



# **SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK**

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## INTRODUCTION

The RVTS Supervisor Handbook is provided to assist Supervisors in fulfilling this important role.

Much of the information you need to know about the organisation, the staff, and the educational processes of RVTS can be found in the RVTS Handbook. Electronic copies can be accessed from the RVTS website.

## THE RVTS SUPERVISOR

### *Supervisor's Roles and Responsibilities*

RVTS supervisors have a unique role in the Australian general practice training landscape. It is one of the core strengths of the RVTS program that supervisors are able to mentor, support, train and teach their registrars remotely. Wherever possible, supervisors practise in similar or comparable locations to their registrar, which strengthens the commonality of experience. While remote supervision is ideally suited to newer technologies and internet based facilities, the telephone remains its cornerstone.

Supervisors provide distance supervision, professional role modelling, one-to-one teleconference teaching, feedback, along with regular telephone/skype/email advice and professional support to the registrar.

To ensure that registrars are well-supported and have reliable access to guidance and advice throughout the duration of their studies the supervisor is required to:

1. Maintain regular contact with their registrar as follows:
  - in the first six months: 1 hour per week
  - in the second six months: 1 hour per fortnight
  - for the remainder of the program: 1 hour per month.

(The Supervisor is not required to maintain contact with the registrar while the registrar is undertaking advanced skills training or while the registrar is on leave from RVTS)

2. Participate in twice-yearly training reviews between the registrar and supervisor and RVTS. These are arranged by the RVTS office and form part of the regular contact between the supervisor and the registrar
3. Visit the registrar once per year for a Clinical Teaching Visit and provide a written report on the visit to the RVTS office. These visits are arranged in conjunction with the RVTS office. In situations where the supervisor works in the same practice as the registrar, the supervisor will not be required to conduct CTVs with the registrar.
4. Join the weekly webinar when their registrar presents a case. (This is considered part of the regular contact between the supervisor and registrar)
5. Assist the registrar in developing their learning plan and with making progress in RVTS Online modules.

6. Attend at least one of the RVTS face to face registrar training workshops each year. (QI/CPD/PDP points may be available). Attendance is funded for at least one workshop per year. Prior approval is required from the CEO/DoT to attend a second workshop.
7. Participate in appropriate teacher training provided by, but not limited to, RVTS
8. Inform RVTS if they are going to be absent for a period greater than 2 weeks so that alternative supervision arrangements can be put in place
9. Inform RVTS immediately of any issues of concern in their role as a supervisor and provide regular feedback to RVTS on their registrar
10. Participate in the twice-yearly RVTS supervisor webinars
11. Where possible, contribute to the workshops either by facilitating or presenting sessions
12. Advise RVTS of any conditions on their medical registration

In exceptional circumstances variations to these requirements may be negotiated between RVTS, the supervisor and the registrar.

RVTS supervisors develop a collegiate working relationship with their registrars, which gives them a unique insight into the registrar's working life. From time to time, registrars may struggle in their practices for a variety of reasons, most commonly workload issues, cultural or family issues or issues pertaining to exam pressure. The supervisor's role is as much to identify that the learner is in difficulty as to assist with the problems. The registrar's Registrar Training Coordinator (RTC) should be informed and any necessary assistance can then be provided for the registrar.

It is important that supervisors be familiar with the following RVTS policies which can be found on the RVTS website, resources tab at: <http://rvts.org.au/resources/policies>

- Performance and Progression policy
- Registrar in Difficulty policy
- Withdrawal from Training policy

### ***Code of Conduct***

As stated in the *RVTS Code of Conduct - Registrars and Supervisors*, RVTS expects all registrars and supervisors to demonstrate acceptable professional standards at all times, including treating others with dignity, courtesy, respect and compassion.

Attainment of the skills and capacities commensurate with Fellowship of the RACGP and ACRRM brings with it the responsibility to apply such skills with the highest professional and ethical standards.

It is expected that all interactions between registrars, supervisors and RVTS should be conducted with probity and respect.

It is the responsibility of each participant engaged in the RVTS training program to abide by the [RVTS Code of Conduct - Registrars and Supervisors](#), observe the Medical Board of Australia's code, [Good Medical Practice: A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia](#), and to be aware of their jurisdictional requirements and legal responsibilities, which may vary between states and territories.

It is also recognised that Registrars and Supervisors as members of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine and/or the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners are required to meet the expectations associated with holding Fellowship of the College/s as stipulated in the relevant Codes of Conduct.

Supervisors will be asked to acknowledge that they have read, understood and agree to abide by the [RVTS Code of Conduct](#) when signing the Supervisor Agreement.

