

## Program Advice

# COVID-19 impacts on GP education and training - FAQs

This FAQ sheet contains information on RACGP's position on education and training policies impacted on by COVID-19. This is for AGPT and PEP trainees, supervisors and training practices.

With respect to managing the clinical aspects including public health implications of this infection, all are recommended to follow the latest relevant medical and community advice.

### How do leave provisions apply to self-isolation?

Self-isolation for COVID-19 reasons qualifies for sick leave.

AGPT registrars are entitled to 5 days of paid sick leave and 10 days of paid annual leave (or full time equivalent) per 6-month term (as per the NTCER). Sick leave taken in addition to this is classified as Category 1 leave. Category 1 leave does not contribute to training time. Please liaise with your training post and RTO and complete any leave forms.

For PEP participants, leave provisions are determined by their employment contract. Program length will not be affected.

### Will AGPT and PEP activities continue uninterrupted?

At this stage it is expected that some educational and assessment activities will be impacted, however decisions about these activities will be made as this evolving situation becomes clearer. There will be local and regional differences. RACGP will continue to monitor the situation and provide regular communication. Other stakeholders are encouraged to do similarly. Central RACGP PEP activities will continue (Learning Plan, Learning Units, etc) as these are online. The delivery of RTO PEP and AGPT activities will be determined by individual RTOs.

### What happens if a registrar misses a compulsory RTO education and training activity?

Any mandatory activities missed are expected to be made up for in a manner that is at the discretion of the RTO. Alternative 'make-up' activities may be offered.

### Can GP trainees undertake teleconsultations?

With the escalating infection rates in Australia it is expected that a significant proportion of GP COVID-19 related advice and management for patients will be provided remotely through teleconsultation either by telephone or by videoconferencing. Some of this may be done remote to the site of the clinician's main clinical practice, particularly if the clinician is under self-isolation but still able to consult. Trainees may be asked to contribute to the provision of teleconsultations. This may include when they are in self-isolation. The RACGP considers teleconsultations during the COVID-19 health crisis an appropriate clinical activity for GP trainees, provided that supervision arrangements commensurate with the normal supervision requirements are in place.

## What are the supervision requirements for telehealth consultations?

Teleconsultations by GP trainees require supervision that is commensurate with normal supervision requirements. For teleconsultations, equivalence to onsite availability is considered the availability of the supervisor to be dialled into the registrar's teleconsultation. Most teleconsultations platforms have the capacity for a third person to be dialled in.

## Are there additional requirements for remotely delivered teleconsultations by GP trainees?

If a GP trainee is conducting teleconsultations off-site, the training post is responsible for ensuring that systems are in place for protecting patient privacy and for ensuring that the off-site worksite has the required workplace support, supervision and occupational safety provisions. Trainee engagement with remote supervision models requires agreement by the trainee who has the option to refuse. **The RACGP expects all trainees to feel comfortable and well supported with any model used for remote supervision.**

Training posts who wish to engage AGPT registrars in remotely delivered teleconsultations need to secure approval from their regional training organisation (RTO). RTOs are required to have a documented process for approving, managing and monitoring remotely delivered teleconsultations by registrars that is consistent with the guidelines detailed above. RTOs do not require prospective approval by RACGP for their chosen model to achieve this.

## When should GP trainees and supervisors self-isolate?

Recommendations for self-isolation by GP clinicians are changing as the COVID-19 situation unfolds. Trainees and supervisors should be guided by the most current advice provided by the medical professional community.

**If an AGPT supervisor self-isolates**, please inform your RTO and ensure that any registrars under your supervision continue to receive the required supervision. All registrars continuing to train are required to receive supervision to the current standards with supervision for telephone and telehealth consulting detailed above.

## Can GP trainees in self-isolation continue to work through teleconsulting?

If the GP trainee is medically well enough, they may continue to work by teleconsulting as long as the above guidelines are adhered to. For AGPT registrars, approval is required from the trainee's RTO.

## COVID-19 Resources

- [Daily updates](#) are provided by the Department of Health, with reliable information and resources on COVID-19 specifically, available on the [Australian Government's COVID-19 resources website](#).
- For those travelling or know someone who is traveling the [Smart Traveller website](#) has up to date content
- You can access further information and guidance on the [World Health Organization's \(WHO\) website](#) and the [Centres for Disease Control \(CDC\) website](#)