



1. TITLE: VARIATION TO GPEP TRAINING POLICY

- 1.1 Policy reference: CO-A-002-03
- 1.2 Category: Academic – Education
- 1.3 Approval date: November 2025
- 1.4 Approved by: Chief Executive
- 1.5 Effective date: November 2025
- 1.6 Review/Revision date: December 2027
- 1.7 Unit responsible: Learning Team

2. Policy declaration

2.1 Purpose

This policy outlines the conditions under which registrars enrolled in The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners' (the College's) General Practice Education Programme (GPEP or the programme) may vary their training as a result of changes to their circumstances and any limitations or restrictions that may apply as a result of those changes.

3. Background

3.1 Objectives

This policy sets out the terms and conditions under which registrars may defer the start of their training, take a break in their planned training programme ('on hold'), withdraw from and/or re-enter the programme.

3.2 In scope

General Practice Education Programme (GPEP)

3.3 Out of scope

Other pathways to Fellowship of the College.

4. Definitions

Deferral: Suspension of course requirements for 12 months once enrolled in year 1 of GPEP.

On-hold: Suspension of a registrar's participation in year 2 or 3 of GPEP for up to 36 months cumulative.

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

5. Policy statements

5.1 Policy principles

Equity: Approved variances to training will take into account cultural differences and demands on the registrar that may arise from cultural practices, values or commitments.

Responsiveness: The College is committed to supporting registrars to gain Fellowship and will endeavour to assist registrars by:

- a. retaining registrars who are unable to train on a full-time, continuous basis within GPEP on a time-equivalent (pro rata) or part-time basis
- b. enabling registrars to take breaks in their training to fulfil concomitant obligations; for example, family commitments
- c. maintaining a balance between engagement in educational and assessment activity, and work experience to meet Fellowship standards within approved timeframes

Transparency: Any variations to a training programme will be approved in writing and recorded on the registrar's training record.

Natural justice: Underpinning this policy is the three-way relationship between the individual registrar, the workplace and the College. Variations to the approved training seeks to take into consideration:

- a. the registrar's personal circumstances and professional objectives
- b. the College's requirements for training, assessment and maintenance of competence and expectation of timely progression through training, and
- c. workplace staffing requirements, service provision and continuity of care.

5.2 General policy

5.2.1 The maximum time for completion of GPEP training is five years from the start of year 2, excluding time on hold.

5.2.2 Leave from training without prior notification and approval from the College may be grounds for removal of the registrar from the training programme.

5.2.3 When approving variations to training arrangements, the College must ensure the employing practice in GPEP 1 agrees to provide appropriate employment conditions to support the variations proposed.

- 5.2.4 All approved variations to training requirements must be completed within the time limits for completing training as set out in the relevant Fellowship Pathway Regulations.
- 5.2.5 If at any time during GPEP years 2+, a registrar is on leave from the GPEP and is working in the scope of general practice, they will be enrolled automatically in the College's Te Whanake (CPD) Annual Maintenance Programme (AMP) .
- 5.2.6 Registrars who have placed their programme 'on hold' while continuing to work can only participate in the AMP for up to a maximum of six months, at which point they must either return to their training programme (no longer 'on hold') or enrol in Inpractice to maintain recertification requirements.
- 5.2.7 Registrars who are on deferral from GPEP year 1 for 12 months must enrol in Inpractice to maintain recertification requirements if working clinical.
- 5.2.8 If a registrar has completed all programme activities and requirements and is eligible but has not yet obtained Fellowship, they will automatically be enrolled in the College's Te Whanake AMP to maintain professional development activities.

5.3 **Acceptable circumstances**

- 5.3.1 Registrars are encouraged to provide notification to the College of the need to vary their approved training arrangements as far in advance as possible. Such situations may include:
- a. parental leave
 - b. change of role or location, i.e. change of practice or change of employment from part-time to full-time or vice versa, or a change of working pattern when employed part-time
 - c. application for leave due to extenuating or unforeseen circumstances
 - d. a change to their New Zealand medical registration
 - e. changes to personal circumstances, e.g. illness
 - f. changes to their workplace's eligibility for hosting and employing GPEP registrars (e.g. their Foundation Standards certification has lapsed or change to onsite supervision arrangements)

5.4 **Part-time training**

- 5.4.1 For GPEP year 1, part-time training refers to training completed at a minimum of 7/10ths per week (5/10ths clinical, 2/10ths seminars).
- 5.4.2 For GPEP years 2 and 3, part-time training refers to clinical time completed at a minimum of 4/10th per week (or 3/10ths plus 1/10th for being involved in childcare and/or caring for a live-in disabled family member for up to three months FTE). Individuals who do not consistently work the minimum 4/10ths must place their training on hold until they are able to do so. In these cases, section 5.7.2 applies.
- 5.4.3 Where an individual is involved in childcare and/or caring for a live-in disabled family member, they can claim one dependency 10th per week for up to three months FTE. This is in recognition of the value that this experience brings to general practice work. The dependency tenth is available for all eligible GPEP year 2 and 3 registrars.

