



**RVT S**

REMOTE VOCATIONAL  
TRAINING SCHEME LTD

# **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 Program 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/video conferencing/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, registrar training coordinator (RTC), and supervisor. The medical educator mentor will attend the first training review, and may attend subsequent reviews. 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 (CTV) or hold a tele-CTV. Following the CTV provide a written report on the registrar's progress to the RVTS office. These visits are arranged by the RVTS program support team. 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 webinar where their registrar is presenting a case discussion.
5. Supervisors are invited to facilitate / present a webinar (the content is provided by RVTS).
6. Assist the registrar in developing their learning plan and monitor and support registrar progress with the RVTS Webinar program.

7. Attend at least one of the RVTS face-to-face registrar training workshops each year (where scheduled), (QI/CPD/PDP points may be available). Attendance is funded for at least one workshop per year. Prior approval is required from the CEO to attend a second workshop. Where possible, contribute to the workshops either by facilitating or presenting sessions.
8. Participate in appropriate teacher training provided by, but not limited to, RVTS. This may include RVTS Supervisor Webinars, Journal Clubs and the RVTS Grand Round.
9. 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.
10. Inform RVTS immediately of any issues of concern in their role as a supervisor and provide regular feedback to RVTS on their registrar.
11. Advise RVTS of any conditions on their medical registration.
12. Advise RVTS of any personal interest in their registrar's training location (practice).
13. Adhere to the [RVTS Code of Conduct for Registrars and Supervisors](#).

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 RTC and Medical Educator Mentor (ME Mentor) should be informed as soon as possible. Necessary assistance can then be provided for the registrar in a timely manner.

It is important that supervisors be familiar with the following RVTS policies which can be found on the RVTS website, resources tab at: [rvts.org.au/resources/policies](https://rvts.org.au/resources/policies)

- Performance and Progression policy
- Registrar in Difficulty policy
- Withdrawal from Training policy
- Critical Incident and Serious Issue Notification Policy

### ***Supervisor Application for Additional Supervision Hours***

RVTS values the supervisor contribution to registrar training. Where a registrar needs extra support, RVTS offers the opportunity for the supervisor to apply for additional supervision hours, as long as the registrar has agreed. The Registrar Training Coordinator assists by confirming consent from all parties. The supervisor completes the application form which is available on the RVTS website, resources tab at:

[rvts.org.au/resources/forms/form\\_supervisors](https://rvts.org.au/resources/forms/form_supervisors)

## ***Code of Conduct***

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 [Code of Conduct](#), 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.

## **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 – this may be in the form of Random Case Analysis, or cases presented by the registrar and/ or supervisor
- 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 in RVTS Online.
- Discussion based on the Registrar Webinar program and resources

Ask the registrar to record issues which arise between contacts as these can be discussed at the next meeting.

Discuss scheduling a regular session date and time that is mutually convenient with a backup for emergencies.

## 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 unconditionally 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
- Not have a conflict of interest (e.g., personal interest in registrar's training location)

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

RVTS supervisors cannot have more than two registrars because they must be available to undertake all registrar training activities.

### ***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 the [Junior Supervisor Mentoring program](#).

## 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 provide 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. Supervisors new to RVTS and those who have not been supervisors previously enter the [Junior Supervisor Mentoring Program](#). The program links a senior supervisor who has had an RVTS registrar complete the program with the junior supervisor. The senior supervisor provides structured, supportive feedback to the supervisor. [Module 9 in RVTS Online](#) explains the Junior Supervisor Mentoring Program.
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 medical events and at meetings of the General Practitioner Supervisors Australia. The SLO is appointed from within the supervisor group. The current RVTS Supervisor Liaison Officers are Dr Christina Carroll and Dr Akil Islam.
4. Supervisors are supported in fulfilling their Continuing Medical Education (CME) requirements.

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

### **General Practitioner Supervisors Australia (GPSA)**

GPSA is the national representative body uniting GP supervisors. Membership is free to all Australian supervisors. GPSA supports supervisors by lobbying and working with relevant health sectors. It provides resources for professional development and has educational assets for supervisors to use in registrar training. GPSA can be accessed at:

[gpsupervisorsaustralia.org.au/](http://gpsupervisorsaustralia.org.au/)

### ***Supervisor Payments***

RVTS makes payments to supervisors in accordance with the supervisor contract and any additional agreements. For example, being involved in the Junior Supervisor Mentoring Program; non-supervisor facilitator duties and the Workshop.

### ***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.

### ***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 (or equivalent) 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. [RVTS Online Module 9](#) provides full information on this program.

## **FEEDBACK**

Annually feedback is sought from registrars and supervisors on the supervision experience, this involves the registrar and the supervisor providing feedback on the other. In the first year of training, the Supervisor Educational Alliance (SEA) is reviewed.

### ***Supervisor Educational Alliance (SEA)***

After 8 – 10 meetings the registrar is asked to complete a questionnaire assessing the SEA. This is based on a shorter version of a validated questionnaire developed to assess the therapeutic alliance between psychologists and their patients. The questions investigate the degree to which the supervisor has understood the registrar's goals, developed tasks to address the goals and the strength of the relationship or bond. Individual constructive feedback is developed for the supervisor based on the registrar's responses. Supervisors report that the feedback has proved helpful and guided reflection on supervisor training techniques.

## **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.

## **MANAGEMENT OF RVTS LTD**

Members of the Board

- Dr Jacki Mein (Chair) – Manoora, QLD
- Dr Rodney Omond (Deputy Chair) – Newcomb, VIC
- Dr Sanjaya Kapuwatte – Bathurst, NSW
- Dr Vlad Matic – Sydney, NSW
- Dr David Moniz – Corowa, NSW
- Dr Ross Wilson – Bathurst, NSW

Information about the Directors can be found at [rvts.org.au/about/about\\_board](https://rvts.org.au/about/about_board)

### ***Membership of RVTS***

The Remote Vocational Training Scheme Ltd (RVTS Ltd) is a company limited by guarantee. The Company provides the governance structure under which the RVTS training program is delivered. It has 3 classes of primary membership.

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

There is an expectation that all RVTS registrars and supervisors join the Company as primary Class C members. Members are entitled to vote at general meetings of the Company 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.

Representation on the RVTS Board of Directors presents registrars and supervisors with professional development opportunities by playing a key role in the governance of the organisation.

Application for membership is included in the Registrar Enrolment, and Supervisor Appointment processes. If you missed the opportunity to apply, a membership form can be accessed [here](#).

## **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: [rvts.org.au/resources/policies](https://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
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
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
GPRRA	General Practice Registrars' Association
GPRIP	General Practice Rural Incentives Payment
GPS	General Practice Supervisor
GPSA	General Practitioner Supervisors Australia
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
RCTV	Reverse Clinical Teaching Visit
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
RTC	Registrar Training Coordinator
RVTS	Remote Vocational Training Scheme
SEA	Supervisor Educational Alliance
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

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