



1. TITLE: ADMISSION TO GPEP AND PLACEMENT POLICY

- 1.1 Policy reference: CO-A-001-01
- 1.2 Category: Academic – Admission
- 1.3 Approval date: July 2023
- 1.4 Approved by: Chief executive
- 1.5 Effective date: July 2023
- 1.6 Review/revision date: July 2025
- 1.7 Unit responsible: Learning team

2. Policy declaration

Purpose

This policy outlines the College requirements for selection and admission of eligible doctors to enter year 1 of the General Practice Education Programme ('GPEP' or 'the programme') at The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners ('the College').

The training of all year 1 registrars is required to be undertaken in College-accredited training practices. This policy ensures that when placing College-employed registrars, practices and regional placements are aligned to the College's strategic direction.

3. Background

3.1 Objectives

This policy sets out the College's principles for the selection, admission, enrolment, and placement of prospective general practice registrars into GPEP. Successful completion of GPEP enables eligibility for consideration of the awarding of Fellowship of The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (FRNZCGP).

3.2 In scope

This policy applies to:

- > Programme admissions for GPEP.
- > Division of Rural Hospital Medicine ('the Division') registrars enrolled in the GPEP component of the Dual Fellowship Training Pathway.

3.3 Out of scope

- > The Division registrars not undertaking the Dual Fellowship Training Pathway.
- > Applicants entering through the GPEP Prior Specialist Training Pathway.
- > Fellows in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes.

4. Definitions

All definitions are available in the College's *Academic Regulatory Framework for Quality Assurance*.

5. General policy

5.1 Policy principles

The principles underpinning this policy are:

5.1.1 Equity

The College has an obligation to prioritise eligible Māori and Pasifika applicants to enable a workforce that reflects New Zealand demographics. This means the College will prioritise eligible applicants able to practise in te ao Māori including having te reo and tikanga Māori competence.

5.1.2 Transparency

All procedures and decisions will be communicated to applicants accurately and consistently to ensure they are fully informed. Processes leading to decisions will be open to appeal where the applicant feels there has been a lack of natural justice.

5.1.3 Reliability

Enrolment processes and procedures are appropriate and valid, resulting in a fair and consistent outcome for all applicants. Equal opportunities are provided for all individual applicants to allow them to demonstrate they meet admission and additional requirements of the programme.

5.1.4 Quality

All processes aim to ensure that the College's quality standards are met, and that GPEP registrars display the behaviours and competencies expected of College members.

- 5.2 Numbers of registrars enrolled into the first year of the programme will be limited by the funding available to the College to train them. Te Whatu Ora / Health New Zealand funds the College to deliver GPEP year 1 training to specifically named registrars who may be employed either by the College or by College-accredited general practices.

Registrars accepted into GPEP who are self-funded must meet their own time and training costs.

- 5.3 Application, selection and admission processes will be used to:

- > ensure Māori and Pasifika applicants, who meet the selection criteria, are given priority admission.
- > prioritise applicants who meet the selection criteria and who wish to practise in rural settings.
- > enhance the number of registrars in training to meet future workforce needs and funded training positions.
- > ensure the applicants most suited to the specialism of general practice medicine are selected for enrolment in the programme.

- 5.4 In selecting applicants who meet the College's selection criteria, preference will be given to Te Whatu Ora's contractual requirements for funding, i.e. New Zealand citizens or permanent residents with no restrictions. Te Whatu Ora may exercise its discretion to waive these requirements and fund places in cases where the following prerequisites are met:
- i. The applicant works, or will be working, in a vulnerable service or region, as determined by Te Whatu Ora.
 - ii. There are insufficient New Zealand citizen/permanent resident applicants to fill GPEP places.
 - iii. The applicant intends to obtain a permanent resident visa and provides evidence of their commitment to remain in New Zealand long-term.

Where an applicant meets the College's eligibility requirements but is not a citizen or permanent resident, the College may approach Te Whatu Ora for dispensation to employ and/or train the applicant.

- 5.5 The College may refuse to admit an applicant entry to GPEP if they have previously been refused entry or ceased the programme after commencement. Any applicant who has previously been excluded from the programme and who wishes to apply to re-enrol must lodge a written application with the College prior to applying. The College has total discretion to decide on whether any applicant who has previously been excluded or exited may be permitted to re-enrol and may impose conditions on the re-enrolment.