## **What's expected of an RVTS supervisor**

### ***Regular registrar contact***

The model of supervision for RVTS may be different to your previous experiences as a supervisor as you may be located some distance from your registrar. The contact will generally be by phone, and this will work best if you set up a regular session on a specific time of the day or evening. Your contract outlines the required amount of contact time for each year.

### ***Contact with registrars on leave from RVTS training***

When a registrar is on leave, the supervisor is not expected to maintain contact with the registrar.

### ***Contact with registrars undertaking AST***

Registrars undertaking AST will have an AST supervisor as per AST Curriculum standards. They may continue with their GP supervisor throughout AST training as required by the curriculum. All supervision arrangements will be considered on a case by case basis and a variation of contract to the existing Supervisor Agreement may be required.

### ***Clinical Teaching Visits (CTVs)***

If you work in a different practice to your registrar, you will be asked if you can undertake a clinical teaching visit to your registrar early in their training time and probably a second one later in their training. You will be contacted by the RVTS office and be separately remunerated for your time and travel. You will be provided with a CTV guide which outlines the processes and requirements. The visit provides an opportunity to get to know your registrar better and allows you to provide a valuable learning experience for your registrar.

The RVTS Clinical Teaching Visit Guide provides information on preparation, conduct and reporting requirements for CTVs. This guide can be accessed from the RVTS website resources for supervisors tab.

### ***Training Reviews***

Periodically, the supervisor, registrar and registrar training coordinator will participate in a training review arranged by the RVTS office to look specifically at the registrar's learning plan, provide an overview of their training performance and address any outstanding issues, including their whole of training plan.

### ***Registrar Webinars***

Each year your registrar will present at least one case during their regular webinar sessions. Supervisors should assist the registrar with development of their topic, addressing the learning goals and providing expert advice. Supervisors may be offered the opportunity to attend their registrar's case presentation. The supervisor's input is especially valuable to the registrar group.

### ***RVTS Online***

RVTS online is the virtual 'go to' place for Registrar and Supervisor training. It acts as a home for a variety of learning resources including a series of self-directed modules developed by RVTS, support material for the webinar series, interactive discussion areas and much more. RVTS will arrange a username and password for your access to RVTS Online.

### ***Workshops***

Supervisors are funded to attend at least one workshop per year. Supervisors may attend both workshops in the year, but funding may only be available for one.

The workshops are a first-class opportunity to engage with registrars and the RVTS team. With remote supervision, these face to face workshops are especially valuable. Integral in the workshops is a continuing supervisor education program specifically targeting the educational needs of supervisors. In addition, these supervisor workshop sessions provide a forum for supervisors to share experiences. Supervisors are heavily involved in teaching sessions during the workshops and their contextual experience is invaluable. Supervisors are often asked to assist in the delivery of teaching or be involved in the clinical case practise. Separate remuneration for workshop attendance is available as described in your contract. CPD points may also be available.

### ***Supervisor Training Webinars***

These are held twice yearly. In conjunction with the workshops these provide an opportunity for supervisors to give feedback to the education team and to share registrar experiences. In particular, these webinars enable the education team to update supervisors in regard to changes and developments in registrar education.

### ***Supervisor Focus Group Meetings***

The Focus Group consists of RVTS Supervisors who volunteer to take part in a think-tank activity two or three times a year. Many innovative ideas are developed by this group. Should you wish to have an active input towards the improvement and development of RVTS programs this is the forum for you. RVTS will notify you of the schedule for Focus Group teleconferences.

### ***Let us know if you're taking leave – Relief Supervisor Program***

To ensure your registrar always has access to a supervisor, we need to be informed when you are taking leave for any period greater than 2 weeks. A Supervisor Leave Notification form must be completed and submitted to RVTS – leave forms can be accessed from the RVTS website resources for supervisors tab:

[http://rvts.org.au/downloads/Supervisor\\_Leave\\_notification.doc](http://rvts.org.au/downloads/Supervisor_Leave_notification.doc)

RVTS provides continuous registrar education and supervision. The Relief Supervisor Program is designed to support prolonged supervisor annual leave, illness or other unexpected eventualities.

RVTS maintains an up-to-date list of experienced supervisors who are available and willing to provide temporary remote supervision. Generally, these supervisors have previously supported a registrar through RVTS. A supervisor (temporary or permanent) with one registrar may volunteer to provide temporary remote supervision to a second registrar. A supervisor will provide support for a maximum of two registrars.

