

Registrars Rural Incentive Payments Scheme (RRIPS)

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

The General Practice Registrars Rural Incentive Payments Scheme (RRIPS) aims to promote careers in rural medicine and increase the number of doctors in rural and regional areas in the longer term.

RRIPS provides financial incentives for general practice registrars who undertake a substantial part of their general practice training in rural and remote areas of Australia, giving rural communities improved access to health services.



A number of changes to RRIPS were introduced for the 2008 general practice training year, such as:

The eligibility for RRIPS was extended from Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Area (RRMA) 4-7 locations to RRMA 3-7, which means RRMA 3 training locations now attract RRIPS in approved circumstances.

Eligibility was also extended to registrars on the general pathway of the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program who have demonstrated a commitment to rural general practice of 12 months or more.

A sliding scale of incentive payments was introduced with substantially higher payments for training in more remote locations.

RRIPS incentive amounts are now calculated based on GP Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia (GPARIA) categories A-E, with E representing those locations identified as most in need of support in retaining doctors.

What has changed?

RRIPS was recently reviewed and remodelled with a view to encouraging more GP registrars to train in rural areas.

Key changes to RRIPS that make it more equitable and attractive include:

- Eligibility expanded to RRMA 3 locations to coincide with a reform that sees RRMA 3 become part of the rural pathway
- Eligibility expanded to general pathway registrars who demonstrate a commitment to rural general practice
- A sliding scale of incentives based on GPARIA (see below)
- Increased incentive amounts.

When will the reform commence?

The reform will commence from Semester 1 2008. There will be a six-month transition period during which registrars will commence under the new arrangements at different times depending on the timing of their regional training provider's (RTP's) practice matching and allocation.

Your practice matching will not be affected if you have already been matched to a practice for Semester 1 2008 (however the revised incentive amounts will be paid for RRIPS eligible training completed in Semester 1 2008).

By the beginning of Semester 2 2008 all registrars will be fully transitioned to the new arrangements.

What is meant by the sliding scale?

The sliding scale of incentives means higher incentives are paid the longer a registrar stays in a rural location and higher incentives are paid in more rural locations (locations with a higher GPARIA). For more information about GPARIA go to the AGPT program website at www.agpt.com.au/pdf/RRIPSRMA3FAQs_v4.pdf.

The lowest incentive is paid for the first year in the lowest GPARIA category and the highest incentive is paid for the third year in the highest GPARIA category (see graph below).

Have the eligibility requirements changed?

The main eligibility requirements for RRIPS have not changed, but have been extended: from 2008, eligible locations for RRIPS have been extended from RRMA 4-7 to RRMA 3-7 locations, which means registrars training in RRMA 3 will now be eligible for RRIPS

Until now only rural pathway registrars were eligible for RRIPS. From 2008 general pathway registrars can also apply after they have trained in a RRMA 3-7 location for 12 months. Other eligibility requirements remain the same as under the current RRIPS.

Which registrars are eligible?

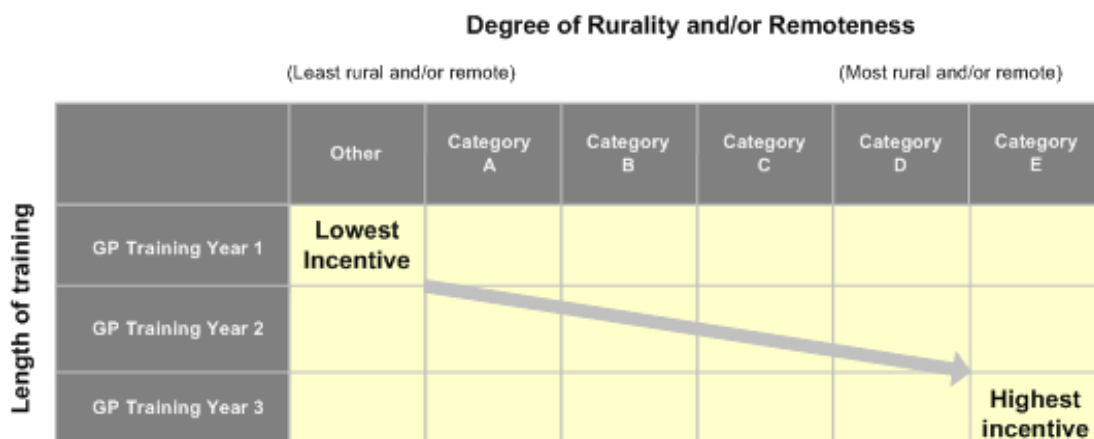
Rural pathway registrars are automatically eligible for the RRIPS (as per the current RRIPS) however they must register with Medicare before they can make a claim.

