



**MEDIA RELEASE
November 2003**

**Accreditation of education and training programs of the Royal
Australian College of General Practitioners**

Green light for new medical schools and College of GP's training

AMC Media release

24 November 2003

Australia could get four new medical schools after the Australian Medical Council (AMC) accredited one new school at ANU and gave the go ahead to three others to submit detailed curriculum plans by next year.

And the AMC has given the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) accreditation for three years – with conditions – after an accreditation review spanning specialist medical education and training programs, and programs designed to enable College fellows to maintain standards of professional practice.

AMC accreditation is mandatory for all Australian medical schools and in 2002, all specialist medical Colleges agreed to the voluntary external review of their training programs by the AMC. The RACGP is the fourth specialist medical College to be reviewed by the AMC, with the College of Surgeons and the College of Radiologists accredited in 2001 and the College of Anaesthetists accredited in November 2002.

The three proposed medical schools cleared to proceed to a full accreditation review are:

- Bond University at the Gold Coast (which would become Australia's first private university medical school)
- The University of Notre Dame Australia (which would become Australia's first Catholic medical school) and
- Griffith University which is planning to establish its medical school at the Gold coast.

Each school aims to take students in 2005. The Federal Government has agreed to provide HECS funded places to Griffith and Notre Dame if they meet AMC accreditation standards. Bond University will be self-funding and must also meet AMC accreditation standards.

The accreditation review of the RACGP came after the Federal Government's decision in 2000 (effective in 2002), to fund and establish a private company, General Practice Education and Training (GPET), to take over the College's responsibilities for administration and funding of GP training. Regional training providers now tender to GPET to provide local GP training, which must meet RACGP standards.

The conclusions and recommendations of the AMC's accreditation report on the RACGP is available at www.amc.org.au. Key findings include:

- three year accreditation to July 2006, with conditions
- there is a need to clarify roles and responsibilities between the RACGP and GPET and
- it is important to re-establish systems of standard setting, process monitoring and communication to ensure high standards of training are maintained

The AMC accreditation team considered the roles and responsibilities the AMC expected any organisation to fulfil to meet its Accreditation Standards. From this, it identified the minimum roles and responsibilities required of the RACGP. The report details areas in which the role of the RACGP as the standards setting body needs to be clarified.

AMC President, Dr Joanna Flynn, said training for registrars was still strong thanks to the efforts of individual doctors and medical educators providing training on the ground.

"This has been an extremely challenging time for the College and for individual General Practitioner registrars," she said.

"Thanks to a lot of effort and goodwill, the actual training being provided continues to be of a high quality. The College has also demonstrated that it is committed to resolving the outstanding structural issues that prevented full unconditional accreditation," Dr Flynn said.

Dr Flynn said that overseas trained doctors made up an increasing proportion of doctors seeking Fellowship with the College and the RACGP played an important role in supporting these practitioners and providing continuing professional development to GPs.

Further information

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