



June 2015

AMC Accreditation Update: 2015

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) has recently completed a number of accreditation assessments of training programs for medical specialists. In Australia, specialist training is managed by specialist medical colleges. To be granted a college fellowship, which leads to being an independent specialist, medical practitioners must successfully complete a college training program while they work as doctors-in-training in college-accredited posts in hospitals and health services.

The AMC assesses specialist medical training programs against defined accreditation standards. It appoints an expert team which reviews a submission by the College, and interviews doctors in training, their supervisors and other stakeholders in the training program.

In March 2015, the AMC completed the reaccreditation of the specialist medical programs and continuing professional development programs of the **Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP)**. The RACP is the largest specialist medical education provider accredited by the AMC, in terms of number of discrete training programs, number of fields of specialty practice, and number of specialties covered. The College conducts the education, training and continuing professional development programs in Australia and New Zealand for physicians and paediatricians in a specialised area of medicine.

The College's Physician Readiness for Expert Practice (PREP) Program requires trainees to complete a minimum of six years which comprises basic and advanced training. In basic training, trainees spend three years training under supervision in either adult internal medicine or paediatrics & child health in a hospital setting. Advanced training is in a specialty of either adult internal medicine or paediatrics & child health. While the requirements between the various specialties differ, advanced trainees generally spend three to four years training under supervision in a variety of settings.

The RACP was first accredited by the AMC in 2004, which resulted in accreditation being granted for four years, until 2008. The College underwent a follow-up assessment and its accreditation was extended to 2010. Based on a comprehensive report for extension of accreditation submitted by the College in 2010, accreditation was then extended to 2014, taking accreditation to the full period of ten years.

On the basis of the 2014 review, the AMC determined that the College substantially meets the accreditation standards. The AMC has given the College and its programs accreditation until 31 March 2021, subject to conditions, and a review visit, by March 2019. The 2014 review found that the College has invested significantly in its educational programs and the expertise supporting them since the last AMC assessment. This investment has led to the continued evolution of the College's education, training and continuing professional development programs. The College has committed to further development of many aspects of its education programs and significant work is underway, including major plans for curriculum and assessment review. At the time of the assessment, a number of other large projects were in the early stages of implementation, including the College's education governance reform. While the AMC commends the College on its well-developed plans for these reviews, it has also identified a number of areas for improvement across the



accreditation standards. Therefore the AMC determined that, after four years of accreditation, an AMC assessment team will review the College's progress in implementing the major educational changes it has embarked on.

The full accreditation decision, including the requirements for progress reports and the conditions on the accreditation, is provided in the Executive Summary of the accreditation report at <http://www.amc.org.au/accreditation/medical-education/accreditation-reports>.

The AMC has also completed the follow-up assessment of the training pathways leading to fellowship of the **Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)** and the College's continuing professional development program.

ACRRM was first accredited by the AMC in 2010, which resulted in accreditation being granted until 2014. The conditions on this accreditation required a follow-up assessment in 2014, to review the progress in meeting the conditions set in 2010 and the further development of the College's programs.

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. General practice training is managed differently to other specialist medical training in Australia. At the time of the review, the main training program, Australian General Practice Training (AGPT), was managed through a separate company, General Practice Education and Training (GPET), which delivered training through funded regional training providers. As of 1 January 2015, GPET transferred its functions to the Australian Government Department of Health. The AMC acknowledged that these significant changes created an uncertain environment for the College in the management of general practice training and took this into account during the review.

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. 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, academic research or remote medicine.

In March 2015, the AMC Directors agreed to grant ongoing accreditation to the training pathways leading to fellowship of ACRRM until 31 March 2018. The AMC found that the College meets the accreditation standards.

Since 2010, the College has significantly enhanced its educational and training activities, and undertaken an extensive consultative review of its governance resulting in a new constitution. The AMC found that there have been enhanced engagement efforts both internally and with external stakeholders and in particular with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners in establishing the Bi-College Regional Training Provider (RTP) Accreditation Program. This program is facilitating a greater oversight of the accreditation of training providers. Concerns remain about the impact of the variable relationships between the training providers and further work is required by the College to ensure they are well versed in ACRRM's curriculum and expectations.



The full accreditation decision, including the requirements for progress reports and the conditions on the accreditation, is provided in the Executive Summary of the accreditation report at <http://www.amc.org.au/accreditation/medical-education/accreditation-reports>.

Once accredited by the AMC, specialist medical colleges are required to submit regular progress reports. In the last twelve months of their accreditation, colleges submit a comprehensive report for extension of accreditation. In this report, the college is asked to show that it continues to meet the accreditation standards by analysing its own performance, and to outline its plans leading up to the next AMC accreditation. On this basis, the AMC determines whether the college is satisfying the AMC requirements for accreditation, and if so, can extend the accreditation, which can be for the balance of the maximum ten years between accreditations, or a lesser period.

The AMC has extended the accreditation of the following three colleges on the basis of satisfactory comprehensive reports.

The **Australasian College of Sports Physicians** covers the specialty of sport and exercise medicine. The AMC agreed to extend the accreditation of the sports medicine training program and the continuing professional development program of Australasian College of Sports Physicians by four years, with reaccreditation due 31 March 2019. The AMC's finding is that the College's programs meet the accreditation standards.

The **Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists** cover the specialties of radiology and radiation oncology. The AMC agreed to extend the accreditation of the radiology and radiation oncology training programs and the continuing professional development programs of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists by five years, with reaccreditation due 31 March 2020. The AMC's finding is that the College's programs meet the accreditation standards.

The **Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators** covers the specialty of medical administration. The AMC agreed to extend the accreditation of the medical administration training program and the continuing professional development program of the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators by four years, with reaccreditation due 31 March 2019. The AMC's finding is that the College's programs meet the accreditation standards.

The AMC presented the accreditation decisions and reports noted above to the Medical Board of Australia to enable the Board to make a 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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