Under the new system, general pathway registrars will become eligible for RRIPS following a period of time training in eligible location/s, demonstrating their commitment to rural general practice. A general pathway registrar who completes six months FTE training (only the mandatory requirement) in a RRIPS-eligible location will not receive any incentives; a registrar who completes 12 months FTE training in a RRIPS eligible location will receive incentives for the final six months; a registrar who completes 18 months training in a RRIPS eligible location will receive incentives for the final 12 months, etc.

General pathway registrar's length of training in a RRIPS eligible location	Incentive paid for rural training
6 months	None
12 months	Last six 6 months
18 months	12 months
24 months	18 months
30 months	24 months

The following unit types will be eligible for RRIPS for both rural and general pathway registrars, provided they are undertaken in an eligible location:

- Basic GP Training (RACGP)
- Advanced GP Training (RACGP)
- Subsequent GP Experience (RACGP)
- Primary Rural and Remote Training (ACRRM).



The following unit types will be eligible for RRIPS for rural pathway registrars regardless of their location, as long as the discipline undertaken is relevant to rural general practice:

- Advanced Rural Skills Posts (RACGP)
- Rural Specialised Training (ACRRM)
- Mandatory electives (RACGP)
- Special Skills posts (RACGP)

Please note that if registrars undertake one of the units mentioned above in an eligible location, they will only be entitled to receive the lowest incentive payments (the 'Other' incentive category).

Which locations are eligible?

ALL RRMA 3-7 locations will attract a RRIPS incentive, and no location that has historically attracted an incentive will have its incentive reduced/removed, even if it is in a GPARIA ineligible category.

Locations that are GPARIA ineligible but have a RRMA 3-7 classification still attract RRIPS, and in this case the lowest incentive will be applied (the 'Other' category). Note this applies only for an eligible registrar (rural pathway registrar or general pathway registrar who has already completed six months of RRIPS-eligible rural time) in an acceptable training unit (e.g. not the hospital year).

Some RRMA 1-2 locations may also be eligible under special circumstances, particularly for procedural training relevant to rural practice that cannot be undertaken in a rural area. RTPs will be able to help determine where this is the case.

How can I find out what category a location is in?

Regional training providers will soon be supplied with a list of RRIPS incentive categories for all accredited training locations in their regions.

The **Medicare Australia RRIPS Helpline - 1800 010 550** - will also provide advice about specific locations.

What incentive will registrars get?

The RRIPS payment for each location will be pre-determined and will depend on where (which category) the training location lies on the sliding incentive scale, and what level of training the registrar is undertaking, as shown above.



The following elements will also be considered at the time of assessing a registrar's claim, to ensure the registrar is eligible:

- Registrars' training pathway
- Qualification period if the registrar is a general pathway registrar
- Appropriate stage of training (for RRIPS) if the registrar has transferred from the general to rural pathway (does not apply to registrars who transferred to the rural pathway during the RRMA 3 transition period)
- If the registrar's claim is for a RRMA 1-2 location, any supporting documentation/evidence (e.g. sign-off from the respective RTP) that the type of training they are claiming for could not be undertaken in a RRMA 3-7 location. Such placements will only attract the minimum RRIPS
- Supporting documentation/evidence if the amount of leave taken in the period is over the allowable limit.

