



Division of Rural Hospital Medicine

NEW ZEALAND

Te Whare Taiwhenua

1. TITLE: **ADMISSION TO RHMTP**

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| 1.1 | Reference: | DRHM POL 01 |
| 1.2 | Category: | Academic – Admission |
| 1.3 | Approval date: | October 2025 |
| 1.4 | Approved by: | DRHM Board of Studies |
| 1.5 | Effective date: | November 2025 |
| 1.6 | Review/Revision date: | November 2027 |
| 1.7 | Unit responsible: | Learning Team |

2. Policy declaration

Purpose

This policy outlines the Division requirements for selection and admission of eligible doctors to enter Rural Hospital Medicine Training Programme (RHMTTP) of Division of Rural Hospital Medicine (DRHM) at the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners ('the College').

The training of all RHMTTP registrars is required to be undertaken in Division approved training sites.

3. Background

3.1 Objectives

This policy sets out the Division's principles for the selection, admission, and enrolment of prospective rural hospital medicine registrars into the RHMTTP. Successful completion of the RHMTTP enables eligibility for consideration of the awarding of Fellowship of the Division of Rural Hospital Medicine. (FDRHMNZ).

3.2 In scope

This policy applies to:

- Programme admissions for the RHMTTP.
- GPEP registrars undertaking the Dual Fellowship Training Pathway.

3.3 Out of scope

Programme admissions for the GPEP

Applicants entering through the DRHM Prior Specialist Training Pathway

Fellows in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes.

4. General policy

4.1 Policy principles

The principles underpinning this policy are:

4.1.1 **Equity**

The College has a commitment to prioritise eligible Māori and Pacific applicants to enable a workforce that reflects New Zealand demographics. This means the College will prioritise eligible applicants able to practice in Te Ao Māori including having Te Reo and tikanga Māori competence.

4.1.2 **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.

4.1.3 **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.

4.1.4 **Quality**

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

4.2 Application, selection and admission processes will be used to:

- Ensure Māori and Pacific applicants, who meet the selection criteria, are given priority admission.
- Prioritise applicants, who meet the selection criteria, wishing to practise in rural and regional settings.
- Enhance the numbers of registrars in training to meet future workforce needs
- Ensure the applicants most suited to the specialism of rural hospital medicine are selected for enrolment in the programme.

4.3 The Division may refuse to admit an applicant entry to the RHMTTP 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 Division prior to applying. The Division 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.

4.4 **Application**

4.4.1 Applicants for admission to the RHMTTP must:

- a. Hold current registration with the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) allowing work in rural hospital medicine in the general scope of practice.¹ 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 experience² in a range of medical positions relevant to rural hospital medicine. This must include experience in at least six of the following: Cardiology; Community based attachment; Dermatology; Ear, Nose, and Throat; Emergency Medicine; Gastroenterology; General Medicine; General Practice; General Surgery; Geriatric Medicine; Musculoskeletal Medicine; Obstetrics and Gynaecology; Ophthalmology; Orthopaedic Surgery; Paediatrics; Palliative Care; Psychiatry; Rehabilitation Medicine; Respiratory Medicine; Rheumatology; Rural Hospital Medicine and Rural General Practice.
- c. Have completed at least one year of experience, after the primary medical degree, in the New Zealand context (except with the permission of the Division Board of Studies).
- d. Have citizenship, permanent residency, or a valid visa such as the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) that provides a pathway to working and undertaking vocational training in New Zealand.³
- e. Qualify to be an Associate in Training of the College, as per the College Rules in force at the time the application is submitted.
- f. Provide a Certificate of Professional Status (COPS) from the MCNZ which is dated no more than 3 months prior to the programme entry date and indicates that the doctor is in good professional standing.
- g. Must be capable of meeting the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act) and the Children's Act 2014 requirements, including police clearance.
- h. Submit a fully completed application form and payment of the relevant application fee before the application closing date.

¹ Note: Registration in general scope of practice must be obtained prior to the start of the programme.

² Note: 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 programme.

³ Note: Applicants who do not hold New Zealand citizenship or permanent residency may be required to pay international student fees as determined by the enrolling university.

- i. Hold a current and valid Advanced Life Support (ALS) certificate. This includes a New Zealand Resuscitation Council CORE Advanced Certificate, or an international equivalent recognised by an ILCOR member organisation.

4.4.2 Applicants who have conditions on their General Scope of Practice and/or have insufficient runs from the Division's preferred list may apply, and at the total discretion of the Division, 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.

4.4.3 Where applications do not meet the requirements of section 4.4.1 above, these will be considered on a case-by-case basis by a Division committee comprising relevant College staff, one or more Clinical Leads, Board of Studies Chair, Chief Assessor and any other appropriate representation co-opted as required.

4.5 Selection

4.5.1 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.

4.5.2 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 offer of training is made.

4.6 Programme enrolment

- 4.6.1 All selected applicants will be offered enrolment into the RHMTTP training programme.
- 4.6.2 Once enrolled on the programme, applicants will be known as registrars and must become members of the College.
- 4.6.3 The Fellowship Pathway Regulations in place at the first year of a registrar's enrolment will generally apply to their entire enrolment.

5.0 Deferrals

- 5.1 Applicants who have been accepted onto the RHMTTP, may request their commencement in the programme to be deferred for up to twelve months in certain circumstances.

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

- 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 aging parents, family crisis)

- 5.2 Where the College, in its discretion, agrees to the deferral, the applicant must commence within twelve months, otherwise their application will lapse.
- 5.3 A change to NZ medical registration conditions such as a 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 the RHTMP later.

6. Appeal of application outcome

Applicants may appeal the admission decision under the DRHM Reconsideration, Review and Appeal Policy.

7. Related policies, documents, and legislation

DRHM Reconsideration, Review and Appeal Policy.

Fellowship Pathway Regulations

8. Administrative procedures

8.1 Promulgation of published policy

This policy will be available via the College website.