



Eastern Victorian GP Training Professional Behaviour Guidelines

Purpose

Eastern Victorian GP Training (EV) is committed to providing patients and their communities with high quality general practitioners who consistently demonstrate appropriate professional behaviours. The purpose of this document is to support and promote appropriate professional behaviours for all persons involved in the EV general practice training organisation. These principles apply equally to the training providers (GP Supervisors, practice managers, program support staff and medical educators) and the recipients of training (GP registrars).

This document provides guidelines for the monitoring of professional behaviours and a clear process for dealing with situations where problems have arisen. The EV program is based on adult learning principles; this process is not in conflict with those principles, rather it enhances it by early identification and intervention.

Background

General practitioners have a unique societal role as professionals who are dedicated to the health and caring of others. Their work requires the mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills, as well as the art of medicine. As such, the Professional Role is guided by codes of ethics and a commitment to clinical competence, the embracing of appropriate attitudes and behaviours, integrity, altruism, personal wellbeing, and to the promotion of the public good within their domain. These commitments form the basis of a social contract between a physician and society. (Frank, JR. (Ed). 2005. The Can MEDS 2005 physician competency framework. Better standards. Better physicians. Better care. Ottawa: The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Page 23).

Whilst this definition was developed for family physicians from the specialist competencies of Can MEDS 2000, it embodies the principles of professional behaviour promoted in this policy. Such a philosophy implies that being a professional is more than simply doing the job. There is evidence that practitioners subject to disciplinary action by a medical board often have been identified with prior unprofessional behaviour in medical school (Papadakis et al, NEJM 2005; 353:2673-82). The importance placed on professional behaviour by regulatory and educational bodies in Australia can be seen by examining their websites, including:

Australian Health Professional Registration Agency - Health Professions accreditation guidelines provide a definition and the competencies required for each health discipline (<http://www.ahpra.gov.au/index.php>)

Australian Medical Council Code of Conduct

(<http://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Policies.aspx>)

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners curriculum - Professional and Ethical Role

(<http://curriculum.racgp.org.au/>)

Whilst many people involved in EV are medical practitioners, there are many other staff and professions that are also involved. However many of these other groups and professions also have codes of conduct or the like, for example the Australian Association of Practice Managers has a Code of Ethical Conduct (http://www.aapm.org.au/media/10312/aapm_ethical_conduct_final_web_format.pdf).

This policy has elements that are applicable to all staff and participants, regardless of their profession.

Rationale

The rationale for the EV Professional Behaviour Policy is to:

- Provide a description of expected professional behaviours considered necessary for training program education events and within the general practice training setting;
- Dedicate adequate resources to the early identification of, and response to, professional behaviour problems; and
- Implement suitable support mechanisms for those identified with problems.

Professional Behaviour Domains

Inappropriate professional behaviour can have a significant impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of an education event, training program or the workplace. The following has been adapted from the Professional Behaviour Intervention Procedures of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University.

1. Aspects/Elements of professional behaviour

Applies to administrative/support staff, medical educators, supervisors, external resource persons and registrars.

Expectation of appropriate:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Respect for others
- Professional boundaries
- Interaction with colleagues and peers – verbal, non-verbal and written (including electronic)
- Social networking and online communications
- Accountability/Responsibility
- Trustworthiness/honesty/integrity
- Participation and preparation
- Reflection/Insight
- Adherence to health and safety guidelines
- Adherence to submission time lines
- Professional and ethical approach (e.g. data presented accurately)
- *Expectation of exclusion:*
- Criminal behaviour
- Plagiarism

2. Aspects/Elements of professional behaviour specifically in a general practice placement

Applies to practice support staff, supervisors, other medical and allied health staff and registrars.