Registrars who train part time will receive a proportion of the RRIPS incentives, depending on their participation level. Registrars training in multiple locations (with different GPARIA categories) during one period will receive pro-rata incentives based on the participation at each location.

RRIPS incentives are calculated annually, but will be paid in two six-monthly payments (retrospectively).

For example, registrars entitled to a \$90,000 incentive (for full-time GP Training Year 3 training in a GPARIA category E location) can expect to receive the incentives in two \$45,000 payments, one of which will be paid after the first six months of training, and the other after the following six months of training.

Note: the incentive amounts are subject to review by the Department of Health and Ageing.

How will leave affect the incentive payments?

Leave periods of up to four weeks within a six-month block of training are recognised for calculating RRIPS incentives.

However, for leave periods longer than four weeks (or seven weeks for maternity leave) in a six month block of training, registrars may only have their training recognised for RRIPS incentives if the training undertaken in the six-month period is recognised (by the RTP medical educator) as satisfying the requirements for that type of training.

Recognition of prior learning

The only time that will be considered when calculating the GP Year level will be time spent in the AGPT program. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) will not be considered for this purpose.



Registrars will only be able to claim up to three years of RRIPS payments, even if they are in the AGPT program longer than this (e.g. because of recognition of prior learning awarded without time credit).

	Other*	Category A	Category B	Category C	Category D	Category E
GP Training Year 1	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$40,000	\$55,000	\$70,000
GP Training Year 2	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$35,000	\$50,000	\$65,000	\$80,000
GP Training Year 3	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$75,000	\$90,000

*Note that this category is still ineligible for the purposes of the Rural Retention Program, but is treated differently under AGPT because of the overlap with RRMA and GPARIA.

Registrars who leave and re-enter AGPT

Registrars who leave and then rejoin the AGPT program will only be able to count AGPT training from their current enrolment towards their GP Training Year* level determination.

Registrars who leave the program and rejoin can only claim up to three years of RRIPS payments (i.e. three years of payments over both their previous and current enrolments).

* GP years include all the years of active GP training except the compulsory hospital year (RACGP) or core clinical training year (ACRRM). They do include mandatory electives where the registrar has been granted recognition of prior learning without time credit but do not include any optional electives (as these are not active training units).

How do registrars register for RRIPS?

The procedure to register for RRIPS remains the same as under the current RRIPS: registrars are required to complete and sign a RRIPS application form and send it to Medicare Australia, which administers the program on behalf of the Department of Health and Ageing.

An Application Form will be available in early 2008 by calling the **Medicare Australia RRIPS Helpline** on **1800 010 550**.

How do registrars claim an incentive?

The procedure to claim an incentive payment remains the same: RRIPS payments are made retrospectively at the end of a six-month block of training.

To make a claim registrars have to fill out the application form after they have completed a semester in an eligible location. They have to obtain their supervisor's signature and - if necessary - other documentation to verify their claim, and send the form to Medicare Australia. Medicare Australia assesses the activity level for the previous six months as part of the verification process and initiates a payment as appropriate. This process is repeated every semester. Medicare sends out letters to remind registrars to make a claim.

When will incentives be paid?

RRIPS incentives are paid retrospectively once you have completed a six-month block of training.

How will the change affect continuing registrars?

Registrars continuing in the AGPT program will not notice a significant difference in the process for registering for, claiming or receiving RRIPS payments. However under the new RRIPS, the incentive payments will be substantially greater in many cases, i.e. for registrars training in more remote locations.

Also, registrars training in RRMA 3 locations will now be able to register and make claims for RRIPS (as long as all other eligibility criteria are satisfied).

How will the change affect commencing registrars?

Information regarding RRIPS will be provided to all registrars during their orientation with their RTP and also during the practice matching process. If this has already been completed for Semester 1 2008, your choices will not be affected until Semester 2 2008.

Where can I find further information?

You can find out more information about the reforms by calling the **Medicare Australia RRIPS Helpline**:

1800 010 550

