training in an Outer Metropolitan location or
- 6 month training in a RRMA 3-7 or RA2-5 location plus 6 months training in an Outer Metropolitan location

Continuing general pathway registrars (2009 cohort and earlier) and 2010 cohort entry registrars that are (or will be) training with a non-capital city RTP that previously had only a 6 month pathway obligation (i.e. no Outer Metropolitan requirement) will still only have a 6 month obligation. All general pathway registrars entering the AGPT program from 2011 onwards will have a 12 month pathway obligation that can be fulfilled in one of three ways as outlined above.

Rural pathway registrars will still be required to undertake the majority of their training in rural locations, which will be RRMA 3-7 before 1 July 2010 and RA 2-5 locations from 1 July 2010.

6. How will the change affect continuing general pathway registrars?

General pathway registrars that have completed their pathway obligation prior to the changes being introduced (on 1 January 2010) will not be affected by the revised pathway rules.

General pathway registrars that have not yet completed their pathway obligation (prior to 1 January 2010) will be able to choose whether to undertake their training as two 6-month periods of training in rural and Outer Metropolitan or one 12-month period of training in a rural or Outer Metropolitan location. Between 1 January

2010 and 1 July 2010, if a registrar chooses to undertake this training as one 12-month period, the registrar's RTP will need to approve the training locations.

Continuing general pathway registrars (2009 cohort and earlier) and 2010 cohort entry registrars that are (or will be) training with a non-capital city RTP that previously had only a 6 month pathway obligation (i.e. no Outer Metropolitan requirement) will still only have a 6 month obligation. All general pathway registrars entering the AGPT program from 2011 onwards will have a 12 month pathway obligation that can be fulfilled in one of three ways as outlined in FAQ 1.

Continuing registrars (2009 cohort and earlier) who have already committed to a training placement for the first 6 months of the 2010 training year will be required to meet this commitment to ensure certainty of training and supervision over this period.

For all registrars 'Rural' will be RA 2-5 from 1 July 2010 onwards.

7. How will the change affect continuing rural pathway registrars?

Pathway obligations for rural pathway registrars will not be affected. For all registrars 'Rural' will be classified as RA 2 to RA 5 from 1 July 2010 onwards.

8. How will registrars starting AGPT in 2010 be affected?

Rural pathway registrars will continue to be required to undertake the majority of their training in rural areas, as was the case with the AGPT program prior to the budget announcement in May 2009. In the period between 1 January 2010 and 30 June 2010, rural areas will be classified as RRMA 3-7. From 1 July 2010 rural areas will be determined under the ASGC RA classification and include RA 2-5 locations.

General pathway registrars will be able to nominate how they fulfil their 12 month training pathway obligation, by electing one of the following options:

- 12 months training in a RRMA 3-7 or RA 2-5 location or
- 12 months training in an Outer Metropolitan location or
- 6 month training in a RRMA 3-7 or RA 2-5 location plus 6 months training in an Outer Metropolitan location

2010 cohort entry general pathway registrars that accepted a training place with a non-capital city RTP that previously had only a 6 month pathway obligation (i.e. no Outer Metropolitan requirement) will still only have a 6 month obligation. All general pathway registrars entering the AGPT program from 2011 onwards will have a 12 month pathway obligation that can be fulfilled in one of three ways as outlined in FAQ 1.

9. Will there be any restrictions on training in RA 2 (such as currently in RRMA 3)?

Currently rural pathway registrars are limited to a maximum 12 months training in RRMA 3 locations. With the commencement of ASGC-RA on 1 July 2010 there will be no limit to the amount of training that registrars can undertake in any of the RA 2-5 category locations. Training locations and distribution of training placements across an RTP region will be managed by the local RTP to ensure appropriate workforce outcomes are achieved (as set out in the contractual arrangements between GPET and the Regional Training Provider (RTP)).

10. How will the change impact the Outer Metropolitan Registrars Program?

The Outer Metropolitan Registrar Program guidelines will be amended prior to 1 July 2010 to accommodate the change of the pathway classification structure from RRMA to ASGC-RA. The following changes will be included in the new guidelines:

- Registrar incentives for Outer Metropolitan training will be aligned with the GPRIP incentives
- GPRIP incentives (instead of Outer Metropolitan incentives) will apply for training in Outer Metropolitan locations that are RA2-5
- In General Practice Training Tasmania and Northern Territory General Practice Education (which will no longer have urban locations but will still have Outer Metropolitan locations) registrars on both pathways will be able to train in Outer Metropolitan locations
- The Outer Metropolitan Registrar Program will no longer be restricted to RTPs currently listed in the guidelines (all general pathway registrars that train with an RTP that has Outer Metropolitan locations will be able to have their training in an Outer Metropolitan practice counted towards their 12 month pathway obligation).