## **How to engage your registrar**

### ***Methods of remote support and supervision***

As well as RVTS Online, some other suggestions of what to cover during the regular supervisor contact can include:

- Case reviews
- Help with exam preparation
- Call for topical issues or concerns which have arisen since the last contact with the registrar
- Development of learning goals which may be evident from the training review and learning plan
- Resources from the Supervisor Toolkit found in the Supervisors course on RVTS Online.

Ask the registrar to keep a pad on the desk to jot down issues which arise in between contacts

Consider scheduling into the appointment book a regular session that is mutually convenient, with a backup time if emergencies arise.

## **Selection of Supervisors**

Registrars in RVTS work in rural and remote locations or in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and are matched with a supervisor for the duration of their training. The supervisor should:

- be registered with AHPRA;
- be a Fellow of ACRRM or RACGP;
- have experience in rural and remote general practice for registrars in the Remote Stream or experience in Aboriginal Health for the AMS Stream;
- have past or present experience in supervising/mentoring; and
- have appropriate medical indemnity cover

It is preferable, but not mandatory, that the supervisor practises in the same region and state as the registrar.

As the supervisor must be able to undertake all of the required registrar support activities, an RVTS supervisor cannot be supervising more than two registrars.



## ***Appointment of Supervisors***

RVTS appoints a supervisor preferably prior to commencement of the registrar's training. The registrar is consulted on the selection of a suitable supervisor. Often doctors with an existing supervisor or mentor role are recruited with the intent to preserve the relationship. The supervisor is not to be the employer/line manager of the registrar, except in exceptional circumstances as approved by the RVTS Director of Training. If possible, registrars are matched with supervisors located in the same or a similar geographical region to the registrar's location. When necessary, recommendations are sought from other sources such as Regional Training Organisations, Workforce Agencies and Primary Health Networks.

RVTS contacts the nominated doctor and, if they are interested in taking on the role, sends details about the program, RVTS supervisor requirements, and a supervisor profile form for completion and return to the RVTS office. If necessary, RVTS then undertakes referee checks.

Once the Director of Training has approved the supervisor's appointment, RVTS sends an agreement for signature and return to the RVTS office. A copy of the countersigned agreement is returned to the supervisor.

Additional documentation may be required for accreditation purposes with the Colleges at the time of your RVTS appointment.

## ***Supervisor Orientation***

Once the agreement has been signed by both parties, RVTS will send orientation material including:

- [Supervisor Orientation Information](#);
- RVTS Clinical Teaching Visit Guide;
- Supervisor Development Module 1 (*a PowerPoint presentation in 3 parts*); and
- Sample recording of a registrar-supervisor teleconference.

An orientation webinar is arranged for new supervisors at the end of January/early February. New supervisors are invited to take part in a three-way teleconference with a senior supervisor and their registrar.

## **Supervisor Support and Professional Development**

To ensure that supervisors are supported in their role, one of the RVTS Medical Educators (currently Dr Taras Mikulin - [tmikulin@rvts.org.au](mailto:tmikulin@rvts.org.au)), has responsibility for professional development and support of supervisors.

The administration team provides the support supervisors need for the administrative aspects of their work. In particular they can be contacted regarding remuneration for supervision and the administrative issues that need to be addressed as registrars are guided through the complexities of Australian general practice training.

In addition, RVTS provides the following support:

1. A structured program of supervisor/teacher training held in parallel to registrar training at the twice-yearly face to face workshops and twice-yearly Webinars. The triennium Supervisor Development Plan is available in RVTS Online under the Supervisors Course.

2. Peer review of the supervisor-registrar teleconference is undertaken throughout the year. A senior supervisor or medical educator partakes in the teleconference and provides structured, supportive feedback to the supervisor.
3. Supervisor Liaison Officers. The role of the SLO is to provide a link between RVTS supervisors, the RVTS management and educators. The SLO may be called upon to represent RVTS at national meetings. The SLO is appointed from within the supervisor group. The current RVTS Supervisor Liaison Officers are Dr Claire Cupitt (Remote Stream) and Dr Mark Sykes (AMS Stream).

### ***Supervisor Resources***

It is important that RVTS supervisors are provided with relevant resources to assist in delivery of training services to RVTS Registrars. Following signing of an RVTS Supervision Agreement, each supervisor will be provided with the following resources as required:

**Access to RVTS Online**, an online learning portal that enables users to engage in online modules, webinar material and online groups. RVTS will arrange a username and password for your access to RVTS Online.

#### **Medical Reference Books**

- Practice-Based Teaching – a Guide for GP's 2nd edition by Richard Hays
- John Murtagh's General Practice (hard copy)

Any other resources that a Supervisor may require will need prospective approval from the CEO.