Expectation of appropriate:

- Professional appearance
- Interactions with patients, colleagues and other staff – verbal, non-verbal and written (including electronic) within professional boundaries
- Multidisciplinary teamwork
- Adherence to ethical and legal guidelines
- Adherence to infection control guidelines
- Adherence to practice policy guidelines
- Incident reporting and documentation
- Exercising duty of care
- Confidentiality

- Awareness of own health and risks of ill health to safe practice
- Required registrations, provider number and medical indemnity insurance

Related Policies and Documents

National Minimum Terms and Conditions for GP Registrars [Available on EV Website]

Fair Work Australia Act (2009)

RACGP General Practice Vocational Training Standards: Programs and Providers and Trainers and Training Posts

[\(<http://www.racgp.org.au/vocationaltraining/standards>\)](http://www.racgp.org.au/vocationaltraining/standards)

ACCRM Operational Policies

[\(<https://www.acrrm.org.au/operational-policies>\)](https://www.acrrm.org.au/operational-policies)

AGPT Policies

[\(<http://www.gpet.com.au/About-Us/Policies-/Policies/AGPT-Policies/AGPT-Policies>\)](http://www.gpet.com.au/About-Us/Policies-/Policies/AGPT-Policies/AGPT-Policies)

Individual Practice Policy and Procedure Manuals (available at practice)

Procedures and Documentation

STEP 1

Expectations (Appendix A)

A summary of organizational expectations and the Professional Behaviour Guidelines will be disseminated to all existing staff, training practices and registrars. In addition, all new registrars, new staff and new training practices will be provided with a copy of this policy and the expectations as part of their orientation process.

STEP 2

Yellow Flag (Appendix B)

The trigger for a yellow flag occurs when expectations are not met or there is demonstrated behaviour that is not consistent with the Professional Behaviour Guidelines. Reports can be submitted by anyone involved in clinical care or training, including but not limited to supervisors, practice staff, registrars, educators, and program support staff. The situation will be reported in writing to the Chief Executive Officer for administrative issues or the Director of Training (DoT) for educational issues. This report should include documentation of the event(s) and what actions have been planned or implemented. The CEO/DoT will enter the report in the registrar/practice file and determine what action, if any, will be taken. The CEO/DoT will inform both parties, in writing, if there is any further action or intervention. This may include liaison with a medical educator with a relevant portfolio. The notifier may be involved in the following up of the resolution of the yellow flag.

STEP 3

Red Flag (Appendix C)

The trigger for a red flag occurs if the intervention in Step 2 has not resolved the issue or the initial issues become ongoing or escalate. In addition, a red flag occurs if there is an issue of a more serious nature. The CEO (for administrative issues) or the DoT (for education program issues) must be notified in writing of all red flag events. The CEO/DoT will enter the report in the registrar/practice file and meet with the party or parties involved before determining a further course of action. The resulting action will be provided in writing to those involved.

The EV Appeals Policy is available if the decision or resulting action is disputed.

STEP 4 (Unresolved/repeated/further issues)

If after the initial meeting with the CEO/DoT and the resulting action or intervention, there are repeated or new red flag behaviours, the CEO/DoT may remove the party from the program (temporarily or permanently). The EV Board will be advised of these actions in writing.

Dissemination Strategy

Expectations and the Professional Behaviour Guidelines have been disseminated to all existing program staff, training practices and registrars by posting on EV website and highlighting at appropriate meetings and workshops in 2016. In addition, all new registrars, new staff and new training practices will be provided with a copy of this policy and the program expectations as part of their orientation process. Program expectations of registrars and supervisors have been included in “yellow” and “red” flags, as non-adherence to these expectations is often a reflection of broader professionalism issues.

Appendix A

Summary of Expectations:

This section outlines the expectation for each member of Eastern Victorian GP Training.

Registrars at all levels

Demonstrate respect for registrar colleagues, supervisors, training practice staff, EV education and program support staff, and external speakers.

Understand the implications and responsibilities, and comply with the documented employment agreement between the training practice and registrar in respect to employed terms and conditions for the training term (negotiations about employment conditions may be possible at some practices, but once the contract is agreed to and signed both parties should adhere to it).

