

Extended Skills for GPs

Guidelines for 2007

A program to support extended and advanced training to meet the medical service needs of people living in Victoria.

This is provided as information for
Victorian Regional Training Providers (RTP).

GPs and health services interested in accessing
this program should contact their local RTP.

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This document may also be downloaded from the Department of Human Services web site at:
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/workforce/medical.htm>

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Introduction

A key challenge for human services is the development of a flexible and skilled workforce across Victoria. In order to meet and respond to this challenge the Department of Human Services (DHS) has committed to building an effective and safe workforce and to investing in training and development in the human services sector.

Although primary medical care is primarily a Commonwealth responsibility, the DHS recognises the important complementary role of the general practitioner (GP) in relation to Victoria's public health system. An appropriately skilled and distributed GP workforce is required to meet the State's primary care needs, particularly for the delivery of public and community health programs and procedural work in rural hospitals. Funding is available from the DHS to assist with the development, recruitment and retention of a skilled general practice workforce in Victoria.

Overview

The 'Extended Skills for GPs' program commenced in January 2004 and is an initiative created to support the acquisition of specialised skills for general practitioners in Victoria and aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- A skilled GP workforce that is competent to deliver medical services required in Victoria and relevant to the State's health priorities; and
- Increased retention and recruitment of GPs in areas of workforce shortage.

In order to achieve these outcomes, the Department supports training posts in areas of GP workforce shortage and development of new posts in service delivery priority areas.

The principles guiding the 'Extended Skills for GPs' program are to:

- provide GP training and up-skilling opportunities that are consistent with community need;
- target training in areas of workforce shortage;
- complement rather than duplicate effort and funding invested in GP training by the Commonwealth;
- integrate with existing training structures and programs; and
- support training posts that meet approved training standards endorsed by the relevant Colleges.

Applications for funding under this program in 2007 are now invited on the application form (Appendix 1). Regional Training Providers (RTPs) administer the program at a local level and coordinate and lodge applications for funding on behalf of health services in their local region. RTPs may retain part of the subsidy to cover the costs of administering the program on behalf of health services.

Applications

Submissions to the Department will be coordinated and lodged by GP RTPs. All applications **must** demonstrate that the post will definitely be filled for the 2007 academic year. All health services wishing to access funding under the Extended Skills for GPs program should contact their local RTP. A listing of Victorian RTPs is at Appendix 2.

Applications for funding for 2007 must be received by the Department by C.O.B **9 September 2006**.

Applications should be forwarded to:

Tanja Surwald
Medical Workforce Unit, Service & Workforce Planning Branch
Department of Human Services
50 Lonsdale St
Melbourne VIC 3000

Tanja.Surwald@dhs.vic.gov.au

Training Post Subsidies

Funding is available to subsidise health services for the cost of GP training posts, specifically for the provision of appropriate education, training and supervision provided within a post.

Subsidies are available for posts in an identified area of workforce shortage. An area of workforce shortage is defined as a region or town in a RRMA 3-7 or an outer-urban area where the doctor to population ratio is below the national average. Posts in other areas with a demonstrable workforce shortage may also be funded, but these cases will be assessed on an individual basis, according to merit and funding availability.

The GP RTPs will manage the allocation of subsidies and be responsible for ensuring that the posts meet the specified standards. A list of RTPs in Victoria is provided in Appendix 2.

Eligibility

Subsidies are available for service providers for GP training posts filled by GPs or GP registrars.

Registrars in the Australian GP Training Program

The program will be available to registrars enrolled in the vocational GP training program. Subsidies are available for posts filled by GP Registrars in Special Skills posts or Advanced Rural Skills Posts (ARSPs). Registrars may elect to take 6 months of special skills training (normally in a hospital environment) during the training period. Posts filled by Registrars enrolled in the Diploma of Rural General Practice are also eligible for subsidies if they are undertaking an ARSP.

Recognised General Practitioners

Posts filled by recognised GPs working in general practice who wish to acquire or maintain a specialised skill are eligible for subsidies. The program targets GPs in areas of workforce shortage, who need specific skills in order to meet the services delivery demands of their community. These doctors are likely to have established practices and therefore training should be flexible enough to allow GPs to work part time in their practice if they wish to.