- 5.4.4 Registrars undertaking part-time training are required to complete the same number of annual formative activities and summative assessments as registrars undertaking full-time training and must complete them within the same time.
- 5.5 **Applications for variations to training arrangements**
- 5.5.1 During GPEP year 1:
- a. Approval of a change to the training arrangements must be sought in writing from the College using the specified request process.
 - b. Applications may be made at any time during the training year. Applications must be made in writing to the College by the registrar. Verbal notice will not be accepted as a registrar's intention.
 - c. Where applications for parental leave impact on the registrar's ability to complete their formative activities and clinical time requirements, then the registrar will need to defer their training and re-enter the programme with the following year's intake. The College will treat each request for parental leave on a case-by-case basis.
 - d. Written and Clinical examinations may not be undertaken while a registrar is on deferral unless the registrar has
 - i. completed all formative activities, and
 - ii. attended at least 32 out of 40 seminars.
- 5.5.2 Approved deferral of training will be for a 12-month period, subject to the following conditions:
- a. Where a registrar has been accepted into the programme and is granted a deferral, then the registrar may be required to re-engage with aspects of the application process once the deferral period is completed (i.e. it is not automatic).
 - b. Deferral requests that arise after the application acceptance and prior to the GPEP commencement date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Refer to *Admission to GPEP and Placement Policy*.
 - c. Where a registrar has commenced training and is granted deferral, the registrar will be offered conditional re-entry to the programme at the same point in the programme the following year. Re-entry is conditional on the registrar still meeting eligibility requirements and complying with all re-entry requests.
- 5.5.3 **Implications of deferral**
- a. The deferred registrar must inform the MCNZ that they have gone on deferral and provide them with all required information.
 - b. Apart from the situations noted below, any clinical time worked whilst on deferral will not count towards the registrar's clinical time requirements upon return to the programme.
 - c. Upon return to GPEP, the College will review the clinical experience placement the deferred registrar left immediately prior to deferral. This is to establish that the type of placement the registrar will be returning to meets the GPEP clinical experience requirements (i.e. high needs and/or rural placements).
 - d. Where a registrar has deferred their training after commencement, their membership will remain active and they will be required to continue paying all fees and levies associated with their membership.

5.6 **GPEP year 2 and 3 requirements**

For GPEP year 2 and 3 registrars:

- a. Enrolment in GPEP year 2 and 3 may be put on hold whenever a registrar chooses; however, they must notify the College in advance by completing the 'On Hold' application form. Verbal notice will not be accepted as a registrar's intention.
- b. Application to put training on hold may be made multiple times, but the total period on hold must not exceed a maximum of three (3) years (cumulative).
- c. Any clinical time worked whilst on hold will not count towards their clinical time requirements when the registrar returns to the programme.
- d. If the registrar is on hold for a period of longer than a year (continuously), on return to the programme they will be required to transfer to the GPEP programme regulations applicable at the time of re-entry.
- e. A registrar must notify the College when they are returning to GPEP. They must meet the years 2 and 3 clinical experience requirements of the Fellowship Pathway Regulations (i.e. in a College-approved training location and a minimum of four-tenths FTE clinical time a week) to be approved by the College as active in the programme.

5.7 **Maximum period between training programmes**

- 5.7.1 A registrar who has completed GPEP year 1 must commence GPEP years 2 and 3 within three years of completing GPEP year 1. A break of up to three years between GPEP year 1 and commencement of years 2 and 3 will be treated as time on hold, in accordance with section 5.6(b) of this policy.
- 5.7.2 If the period between the completion of GPEP year 1 and commencement of GPEP years 2 and 3 is longer than three years, the registrar will no longer be eligible to automatically re-enter GPEP. The registrar may be required to restart GPEP from the beginning.

5.8 **Withdrawal and re-entry**

- 5.8.1 Any registrar who has withdrawn from the programme and wants to re-enter into the programme at a later date is required to apply for re-entry by submitting an application form. All applications will be treated on a case-by-case basis and there is no guarantee that they will be readmitted, or that they will be able to continue their training at the same stage they left off.
- 5.8.2 Should the registrar be re-admitted to the programme, they may apply for recognition of prior learning in accordance with the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (CO-A-001-03). This will take into account any training previously completed in GPEP and any subsequent formal training that has been completed.

5.9 **Appeals**

- 5.9.1 Registrars may appeal any decisions made. Rights of review and appeal are set out in the Appeals Policy (CO-A-002-06).

6. Related policies, documents and legislation

- Academic Regulatory Framework for Quality Assurance (CO-A-001-00)
- Supporting Registrars Policy (CO-A-002-04)
- Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy (CO-A-003-05)
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (CO-A-001-03)
- Recognition of Prior Learning Procedures (CO-A-001-03A)
- Fellowship Pathway Regulations
- Admission to GPEP and Placement Policy (CO-A-001-01).

7. Administrative procedures

7.1 Promulgation of published policy

This policy will be available via the College website.