

### Introduction

As an adult learner, the registrar may have had previous experience in accredited hospital or other posts that may be recognised as relevant prior learning for general practice. In order to facilitate registrars' access to flexibility, efficiency and self direction in relation to learning choices and time spent in training, GP registrars may apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). RPL may be used for shortening the length of time in training or for recognising content of prior learning.

Applications for RPL must be made in the first 12 months of training.

The purpose of RPL is to ensure that a rigorous and adequately documented process is followed in the application for, and granting of, recognition of prior learning, which provides evidence of the relevance of prior learning to the learning objectives of Australian General Practice Training (AGPT).

Recognition of prior learning relevant to general practice may be used for two purposes. It may enable the registrar to reduce the overall time spent in AGPT or it may reduce the time the registrar needs to spend on skills they have already gained and instead use that time to pursue additional training in particular areas during training.

### Eligibility

To be eligible for Recognition of Prior Learning GP registrars must have at least one year of post-intern hospital experience and be unconditionally medically registered in Australia for that post-intern experience before enrolment in training.

GP registrars whose prior hospital experience has been given RPL are eligible to apply and be considered for an exemption from some or all of the time requirements for Hospital Terms in recognition of their prior learning.

For hospital experience to be considered for Recognition of Prior Learning it must have occurred in hospital posts accredited by the RACGP.

GP registrars whose prior experience includes Special Skills posts are eligible to be considered for an exemption from some or all of the time requirements for Special Skills terms in recognition of their prior learning. This prior experience in Special Skills posts must have been obtained in accredited posts. Satisfactory documentation of employment in the post(s) must be provided.

Applicants who are successful in gaining Recognition of Prior Learning for either hospital or Special Skills, or both, will be eligible for up to a maximum of 52 weeks exemption from the time requirements of training, depending on the number of weeks they have completed and have had recognised in the respective areas in their post-intern hospital year(s).

## **Application Procedure**

Applications from registrars for Recognition of Prior Learning are submitted to registrars' identified medical educators.

In the case of registrars who do not seek to have the length of their training reduced, an application for RPL can be approved by the medical educator, who will advise on the need for involvement of the relevant College Censor. They will also advise on structuring the registrar's future learning plan in accordance with the outcomes of the RPL application.

In the case of registrars who seek to reduce their time in AGPT through recognition of their prior learning, medical educators will assist the registrars to develop an adequately documented submission and liaise with the College Censor to determine college requirements. The relevant College Censor will make a decision on their application and the medical educator will work with the registrar to ensure that their remaining training requirements are modified to address learning needs in accordance with the outcomes of the RPL application.

## **General Process and Documentation Requirements**

An application for Recognition of Prior Learning must be made to the regional senior medical educator and, in the case of RPL for Hospital or Special Skills experience, include a portfolio of documentation to provide evidence of the relevance of their prior learning to the learning objectives of training.

Approval of applications is the responsibility of the local senior medical educator and the RACGP State Censor. Unusual or complex cases are to be referred to GPET which in turn will take the issues up with the RACGP Censor in Chief for determination.

To be considered for Recognition of Prior Learning for hospital/special skills, applicants need to have completed at least one year of post-intern hospital experience before enrolment in Australian General Practice Training. They must have had unconditional medical registration in Australia for this period of hospital experience.

Applicants may be required to attend an interview to support their application.

## **Application Requirements (refer Application Form on the GPET website)**

Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning must be accompanied by a portfolio of relevant documentation which provides sufficient evidence to warrant a decision that:

- a. the learning objectives have been attained,
- b. there has been adequate participation in educational activities, and
- c. there has been adequate participation in formative assessment.

The portfolio is to include:

- A written essay of 500 words explaining how particular experiences have helped meet the learning objectives of the Hospital and/or Special Skills components of Australian General Practice Training.
- A log of educational activities attended by the applicant with accompanying reference as to how such activities relate to the learning objectives of the hospital and/or Special Skills components of training.

- A description of feedback and formative assessment processes undertaken and inclusion of feedback and assessments provided by supervisors to the applicant.
- The names and addresses of three supervisors who could act as referees to discuss the applicant's knowledge and skills, with particular reference to training for general practice.
- Other relevant information such as conference papers, research grants, publications, committee activity, testimonials, etc.

## **Guidelines for Assessment of Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning**

In exercising responsibility for recommending applications to the respective RACGP Censor, the regional senior medical educator will approach the State RACGP Censor to determine the Censor's views and requirements as to any delegation of the recommendation process to, for example, medical education staff in the regional program or in adjacent regions or such other methods as determined by the State RACGP Censor in consultation with the regional senior medical educator.

Evidence contained in the portfolio will be assessed for:

- a. strong evidence that learning objectives and requirements have been met, or
- b. borderline evidence that learning objectives and requirements have been met, or
- c. insufficient evidence that learning objectives and requirements have been met.

Assessment will also be made on the evidence as provided in the application (eg. the essay, conference papers, publications or, with respect to general practice applications, the level of evidence to satisfy the stated criteria) in arriving at an overall assessment of an application. The overriding principle is that the learning objectives of the training program have been met.

At the discretion of the senior medical educator, the applicant may be invited to attend for interview in order to clarify information contained in the submitted portfolio and to provide additional information/evidence as deemed necessary to support the application.

The application will be assessed to determine the amount of time which is to be recognised. With respect to hospital and special skills applications, the maximum credit of 52 weeks available to any applicant is dependent on the number of weeks undertaken in accredited Hospital or Special Skills posts. With respect to general practice applications the maximum time that will be credited is one Unit of training.

## **Results of Applications**

The applicant shall be notified of the decision within three months of receipt of a completed application.

Once an application has been assessed, a decision made and the registrar notified, the registrar's remaining training requirements will be modified in accordance with the decision.

Within one month from the date of notification of a decision, an appeal may be lodged by an applicant and will be considered in accordance with the RTP's Appeals Procedure.

## **Application for Recognition of Prior Learning – Advanced Rural Awards**

Registrars seeking to attain the RACGP's Graduate Diploma in Rural General Practice or Fellowship of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) can apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Registrars are advised to contact the RACGP Rural Faculty or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine for further information in regards to RPL procedures and other components required to complete an advanced rural award.

The previous experience which may be considered for RPL for Advanced Rural Awards includes appropriate accredited hospital and/or community experience. The principle is that the applicant has sufficient education and clinical experience in the rural or remote context and completes the relevant curriculum and assessment requirements.

## **Recognition of Prior Learning – ACRRM**

ACRRM employs a range of criteria with numerical weightings for aspects of training and experience to assess RPL that can be used for credit towards attainment of the ACRRM Fellowship. This includes credit for aspects of practice that might reasonably be seen as contributing towards competence. Up to 16 points are required for Fellowship which may be made up of components from the following activities: participation in a relevant training program, clinical practice in rural and remote medicine in a peer-reviewed environment, participation in continuing professional development, attainment of a higher academic or professional degree or qualification in another medical discipline e.g. FRACP, FRACS, contribution to the field of rural and remote medicine through leadership, professional or academic contributions to undergraduate/postgraduate education, or publications in scientific journals and/or contributions to scientific meetings.

Registrars should contact ACRRM and work with their medical educator to determine their RPL status in relation to the ACRRM Fellowship within the first 12 months of entry into AGPT in order to make the best use of their training time.