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REMOTE VOCATIONAL
TRAINING SCHEME LTD

SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK

This Handbook is an interactive document containing hyperlinks to policies, documents, websites, and email contacts that will be of assistance during your participation in the training program.

Remote Vocational Training Scheme Ltd.
PO Box 37 Albury NSW 2640
Phone: 02 6057 3400
www.rvts.org.au

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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 registrars are well-supported and have reliable access to guidance and advice throughout the duration of their training 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.

Each regular contact should be recorded on the Registrar/Supervisor Portal under 'Conversations' in RVTS Online throughout training.

Specific requirements for registrar contact are listed on [page 6 – Engaging with your Registrar](#)

2. Participate in [twice-yearly training reviews](#) between the registrar, registrar training coordinator (RTC), and supervisor. The medical educator mentor (ME 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. **Supervisors are invited to facilitate / present a webinar** (the content is provided by RVTS).
5. **Assist the registrar in [planning their learning](#), developing a learning plan and monitor and support registrar progress with the RVTS Webinar program.**
6. **Attend at least one of the RVTS face-to-face registrar training workshops each year** (where scheduled), (CPD¹ 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.
7. **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.
8. **Inform RVTS if they are going to be absent for a period greater than 2 weeks so that a relief supervisor can be appointed.**
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. **Advise RVTS of any undertakings, conditions, or notations on their medical registration.**
11. **Advise RVTS of any personal interest in their registrar's training location (practice).**
12. **Adhere to the [RVTS Code of Conduct for Registrars and Supervisors](#)** (refer additional detail on [page 5](#))
13. **Incident Reporting** – Report, or advise their registrar to report any incident to RVTS as required under the [Critical Incident and Serious Issues Notification Policy](#)

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 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

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

¹ Refer [RACGP CPD 2023 Triennium](#) and [ACRRM CPD 2023 Framework](#)
Warning – Uncontrolled when printed!

Code of Conduct

RVTS expects all registrars, supervisors, staff, program presenters and facilitators 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.

Use of appropriate language in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture conveys respect and acknowledges the social, linguistic, and cultural diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. RVTS provides guidance in the documented [Nomenclature principles pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People](#) prepared by the RVTS Cultural Educator.

ENGAGING WITH YOUR REGISTRAR

Frequency of contact

Maintain regular contact with your 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.

Commencement of registrar training

At the commencement of registrar training, registrars and supervisors are required to discuss:

- Emergency and support contacts
- Registrar Procedural Skills Survey
- Process for Emergency Case Review (ongoing throughout training)
- Process for discussing procedures performed (ongoing throughout training)

Documentation of discussions and outcomes, recommendations, resources or plans for future learning are to be recorded on RVTS Online.

Additional resources (available on RVTS Online) are provided for registrars to discuss with their supervisor at commencement of training, including:

- New location commencement checklist
- Cultural awareness checklist

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 RTC 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

Registrars joining RVTS via Targeted Recruitment may be provided additional supervision early in training depending on need.

Additional 'just in time' decision support

RVTS is currently developing additional 'just in time' decision mechanisms. RVTS will provide details once implemented.

Methods of remote support and supervision

Registrar contact with the supervisor has a range of purposes including:

- **Case reviews** – this may be in the form of Case Analysis, or cases presented by the registrar and/ or supervisor (including reflection on emergency cases and common presentations)
- **Mentorship**
- **Assistance with the development of learning goals**, which may be evident from the training review and learning plan
- **Review of general problems**
- **Discussion and assistance with completion of RVTS Online modules and activities**
- **Clinical audit**
- **Advice on exam preparation**
- **Call for topical issues or concerns which have arisen since the last contact with the registrar**
- **Sharing resources from the Supervisor Toolkit found in the Supervisors course in RVTS Online**
- **Discussion based on the Registrar Webinar program and resources**

Record of Contact

Contact should be recorded via the Registrar/Supervisor Portal on RVTS Online.

Ask the registrar to record issues which arise between contacts in the Registrar/Supervisor Portal in RVTS Online, as these can be discussed at the next meeting.

Additionally, the registrar should use the Registrar/Supervisor Portal to record deidentified summaries of the management of medical emergencies and clinical procedures that the registrar has undertaken.

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

SUPERVISOR SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

Supervisor Selection

RVTS Registrars 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
- Have appropriate medical indemnity cover, and
- 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 to ensure they are available to undertake all registrar training activities.

Appointment of Supervisors

RVTS aims to appoint a supervisor 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 (DoT). 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.

Process:

RVTS contacts the nominated doctor and, if they are interested in taking on the supervisor 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 DoT 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.

The Supervisor agrees to provide RVTS with the necessary information and evidence as required for credentialling and RACGP / ACRRM accreditation purposes and to undertake this process at regular intervals to maintain currency.

SUPERVISOR ORIENTATION

Once the Supervisor Agreement has been signed by both parties, RVTS will provide login details for RVTS Online. New supervisors will participate in an Orientation Webinar which will provide support in the use of the RVTS Online platform.