Overseas Trained Doctors

Posts filled by doctors trained overseas, working in general practice in districts of workforce shortage, under the Victorian Overseas Trained Doctor Rural Recruitment Scheme (VORRS) and Rural Locum Relief Program (RLRP) are eligible for subsidies. Doctors in these schemes have been previously identified as individuals who may benefit from additional skill training that is relevant to general practice.

Posts

Health services are expected to make flexible training options available to encourage practising GPs to participate in the program. This may include making posts available on a part-time basis or facilitating job-share arrangements.

In 2005 the DHS funded an Advanced Procedural Training Pilot to provide additional opportunities for GPs to up skill in areas of workforce shortage. To support this program, VicNet (a collaboration between RWAV and RTPs) has been contracted by the Department to provide information, advice and direction regarding all training opportunities for extended and advanced skill posts and clinical attachments. A centralised and coordinated register of training opportunities will streamline the process for GPs wishing to up-skill, and will list all Extended Skills posts on its register. For more information on this coordinated statewide information service refer to www.vicgptraining.com.au.

Health services & RTP should liaise with VicNet to ensure posts are widely advertised and that accurate information about posts is listed in time for publications & advertising activities.

Accreditation

In order to qualify for a training subsidy, posts must be accredited as either Special Skills posts (Extended Skills posts in the 2005 RACGP Standards for General Practice Education and Training or 2002 Standards for ACRRM Teaching Posts and Teachers in Rural and Remote Medicine) or Advanced Rural Skills Posts (ARSP) by the relevant Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). Regional Training Providers will be responsible for ensuring that posts are accredited according to College processes and for monitoring the quality of education, training and mentoring provided.

Curriculum

It is expected that existing curricula will be utilised where available, and that it is consistent with the accreditation requirements of Special Skills posts and ARSPs. Training provided within the post will be based on the relevant curriculum and the trainee's individual learning plan. Health services will be responsible for ensuring that a learning plan is developed when the trainee begins, and that it reflects both the training requirements of the trainee and the service needs of the community. Individual learning plans should be developed jointly by the trainee and the supervisor and will include a list of learning objectives that are drawn from key learning outcomes associated with the relevant curricula. The learning plan will also specify the required number of training hours or required number of procedures to be performed to meet the training requirements.

Education and Supervision

Formal and informal education and supervision of trainees, where the relevance to the GP context is highlighted, is essential and will be the responsibility of the service provider (the organisation that hosts the training post). RTPs will be responsible for ensuring that the education and supervision is consistent with the agreed learning plan, curriculum and standards specified by the Colleges. They will monitor and assess whether the education, training and supervision provided by the service meets the requirements of the post. RTPs will be expected to liaise with other providers of GP education, at the local, state and national level, to ensure the training provided forms part of a continuum of learning for general practice.

Subsidies

RTPs are best placed to manage the allocation of subsidies as they have a strong relationship with key stakeholders in their geographic area and have experience in GP education and training. RTPs are able to engage with registrars and GPs at the local level and are motivated to ensure optimal outcomes for their region in terms of skill development and retention of skilled GPs and trainees.

Training subsidies of \$12,000 for 12 month full-time posts (or pro-rata) are available to health services that comply with the eligibility criteria outlined above.

Process

Health services seeking funding for posts will lodge an application for funding via their RTP to the Department. Payment to Health Services will be made via the RTPs once the post is filled.

RTPs will nominate the expected number of posts to be filled in the following calendar year. All posts for which funding is sought must comply with the Extended Skills for GPs program requirements. Proposals for funding in 2007 must be received by the Department of Human Services C.O.B **9 September 2006**. Proposals should follow the proforma outlined in Appendix 1.

New Posts

Funding by the DHS is available for the development of new GP training posts where the need for a new Special Skills or ARSP post is identified. Posts must be relevant to the skills required for general practice and must be structured in a way that provides the necessary supervision,

experience and training. Posts should be developed according to the accreditation standards set by the relevant College and/or accreditation body.

Regional Training Providers (RTPs) may apply for development funds in partnership with hospitals, Community Health Services, universities, medical colleges or other relevant organisations. In order to access development funds, agencies will be required to:

- Liaise with the appropriate service provider;
- Develop a curriculum for the post if one does not already exist;
- Gain relevant accreditation for the post; and
- Market the post in coordination with the service provider and liaise with VicNet to ensure posts are widely advertised and that accurate information about posts is listed in time for annual publications and advertising activities.