Registrar has completed all reasonable steps within their power to be ready to start work on agreed date (e.g. completed their element of Medicare provider number paperwork in a timely manner; ensured appropriate medical indemnity insurance).

Compliance with the standard of conduct and practice policies as documented in the practice policy manuals/guidelines.

Appropriately share the burden of patient load in clinic.

Program Staff

Medical Educators

- ♦ Respect for program colleagues and co-workers
- ♦ Start and finish workshops at the scheduled time
- ♦ Attend practice for ECTVs on time
- ♦ Provide ECTV feedback for registrars within 2 weeks of visit
- ♦ Contact with GP supervisor before and after ECTV
- ♦ Honesty and integrity in all training matters
- ♦ Adequate documentation of training events and issues
- ♦ Adherence to all AGPT, RACGP, ACRRM and EV policies
- ♦ Inform DoT of all matters of importance which arise in relation to ME's professional work
- ♦ Exercise confidentiality and respect in all matters pertaining to personal information known about GPR, GPS and EV training practices
- ♦ Comply with documented employment agreement and agreed position description

Program support staff

- ♦ Respect for program colleagues and co-workers
- ♦ Display punctuality
- ♦ Accountable and responsible in all training matters
- ♦ Multidisciplinary teamwork
- ♦ Demonstrate trustworthiness/honesty/integrity
- ♦ Incident reporting and appropriate documentation

- ♦ Exercise confidentiality and respect in all matters pertaining to personal information
- ♦ Adhere to professional boundaries
- ♦ Communicate professionally within EV and with training practices

Training Practice Staff

GP Supervisors/other medical staff

- ♦ Demonstrate respect for registrars and training program staff
- ♦ Recognise dual role of the registrar – doctor and learner
- ♦ Facilitate transition for registrars who are new to the practice and may have limited general practice experience
- ♦ Provide practice orientation for registrar
- ♦ Provide registrar with copy or direction to all practice policies and guidelines
- ♦ Adhere to National, EV and related third party Terms and Conditions, and National and statutory requirements for employment of registrars
- ♦ Adhere to contract with EV as a training practice
- ♦ Complete and submit forms to EV by due date
- ♦ Display punctuality when attending GP supervisor professional development and in registrar teaching sessions
- ♦ Ensure, as much as possible, a broad clinical experience and range of patients
- ♦ As role-models for registrars, demonstrate fairness, respect and integrity

Practice managers/administrative staff

- ♦ Adhere to National, EV and related third party Terms and Conditions, and National and statutory requirements for employment of registrars
- ♦ Assist in the orientation program for registrars
- ♦ Inform registrars of rostering practices, including nursing home and home visits
- ♦ Support the registrar in understanding practice policies and procedural guidelines
- ♦ Complete and submit forms to EV by due date
- ♦ Undertake duties in accord with EV policies, procedures and contracted requirements

Appendix B

Yellow flags

GP Registrars (in the metropolitan program)

- ◆ Complaints from program or practice staff in relation to professional behaviour domains (pages 2-3), this includes issues such as punctuality, professional appearance, team work, etc. that are on-going and do not resolve after initial practice level intervention
- ◆ Catch up program (CUP) activities outstanding >2 weeks post due date
- ◆ Learning Needs Analysis not submitted >2weeks post due date
- ◆ Submission of ReCEnT activity not submitted > 2 weeks post due date
- ◆ GPT1 registrar
 - late for ≥ 2 workshops, or
 - at risk of attending less than 10 workshop days
- ◆ GPT2 registrar
 - late for ≥ 1 workshop, or
 - at risk of attending less than 5 workshop days
- ◆ GPT 3 registrar late for the workshop
- ◆ Interpersonal problems with colleagues/ EV education or program support staff that are adversely affecting working relationships
- ◆ Not enrolled in RACGP exam by GPT4/extended skills term
- ◆ Persistent unreasonable refusal to see patients requiring urgent appointments (e.g. lacerations, possible fracture or febrile child) at clinic, however such requests should not be any more onerous than for any other doctor at the practice.
- ◆ Dispute about employment agreement due to registrar unreasonably wanting to alter agreement
- ◆ Failure to follow practice policies and procedures
- ◆ Forms or documents required for training (e.g. from EV) not completed >1 week post due date