5.6 Application

5.6.1 Applicants for admission to GPEP must:

- a. hold current registration with the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) allowing work in general practice. Applicants who have or have had special conditions, limitations, notations, undertakings, or provisional requirements imposed on their registration must provide full disclosure of the nature of these with their application.
- b. have completed a minimum of two years of postgraduate experience¹ in a range of medical positions relevant to general practice in New Zealand. One year of postgraduate experience must be undertaken in New Zealand including:
 - i. a total of eight rotating hospital runs, with at least six being from the College's preferred list;²
 - ii. one year of hospital or relevant community-based attachments (runs) completed in New Zealand.
- c. qualify to be an Associate Member of the College, as per the College Rules in force at the time the application is submitted.
- d. provide a Certificate of Professional Status (COPS) from the MCNZ which is dated no more than three months prior to the programme entry date and indicates that the doctor is in good professional standing.

1 This postgraduate experience does not have to be completed at the point of application submission but must be completed prior to the start date of the first year in GPEP.

2 Refer to *GPEP Standard: Clinical experience – General Requirements*

- e. be capable of meeting the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act) and the Children's Act 2014 requirements, including police clearance.
- f. submit a fully completed application form and payment of the relevant application fee before the application closing date.

The College strongly encourages candidates to be fully vaccinated to minimise the risk of transmission and the effects of COVID-19.

- 5.6.2 Applicants who have conditions on their General scope of practice and/or have insufficient runs from the College's preferred list may apply, and at the total discretion of the College, be considered for selection into the programme if:
- › the conditions or limitations on their General scope of practice will not limit their ability to participate fully in and fulfil the requirements of the programme.
 - › their total experience indicates they have sufficient breadth of experience to succeed in the programme.
- 5.6.3 Where applications do not meet the requirements of section 5.6.1 above, these will be considered on a case-by-case basis by a College committee comprising relevant staff, one or more educators from the Learning team, and any other appropriate representation co-opted as required.
- 5.6.4 Where the number of applications does not meet all of the available funded training places, the College may engage directly with teaching practices who have undertaken to engage practice-employed trainees to ascertain whether they are aware of individuals who have not applied but who they would employ as trainees.
- In such instances, and to ensure engagement of quality trainees, these individuals would be required to complete a standard application, arrange for submission of referees' reports, and proceed to interview (where applicable).
- 5.6.5 Where the number of applications does not exceed all of the available funded training places, the College, at its total discretion, may consider late applications. The review of late applications must ensure the eligibility criteria as set out in section 5.6.1 are met.
- 5.6.6 Where the number of eligible applicants for GPEP exceeds the places available, the final selection of applicants will be based on additional criteria reflecting the College's strategic objectives:
- a. Ensuring the general practice and rural workforces reflect the populations they serve and are fairly distributed according to need.
 - b. Building capacity to reduce health inequity and develop culturally safe practice.
 - c. Increasing the Māori general practice workforce.
 - d. Addressing the specific needs of key priority populations including Māori, Pasifika, and rural communities.
 - e. Addressing rural health needs.

5.7 Selection

- 5.7.1 Selection screening is undertaken for all applicants, and interviews may be required if applicants are unable to demonstrate in their application that they are likely to be successful in the programme.
- 5.7.2 All applicants that are accepted on the programme will be required to have a phone interview with a College medical educator from their preferred region for placement purposes.
- 5.7.2 Where an applicant has unfavourable referee reports, permission is obtained from the applicant to discuss the reasons directly with the doctor(s) who provided them before any decision on the registrar's employment by the College or offer of training is made. An initial unfavourable report may be set aside after discussion between College senior management and any other appropriate representation co-opted as required.
- 5.7.3 A waitlist will be established consisting of applicants who are either in the process of obtaining working visas/residency visas and/or where there are more applicants than funding will allow for.

5.8 Programme enrolment

- 5.8.1 All selected applicants who are not on the waitlist will be offered enrolment into GPEP.
- Applicants successfully seeking first-year employment through the College will be separately offered an employment contract for the first year of training.
- 5.8.2 Once enrolled in the programme, applicants will be known as registrars and must become members of the College.
- 5.8.3 The Fellowship Pathway Regulations in place at the first year of a registrar's enrolment will generally apply to their entire enrolment.

6. Deferrals

- 6.1 Applicants who have been accepted into GPEP, may request their commencement in the programme to be deferred for up to 12 months in certain circumstances.

Deferrals will only be considered for exceptional circumstances that arise after the application acceptance and prior to the GPEP commencement date. These include:

- > dual applicant in Division of Rural Health Medicine (DHRM), where the applicant is commencing in the RHMTTP programme.
- > pregnancy
- > temporary impairment or disability (e.g. treatment for serious illness)
- > family or carer responsibilities
- > compassionate grounds not covered by items above (e.g. special needs of ageing parents, family crisis).

Requests for Deferral must be in writing and provide supporting evidence of the exceptional circumstance. Evidence to support the applicant's ability to commence GPEP within 12 months will be required.