Funding

Grants of up to \$6000 are available for the development of new posts. The maximum amount is available where a curriculum for the type of post proposed does not currently exist in Australia. Funding of up to \$3,000 is available where a new post is being developed but an existing curriculum will be adopted. Funding will be provided once the post is developed. Note that once a post is established, the service provider will be responsible for funding the post, however health services may be eligible for a Training Post subsidy, as outlined earlier in these guidelines.

Process

RTPs are required to meet the requirements outlined above in order to access funding for the development of new posts. Applications for funding must be received by the DHS by C.O.B **9 September 2006**. Proposals should follow the proforma outlined in Appendix 1.

Applications for funding will be assessed according to the following selection criteria:

- Demonstrated capacity to develop a new post or engage the appropriate expertise;
- Demonstrated capacity to fill the post;
- Demonstrated workforce or training need for a new post in the region;
- Demonstrated support from the proposed service provider; and
- Relevance to DHS priority areas for general practice.

In 2007, priority is given to the development of new ARSPs in Advanced Obstetrics, Anaesthetics, Surgery and Emergency Medicine.

Timeline

9 September 2006	Proposals for 2007 funding must be received from RTPs
23 September 2006	DHS selected successful posts, ensuring equity across the RTPs
14 October 2006	Service Agreements (2005-06) signed between DHS and each of the RTPs
30 November 2006	Funding for 2006-07 provided to RTPs

Appendix 1 Application Form

1. Regional Training Provider Details

Regional Training Provider

Contact Person

Post

Address

Phone

Fax

Email

2. Training Post Subsidies

Posts for which subsidies are sought:

Service Provider	Town or SLA *	Type of Post (eg anaesthetics)	FTE	Semester 1, 2 or both	Current Accreditation (eg ARSP) **	Has a suitable candidate been identified for the post?
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						

* Statistical Local Area

** Current accreditation as either a Special Skill post or Advanced Rural Skills Post is essential.

Please complete the following section for each post that is not within a RRMA 3-7 or in a defined outer-urban area of workforce shortage.

Please describe the workforce shortage.

How does the proposed post address workforce shortage?

3. New Posts

Please complete this section for each new post

Service Provider Details	Service provider type: (eg hospital/community health centre/ GP practice)			
	Service provider name:			
	Contact person:	Letter of support attached?	Yes	No
	Address :			
	Phone:	Fax:		
	Email:			

Has a suitable candidate been identified for the post?

If so, whom?

Is this post new or is it a post supported in 2006 as part of this initiative?

Does a similar post already exist in your region?

Does a similar post already exist elsewhere in Aust? If yes, where?

Describe the education and training activities to be provided/developed.

Describe the proposed supervision arrangements.

How will the appropriate educational and training expertise be engaged in the development of the post?

How does the proposed post address workforce shortages or fill a training need in your region?

Appendix 2 Regional Training Providers - Victoria

Bogong Regional Training Network

PO Box 387
Wodonga Vic 3689
Tel: 02 6057 8600
Fax: 02 6024 7817
Email: bogong@bogong.org.au
Internet: www.bogong.org.au

Gippsland Education and Training for General Practice (GETGP)

GetGP Offices
GREEN Inc.
Suite B2 50 Northways Rd
Churchill VIC 3842
Tel: 03 5132 3100
Fax: 03 5132 3133
Email: linda.kruger@getgp.net.au
Internet: www.getgp.net.au

Greater Green Triangle GP Education & Training Inc

PO Box 5010
Warrnambool VIC 3280
Tel: 03 5562 0051
Fax: 03 5560 5581
Email: gmcmeel@ggtgpet.com.au
Internet: www.ggtgpet.com.au

Victoria Felix Medical Education

PO Box 2177
Bendigo Delivery Centre VIC 3554
Tel: 03 5441 9300
Fax: 03 5441 9399
Internet: www.vicfelix.com.au

Victorian Metropolitan Alliance

62 Smith Street
Collingwood VIC 3066
Tel: 03 9419 3033
Fax: 03 9419 1866
Email: enquiries@vma.com.au
Internet: www.vma.com.au