EV Staff (including medical educators)

- ◆ Complaints from registrars or practice staff in relation to professional behaviour domains
- ◆ Failure to record accomplishment of registrar and supervisor requirements on Pivotal in a timely manner
- ◆ Untimely or inaccurate information provided to registrars or training practices
- ◆ Interpersonal problems with colleagues, registrars or administrative staff
- ◆ Educators late for teaching sessions or ECTVs
- ◆ ECTV reports not posted on Pivotal by deadlines

Practice staff (including GP Supervisors)

- ◆ Complaints from registrars, program or practice staff in relation to professional behaviour domains
- ◆ Failure to comply with Terms and Conditions for the Employment of Registrars
- ◆ No orientation provided for new registrars

- ♦ Providing less than required teaching over 1-month period
- ♦ On-site supervision less than contracted requirements
- ♦ Interpersonal problems with registrar or EV teaching or administrative staff
- ♦ Dispute about employment agreement due to practice / supervisor unreasonably wanting to alter agreement
- ♦ Attendance at less than 3 days per year requirement of supervisors CPD sessions
- ♦ Consistently late for supervisor CPD sessions in a year
- ♦ Excessive roster demands on the registrar
- ♦ Requested documentation, forms or data not received in accordance with contract with EV

Appendix C

Red flags

GP Registrars (in the metropolitan program)

- ♦ Recurring complaints from program or practice staff in relation to professional behaviour domains (pages 2-3)
- ♦ CUP activities outstanding > 4 weeks post due date
- ♦ Learning Needs Analysis not submitted > 4 weeks post due date
- ♦ Submission of ReCEnT activity not submitted > 4 weeks post due date
- ♦ GPT1 Registrar
 - late for ≥ 4 workshops, or
 - at risk of attending less than 8 workshop days
- ♦ GPT2 Registrar
 - late for > 2 workshops, or
 - at risk of attending less than 4 workshop days
- ♦ GPT3 Registrar non-attendance for full day of the workshop program
- ♦ On-going interpersonal problems with colleagues/ EV education or program support staff that are persistently adversely affecting working relationships
- ♦ Any form of abuse or harassment of another registrar, member of education or administrative staff
- ♦ Refusal to see patients with a medical emergency at clinic
- ♦ On-going inability to resolve employment agreement issues coming about due to registrar unreasonably wanting to alter agreement
- ♦ On-going failure to follow practice policies and procedures

EV Staff (including medical educators)

- ♦ Recurring complaints from registrars or practice staff in relation to professional behaviour domains
- ♦ On-going failure to document communication with registrars and teaching practices
- ♦ Inconsistent decision-making in relation to registrars and teaching practices
- ♦ On-going interpersonal problems with colleagues, registrars or other EV staff that are having a significant adverse effect on working relationships
- ♦ Any form of abuse or harassment of registrar or member of teaching or program support staff
- ♦ Deliberate disregard of EV policy, procedures and /or terms of employment

Practice staff (Including GP supervisors)

- ♦ Recurring complaints from registrars, program or practice staff in relation to professional behaviour domains
- ♦ Repeated non-compliance with Terms and Conditions for employment of registrars
- ♦ Inability to resolve employment agreement issues coming about due to supervisor unreasonably wanting to alter agreement

- ♦ Ongoing failure to follow practice policies and procedures
- ♦ Ongoing failure to meet supervision requirements for registrars
- ♦ Providing no teaching in one month period or ongoing reduced registrar teaching
- ♦ Nil attendance at supervisor CPD sessions
- ♦ Ongoing interpersonal problems with registrar or EV teaching or program support staff that are having a significant adverse effect on working relationships
- ♦ Any form of abuse or harassment of GPR or member of EV teaching or program support staff