### ***Supervisor Payments***

RVTS makes payments to supervisors in accordance with the supervisor contract.

### ***Vertically integrated registrar to supervisor training program***

RVTS has initiated a new supervisor support program, which provides a vertically integrated training pathway for progression from registrar to supervisor. This enables new Supervisors to have appropriate mentor support from a senior supervisor. *Refer: Junior Supervisor Mentoring policy*

### ***Junior Supervisor Mentoring program***

The junior supervisor mentoring program provides support for up to six one-hour meetings between a junior supervisor and a senior supervisor who has had a registrar complete three years RVTS training. These meetings are usually by teleconference but may include Skype conferences, face-to-face discussions or even three or four-way teleconferences involving their registrars.

A registrar who has recently completed Fellowship exams or, is a new supervisor or new to RVTS will have one-on-one mentoring enabling them to provide registrar training with confidence. In addition, the junior supervisor has access to supervisor training materials in

RVTS Online and is expected to work through these. Further training is provided during the RVTS Workshops. Please refer to the RVTS Supervisor Mentoring Policy.

## Other Useful Information

### *The Role of the Registrar Training Coordinator*

Registrar Training Coordinators (RTCs) are experienced members of our administration staff. Each registrar has an allocated RTC.

The role of the RTC is to be an accessible first point of contact for registrars, providing training advice, monitoring registrar progress and to be a referral point for registrars to access specialised training advice within the organisation.

The RTC is also the contact for Supervisors who have concerns about their registrar which can then be followed up accordingly.

### *Role of learning plans*

The learning plan provides an outline of the individual learning objectives that each registrar would like to achieve during their training time. It is developed regularly throughout a registrar's training between the registrar and the supervisor. The learning plan is reviewed at each training review with the RTC to assess progress and be updated.

## Membership of RVTS

RVTS Ltd is a company limited by guarantee. It has 3 classes of primary membership.

- Class A is comprised of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Class B is comprised of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
- Class C is made up of RVTS registrar and supervisor members

All RVTS registrars and supervisors are encouraged to apply for admission as primary class C members. Members are entitled to vote at general meetings of RVTS Ltd as well as nominate as directors of the RVTS Ltd Board. The company constitution allows for two Class C nominees to be appointed to the board.

A membership form can be downloaded at

[http://www.rvts.org.au/downloads/Application\\_for\\_Membership\\_class\\_C.pdf](http://www.rvts.org.au/downloads/Application_for_Membership_class_C.pdf).

## COMPLAINTS

In the event of a dispute arising involving a registrar, supervisor or member of the RVTS staff the RVTS Complaints policy provides for a clear framework under which complaints can be addressed. The Complaints policy can be accessed from the RVTS website resources tab:

<http://rvts.org.au/resources/policies>

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCHS	Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service
ACRRM	Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
AGPT	Australian General Practice Training
AKT	Applied Knowledge Test
ALS	Advanced Life Support
AMS	Aboriginal Medical Service
APLS	Advanced Paediatric Life Support (Course)
ARST	Advanced Rural Skills Training
AST	Advanced Skills Training
CBD	Case Based Discussion
CME	Continuing Medical Education
CT	Clinical Teaching
CTV	Clinical Teaching Visit
DOT	Director of Training
EMST	Early Management of Severe Trauma (Course)
FACRRM	Fellowship of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
FARGP	Fellowship of Advanced Rural General Practice
FRACGP	Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GP	General Practitioner
GPR	General Practice Registrar
GPRA	General Practice Registrars' Association
GPRIP	General Practice Rural Incentives Payment
GPS	General Practice Supervisor
GPPTSP	General Practitioner Procedural Training Support Program
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
IMG	International Medical Graduate
KFP	Key Feature Problems
MA	Medicare Australia
MCQ	Multiple Choice Questions
MDO	Medical Defence Organisation
ME	Medical Educator
MiniCEX	Mini Clinical Evaluation Exercises
NRC	National Resource Centre – RACGP John Murtagh Library
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
RACGP	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
RDA	Rural Doctors Association
RHTU	Rural Health Training Unit
RLO	Registrar Liaison Officer
RMS	Registrar Management System
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RRMA	Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Area
RRMEO	Rural and Remote Medical Education Online
RTC	Registrar Training Coordinator
RVTS	Remote Vocational Training Scheme
SLO	Supervisor Liaison Officer
SME	Senior Medical Educator
StAMPS	Structured Assessment using Multiple Patient Scenarios
VR	Vocational Registration
WONCA	World Organisation of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians

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### **Document control**

**Warning – Uncontrolled when printed! The current version of this document is kept on the RVTS server.**

Authorised by: CEO/DoT

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