Outer Metropolitan incentives for practices will remain unchanged.

The new guidelines will be released before 1 July 2010.

11. How will the change affect supervisors/practices?

A small number of training practices will be reclassified from 'urban' (under RRMA) to 'rural' under the new ASGC-RA classification system. These practices will be able to train both general and rural pathway registrars, and registrars in these practices will be able to participate in the General Practice Rural Incentive Program (GPRIP).

A small number of training practices will be reclassified from being 'rural' under RRMA to 'urban' under ASGC-RA. These practices will now train general pathway registrars.

A small number of training practices will be classified as both Outer Metropolitan and 'rural' under the new ASGC-RA classification system. These practices will still be eligible for Outer Metropolitan practice incentives.

General Practice Rural Incentives Program

1. What is General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP)?

The new General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP) will commence from 1 July 2010. It will replace the Registrars Rural Incentive Payments Scheme (RRIPS), which applies to GP registrars on the AGPT program, and the Rural Retention Program, which applies to General Practitioners.

The new incentives program will provide a consistent set of incentive payments that applies on an equivalent basis for GPs and registrars practicing in rural locations. This new program will streamline the administration of incentive payments and provide parity between GPs and GP registrars.

Eligibility for GPRIP will be based on the Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) classification system.

2. When will the change commence?

GPRIP will start from 1 July 2010; all training occurring after 1 July 2010 will attract the GPRIP payments.

3. How will the change affect continuing registrars?

Incentive payments for training undertaken by registrars before 1 July 2010 will be made under the RRIPS. From 1 July 2010 incentive payments will be made under the GPRIP. Training undertaken in eligible rural locations prior to 1 July 2010 will be recognised for calculating time spent in a rural location under the GPRIP.

4. How will the change affect commencing registrars?

The RRIPS will be applicable for registrars commencing the AGPT program in eligible training terms at the start of the 2010 training year, for all training undertaken before 1 July 2010. From 1 July 2010 incentive payments will be made under the GPRIP. Training undertaken prior to 1 July 2010 will be recognised for calculating time spent in a rural location for the purposes of future payments.

5. How do I know what RA a location is?

A location's ASGC-RA category and attached incentives can be searched using the RA locator on the DoctorConnect website - <http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/Publishing.nsf/Content/RA-locator>.

6. Have the eligibility requirements changed?

Under GPRIP registrars on both pathways are treated equally. If they provide services in a RA 2-5 location for the required period of time, they will be eligible to receive the relevant incentive payment.

Gaps of 12 months or more from rural training will result in the incentives reverting back to the lowest level; this is known as the "continuity of service eligibility" requirement of the GPRIP.

7. Which registrars are eligible for GPRIP?

All registrars, on both the rural and general pathway, will be eligible for GPRIP payments following their first 6 months in a RA 3-5 location or following 12 months in a RA 2 location.

8. Which locations are eligible for GPRIP?

All training undertaken in RA 2-5 locations that satisfy the continuity of service eligibility requirements will be eligible for GPRIP payments.

9. What incentive will registrars receive?

Under GPRIP incentives will be paid according to a sliding scale based on the ASGC-RA category and the length of time spent in a rural location. A registrar undertaking an initial 6 month training block in a rural location will be entitled to the base level incentive payment (the base payment for the initial 6 months being undertaken in RA 2 locations is zero dollars). For the second and subsequent 6 month block the payment increases. No incentive payment is granted for the first 6 month rural placement if it is conducted in an RA 2 location, however, the time counts towards the total duration of rural training for calculating the level of incentive payment for second and subsequent training blocks.

See the GPRIP fact sheet for the payment scale - <http://www.agpt.com.au/Registrars/GPRIPFAQs/>.

10. Will the incentive increase if a registrar moves to a more remote location?

Yes. Registrars who move from any RA 2-5 location to one that is more remote are eligible for the higher payment that applies to that classification, depending on the period of time spent in a rural location. Any gaps in training or leave taken would need to be approved to ensure continuous service requirements are met.

11. Where can I find more information?

More information about the GPRIP is available from the fact sheet - <http://www.agpt.com.au/Registrars/GPRIPFAQs/>. The GPRIP guidelines for registrars will also be released closer to the commencement of the program (in early 2010).