Supervisors who are new to supervision or to the RVTS Training Program are expected to take part in the Supervisor Mentoring Program. Further details are found on RVTS Online (refer [Supervisor Course / Supervisor Mentoring Program](#))

SUPERVISOR SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To ensure that supervisors are supported in their role, an RVTS Medical Educator - Dr Sara Fergusson sfergusson@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. Supervisor Training is planned and documented as part of the annual RVTS Education Plan
2. Supervisors new to RVTS and those who have not been supervisors previously enter the Supervisor Mentoring Program. (Refer [Supervisor Mentoring Policy](#)). The program links an experienced supervisor who has had an RVTS registrar complete the program with the supervisor who is new to RTS. The experienced supervisor provides structured and supportive feedback as required.
3. Supervisor Liaison Officers are appointed representatives for the RVTS supervisors. The role of the SLO is to provide a link between RVTS supervisors, the RVTS management and educators. SLOs may be called upon to represent RVTS at national medical events and at meetings of the General Practitioner Supervisors Australia. SLOs are selected from within the supervisor group.
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/

Supervisor Payments

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

Vertically integrated registrar to supervisor training program

RVTS has initiated a 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 an experienced supervisor.

Supervisor Mentoring program

The supervisor mentoring program provides support for up to six one-hour meetings between a supervisor new to RVTS and an experienced supervisor who has had a registrar complete RVTS training. These meetings are usually by teleconference which may include Zoom, Teams or equivalent videoconference, face-to-face meetings 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 support with confidence. In addition, the supervisors have access to supervisor training materials in RVTS Online and are expected to work through these. Further training is provided during the RVTS Workshops. [RVTS Online Module 9](#) provides full information on this program.

FEEDBACK

Registrars and supervisors are encouraged to reflect on the supervisory relationship, and provide feedback via:

- Open discussion at regular meetings
- A survey within the first 4 months of training to determine the quality of the supervisory bond that has formed (*reflection of registrar feedback is undertaken as the [Supervisor Educational Alliance – SEA](#)*)
- Six-monthly feedback from registrars and supervisors using the [electronic Registrar Supervisor Feedback form](#). This feedback link is in the Registrar/Supervisor Portal in RVTS Online.
- Ongoing feedback via the [electronic feedback form](#) accessible on RVTS Online at any time throughout training.

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. The alliance is assessed, and feedback is provided to the supervisor.

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

Each registrar has an allocated Registrar Training Coordinator (RTC) for the duration of their training.

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

The RTC also acts as a liaison point between RVTS and the registrar's practice and ensures regular engagement and support.

Training Plans

A Training Plan outlines how the registrar will meet College requirements over the duration of their training and is reviewed as part of the 6 monthly Training Review.

All registrars completing ACRRM training are required to complete an ACRRM Training Plan prior to the commencement of the training year.

Training Reviews

The registrar, their RTC, supervisor, and at times, the medical educator mentor, will meet twice yearly to conduct a Training Review. The Medical Educator Mentor will attend the first Training Review.

Training reviews follow a set agenda to allow for confirmation of the recorded information, review of progress and further updates to the learning plan. This approach enables individual learning pathways to be tailored to meet the specific needs of each registrar as well as ensuring that all participants attain the educational and professional competencies required by the respective colleges.

A training review report is developed after each meeting and is circulated to the registrar, supervisor and ME Mentor, and a copy is kept on the registrar training record.

Planning Learning

Both Colleges require registrars to plan their learning. Assistance with development and review of the registrar's planned learning forms part of this activity.

Management of RVTS Ltd

Members of the Board

- Dr Jacki Mein (Chair) – Manoora, QLD
- Dr Sanjaya Kapuwatte (Deputy Chair) – Bathurst, NSW
- Dr Merran Auland – Bylong Valley, NSW
- Dr Suzanne Harrison – Echuca, VIC
- Dr Abigail Harwood – St James, WA
- Dr Ross Wilson – Bathurst, NSW

Information about the Directors can be found at 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

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)
ARSP	Advanced Rural Skills Post
AST	Advanced Skills Training
CBD	Case Based Discussion
CCE	Core Competency Exam
CME	Continuing Medical Education
CT	Clinical Teaching
CTV	Clinical Teaching Visit

RVTS Supervisor Handbook

DoT	Director of Training
DDoT	Deputy Director of Training
ETA	Early Training Assessment
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
FRACGP-RG	Rural Generalist 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
ME Mentor	Medical Educator Mentor
MiniCEX	Mini Clinical Evaluation Exercises
MMM	Modified Monash Model
MSF	Multi Source Feedback
NRC	National Resource Centre – RACGP John Murtagh Library
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
RACGP	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
RDA	Rural Doctors Association
REST	Rural Emergency Skills Training
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
SLO	Supervisor Liaison Officer
StAMPS	Structured Assessment using Multiple Patient Scenarios
TeleCTV	Clinical Teaching Visit undertaken remotely via electronic means
VR	Vocational Registration
WONCA	World Organisation of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians

Document control

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Authorised by: CEO

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