



## 1. TITLE: VARYING GPEP TRAINING POLICY

- 1.1 Policy reference: CO-A-002-03
- 1.2 Category: Academic – Education
- 1.3 Approval date: July 2020
- 1.4 Approved by: Chief executive
- 1.5 Effective date: September 2020
- 1.6 Review/revision date: July 2021
- 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 and re-enter the programme.

### 3.2 In scope

GPEP.

### 3.3 Out of scope

Other pathways to Fellowship of the College.

## 4. Definitions

**Deferral** – Suspension of course requirements for up to 12 months during GPEP year 1.

**On-hold** – Suspension of a registrar's participation in GPEP year 2 or 3.

Other definitions are available in the College's Academic Regulatory Framework for Quality Assurance (CO-A-001-00).

## 5. Policy statements

### 5.1 Policy principles

**Equity.** Approved variations 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. varying their start date to accommodate personal circumstances.
- b. allowing registrars who are unable to train on a full-time, continuous basis within GPEP to do so on a time-equivalence (pro-rata) or part-time basis.
- c. enabling registrars to take breaks in their training to fulfil concomitant obligations, e.g. family commitments.
- d. 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 seek to take into consideration:

- > the registrar's personal circumstances and professional objectives
- > the College's requirements for training, assessment and maintenance of competence and expectation of timely progression through training, and
- > 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 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 Fellowship Pathway Regulations.

5.2.5 If at any time during the programme a registrar is on leave from GPEP (either deferred or on hold) and is working in the scope of general practice, they will be required to join the Annual Maintenance Programme – the College's online Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for registrars. Progress in the College's CPD programme will be monitored closely. The College will inform the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) of any performance problems.

- 5.2.6 If all formative activities and summative assessments are not completed at the end of year 3, registrars who are not yet ready for Fellowship must undertake annual continuing professional development for registrars to renew their annual practising certificate with the MCNZ. In this case, registrars will automatically be enrolled in the College's CPD programme.

### 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
  - 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.

### 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), with total clinical time on completion of year 1 being 10 months FTE.
- 5.4.2 For GPEP years 2 and 3, part-time training refers to clinical time completed at a minimum of 4/10ths 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 and summative assessment activities and teaching and learning tools 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.
  - 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 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 that exceeds 12 months, then the registrar must reapply to join the programme once the deferral period is completed (i.e. it is not automatic).
- b. Deferral requests submitted after acceptance onto the programme but prior to its start may be granted. Refer to the Admission to GPEP and Placement Policy (CO-A-001-01).
- c. Where the registrar has started training and the deferral starts between the first and second attachment, then the 12 months will begin at the start of the first attachment in the following year.

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).

## 5.6 **GPEP year 2 and 3 requirements**

For GPEP year 2 and registrars:

- a. Training in GPEP year 2 and 3 may be put on hold whenever a registrar chooses; however, they must notify the College in writing in advance. Verbal notice will not be accepted as a registrar's intention.
- b. Training may be put on hold multiple times, but the total period on hold must not exceed a maximum of three (3) years (cumulative).
- c. Due dates are extended by the amount of time on hold, but the overall time limit for the completion of training requirements will not be extended.
- d. Any clinical time worked whilst on hold will not count towards their clinical time requirements when registrars return to the programme.

- e. Registrars will not be able to participate in formative activities on the programme whilst on hold.
- f. If the registrar is on hold for a period of longer than a year (cumulatively), on return to the programme they will be required to transfer to the GPEP programme regulations applicable at the time of re-entry.

## 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 of GPEP year 1.
- 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 will need 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 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 formal training completed while on hold.

## 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)
- > Appeals Policy (CO-A-003-05)
- > Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (CO-A-001-03)
- > Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure (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 intranet and website.