Refer to the Varying GPEP Training Policy (CO-A-002-03).

- 6.2 Where the College, in its discretion, agrees to the deferral, the applicant must commence within 12 months, otherwise their application will lapse.
- 6.3 Where the College, in its discretion, does not agree to the deferral, the applicant will be deemed to have withdrawn from GPEP, and any offers of training and/or employment with the College will lapse.
- 6.4 A change to New Zealand medical registration conditions, such as an HDC complaint that prevents a deferred applicant from joining the programme, will result in a withdrawal. The applicant may have the opportunity to reapply for GPEP later.

7. Placements

7.1 Practice accreditation

- 7.1.1 All registrars in the College's GPEP training programme must be trained in College-accredited training sites.
- 7.1.2 Practices wishing to take a GPEP registrar must hold a current Foundation Standard certification with a College-approved teacher. Practices are also required to attain Cornerstone accreditation or demonstrate that they are proactively participating towards gaining accreditation.
- 7.1.3 Practices taking a GPEP year 1 registrar must have a College Fellow as the teacher.

7.2 Placements – College-employed GPEP year 1 registrars

- 7.2.1 The College will place all College-employed registrars in one or more practices that hold College practice accreditation as per clause 7.1. Practice placements will be six months' duration, with one placement in a rural and/or high-needs practice.

In determining registrar placement, the College will consider any conditions imposed due to limitations on Te Whatu Ora funding and the registrar's:

- > personal circumstances
- > travel times to training sites
- > desired region(s) for training
- > previous experience or areas of expertise
- > special interests or needs that can be accommodated in training.

- 7.2.2 Evidence gathered from the application form, referee(s), police vetting report and interviews (where held) will be used to confirm those applicants selected for placement in GPEP. Applicants who meet the following criteria will be given priority for placement:

- i. Applicants of Māori and Pasifika ethnicity, in order to reflect New Zealand demographics in the general practice workforce.
 - ii. Applicants employed in a rural area or dual enrolled in the Division training programme.
 - iii. Applicants who demonstrate a commitment to rural practice, which may include placement for a year in a rural practice or high-needs area.
- 7.2.3 In filling regional placements, the College will seek to balance:
- > the level of demand for registrars
 - > GP workforce capacity constraints in the region
 - > the number of accredited training practices available in the region.
- 7.2.5 Applicants will have a deadline of 10 working days to accept the formal offer of placement. If an offer is declined, the College will work with the registrar to find an alternative placement aligned to College priorities, taking into consideration registrar needs where possible.
- 7.2.6 Where an applicant subsequently decides not to take up the formal offer of a placement, a position may be offered to another applicant.
- 7.2.7 Where additional funding becomes available, a position may be offered to another applicant.
- 7.2.8 Waitlisted applicants may be offered a placement on the programme based on the College's need to fill priority placements and regional needs. Such placements may not reflect their preferred region.
- 7.2.9 Waitlisted applicants have the right to decline the placement offer by the College and choose to see if an opportunity becomes available in their preferred region or area; however, the College cannot guarantee they will be given a place. If such applicants do not find a place, they will need to reapply for entry into the programme in the following year.

7.3 **Placements – practice-employed and self-funded GPEP year 1 registrars**

- 7.3.1 Self-funded and practice-employed registrars must be employed within a College-accredited training practice that complies with College requirements as per clause 7.1. These registrars may undertake their first year of training in a single practice.

7.4 **Placements – GPEP registrars in training beyond year 1**

- 7.4.1 All registrars in GPEP training beyond year 1 must find their own employment at a College-accredited training practice, and the College must be proactively informed in advance of commencement at each practice throughout the registrar's time spent within the training programme.
- 7.4.2 The College may impose conditions, including the practice selection and availability of supervision, for GPEP training beyond year 1 where the registrar has been unsuccessful in one or more of their summative examinations, in accordance with the Fellowship Pathway Regulations.

8. Appeal of application outcome

Applicants may appeal the admission decision under the Appeals Policy (CO-A-002-06).

9. Related policies, documents, and legislation

- > Academic Regulatory Framework for Quality Assurance (CO-A-001-00)
- > Procedure: Admission to GPEP and Placement (CO-A-001-01A)
- > Appeals Policy (CO-A-002-06)
- > Varying GPEP Training Policy (CO-A-002-03)
- > Approval of GPEP Teaching Practices and Teachers Policy (CO-A-001-02)
- > Academic Integrity Policy (CO-A-002-02)
- > Fellowship Pathway Regulations

10. Administrative procedures

10.1 Promulgation of published policy

This policy will be available via the College website.