



29 September 2011

AMC Accreditation Update: September 2011

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) has recently completed an assessment of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine.

The AMC has given the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) accreditation until 2014 – with conditions – after an accreditation review spanning the College's specialist medical education and training programs, and programs designed to enable College fellows to maintain standards of professional practice.

ACRRM is one of two medical colleges in Australia that sets standards for training in the specialty of general practice. ACRRM is focused on standards that apply to appropriate and safe practice in rural and remote contexts.

In February 2007, the AMC granted ACRRM initial accreditation as a standards body and a provider of specific training and professional development programs for the speciality of general practice.

Initial accreditation entails an assessment by the AMC of an application addressing the accreditation standards. This accreditation continues, subject to submission of satisfactory annual progress reports, until an AMC expert team completes a full accreditation assessment, involving stakeholder consultation, visits to practices that provide on-the-job training of general practitioners, and meetings with College committees, staff and officers.

The College provides three pathways for doctors wishing to train as specialist general practitioners and receive Fellowship of the College. In all three pathways, doctors complete four years of training in accredited posts while working in hospitals, and community and general practices. Their supervised on-the-job training is complemented by educational modules and courses, and ongoing assessment and feedback. Doctors complete their training with one year of advanced specialty training in an area that will provide extended skills and knowledge relevant to rural and remote medical practice such as surgery, obstetrics, anaesthetics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, emergency medicine, mental health, adult internal medicine, population health, paediatrics, or remote medicine.

The Vocational Preparation Program, which is designed for recent medical graduates, is delivered through Australia's government-funded training scheme, Australian General Practice Training. This scheme delivers training through regional training providers with the support of general practitioners who act as training supervisors. The Remote Vocational Training Scheme, which is also Government funded, was designed for isolated rural medical practitioners. It is delivered almost entirely through distance-based education. The Independent Pathway, which is self-funded by the participants, is designed for experienced medical practitioners who are working in rural and remote communities.

The AMC report on the accreditation acknowledges that the College's training pathways have developed significantly since it first began training medical specialists in 2003. In the four years since the College was first accredited by the AMC, it has made considerable

progress in establishing policy, procedures and structures to support doctors completing one of its three training pathways.

In August 2011, the AMC Directors found that the education, training and continuing professional development programs of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine substantially meet the accreditation standards. The Executive Summary of the accreditation report is available on the [AMC website](#). Key findings include:

- accreditation until December 2014, with a requirement for ACRRM to report on conditions of accreditation;
- the need for the College to give priority to completing the review of its primary curriculum;
- the need for ACRRM training requirements to recognise that the College is preparing doctors for unsupervised general practice and to ensure that all doctors complete an identified period of community and primary care;
- the requirement for better processes for monitoring doctors' training and education;
- the need for aims of the Independent Pathway to be reviewed, taking account of other mechanisms that permit overseas-trained doctors to obtain medical registration and complete specialist training in Australia;
- the importance of articulation of ACRRM standards and requirements, and build process-monitoring and communication systems to ensure that training is delivered to high standards.

The report also details ACRRM's notable successes and strengths, including the enthusiasm and commitment of the doctors who contribute to College training as supervisors and as members of ACRRM training committees; the flexibility in the training pathways; the College's remote learning tools; and the approach to assessing trainees' performance. The College's well established and well designed professional development program is also commended. The report acknowledges the outstanding work by ACRRM to enable practitioners in rural and remote areas to access high quality and relevant learning materials and activities.

The Vocational Preparation Pathway, the Remote Vocational Training Scheme, and the Professional Development Program are granted ongoing accreditation to 31 December 2014, subject to satisfactory progress reports to the AMC Specialist Education Accreditation Committee. The Independent Pathway is granted ongoing accreditation to 31 December 2014, subject to a review of the selection criteria by 2011, and the aims and objectives of the Pathway by 2012. The accreditation decision is subject to satisfactory reports by the College and meeting the conditions imposed.

The AMC presented the accreditation decision noted above to the Medical Board of Australia for decision on the approval of the programs of study for registration purposes. The Medical Board of Australia details its decisions about accredited programs of study in communiqués published on the [Board's website](#) following each meeting.

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