

## **REGISTRAR IN DIFFICULTY POLICY**

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## 1. Approval and Commencement

This policy:

- a. has been approved by the Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS) Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- b. commences operation on 1 January 2021.

## 2. Purpose

The RVTS is committed to providing a training support structure for registrars that is fair, consistent, transparent and robust. RVTS acknowledges the importance of the safety and wellbeing of registrars and their right to learn in an environment of professionalism, collegiality and respect.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the identification and support of registrars who encounter difficulties during their training, and to ensure a process that is fair and transparent, and accessible by all parties involved to assist with the resolution of training difficulties.

This policy describes how RVTS provides additional training and support to a registrar who has been identified as a *Registrar in Difficulty* where there are issues or concerns about their:

- a. level of performance *during* training ('performance'); and/or
- b. rate of progression *through* training ('progression'),

which have arisen:

- a. during training
- b. through the examination or assessment process, or
- c. as a result of an adverse event or in other circumstances.

This policy replaces the *RVTS Remediation Policy*.

## 3. Scope

This policy:

- (1) Sets out what 'in difficulty' means in the context of the RVTS Training Program. It defines the principles applicable to the registrar and RVTS when a difficulty is identified, and the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.
- (2) Applies to all registrars undertaking the current RVTS Training Program ('the program') irrespective of the date they commenced their training.
- (3) Operates in conjunction with the following policies, standards and systems (as might be amended from time to time), namely the:
  - Performance and Progression Policy
  - Withdrawal from Training Policy
  - Reconsiderations, Review and Appeals Policy
  - Registrar Management System (RMS)
  - RVTS Online
  - RVTS Handbook
  - RVTS Code of Conduct – Registrars and Supervisors

- RACGP Vocational Training Standards
- RACGP Vocational Training Pathway Examination Eligibility Policy
- RACGP Fellowship Exams Candidate Handbook
- ACRRM Training policies
- ACRRM Fellowship Assessment Handbook.

#### **4. Definition of a Registrar in difficulty**

- (1) Broadly, a registrar in difficulty is a registrar who is not making the expected progress in meeting the training and/or assessment requirements of the RVTS training program.
- (2) A registrar in difficulty may not be performing in line with expected standards or may be experiencing other difficulties that are impeding their progress and ability to undertake their training.
- (3) Such difficulties may relate to:
  - Clinical performance - knowledge, skills and professional behaviours, as described in the RVTS Curriculum Framework
  - Examination preparation and/or performance
  - Completion and/or performance in RVTS assessments and other requirements of the RVTS training program
- (4) The factor(s) contributing to a registrar being 'in difficulty' may include, but are not limited to:
  - Environmental/organisational issues - workplace culture, lack of support, lack of appropriate clinical management or resources, cultural difference or challenges, registrar/supervisor relationship difficulties
  - Physical and mental health considerations, including in relation to immediate family members

This policy does not apply to those situations where a registrar is exhibiting notifiable conduct. In those circumstances, the matter should be referred to AHPRA.

## 5. Definitions

The following definitions (where the context permits) will apply to this policy and any related guidelines.

TERM	DEFINITION under this policy
Additional training and support	Additional training and support can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greater oversight by supervisor or RVTS ME</li> <li>• increased contact by RVTS ME or RTC</li> <li>• a structured program delivered by an RVTS ME or RME</li> <li>• other forms of support by RVTS or stakeholders involved in registrar training.</li> </ul>
Adverse Events	Incidents in which harm resulted to a person receiving health care. Some of these adverse events may be preventable. Includes notifiable conduct as defined by the Medical Board of Australia
Director of Training (DOT)	The Director of Training (DOT) has overall responsibility for the structure, delivery and quality of the RVTS Training Program. The DOT is responsible for educational leadership, coordination of the medical educator team, education planning, remediation and evaluation.
Focused Learning Intervention Program	The Focused Learning Intervention Program (FLIP) is the first stage for a registrar managed under the <i>Registrar in Difficulty Policy</i> . The FLIP is a formal management process where a registrar has been identified as not meeting RVTS performance and progression standards. A registrar is required to develop a formal Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) in conjunction with the RME which is signed by the registrar and the RVTS RME. The performance of the registrar is assessed by RVTS over a defined timeframe. If the registrar is deemed to have successfully met the FLIP requirements, the registrar continues with their normal training. If the registrar does not meet the requirements, they enter Remediation as a second management stage.
Medical Educator (ME)	RVTS Medical Educators (MEs) are responsible for delivery of elements of the RVTS education plan.
Notifiable conduct	Notifiable conduct by registered health practitioners is defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practising while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs</li> <li>• sexual misconduct in the practice of the profession</li> <li>• placing the public at risk of substantial harm because of an impairment (health issue), or</li> <li>• placing the public at risk because of a significant departure from accepted professional standards.</li> </ul>

TERM	DEFINITION under this policy
Performance	A standard by which registrars are assessed as having fulfilled the training requirements at the minimum required standard or level of attainment during training. In the event that the registrar has not satisfied the progression rules, they are deemed to be a registrar to be managed under the <i>Registrar in Difficulty Policy</i> and can be placed on a Focused Learning Intervention Program (FLIP) or Remediation for unsatisfactory training and / or assessment performance.
Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)	A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is a documented plan that outlines the agreed steps and actions that will be undertaken by a registrar managed under the <i>Registrar in Difficulty Policy</i> . A registrar is required to develop a PIP in conjunction with the RME and RTC including measurable outcomes that a registrar must meet in order to continue their training.
Progression	A standard by which registrars are assessed as having fulfilled the training requirements at the minimum required standard or level of attainment during training that permits a registrar to continue training. It is the rate of progression through the training program including completion of examinations (summative examinations conducted by the RACGP or ACRRM), other assessment (formative assessment delivered and conducted by the RVTS) and attendance at mandatory workshops, webinars and other teaching opportunities as prescribed by the RVTS Training Program. This includes failure to complete assessment items or poor performance in assessment items which may prevent a registrar from progressing to the next stage of training. Progression through to completion of training and fellowship must be within the prescribed timeframes, being: within 4 years and 5 years for FRACGP and FACRRM respectively.
Registrar Training Coordinator (RTC)	Registrar Training Coordinators (RTCs) are members of the administration team. 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 specialised training advice within the organisation.

TERM	DEFINITION under this policy
Remediation	A registrar is placed on remediation when they have not met the requirements of the Focused Learning Intervention Program (FLIP), or where a registrar has been identified as not meeting RVTS performance and progression standards. In this process a registrar is required to develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) in conjunction with the RME which is signed by the registrar and the RVTS RME. The performance of the registrar is assessed by RVTS over a defined timeframe. If the registrar is deemed to have successfully met the formal remediation requirements, the registrar continues with their normal training. If the registrar does not meet the requirements of the improvement plan, the registrar may be withdrawn from the training program.
Remediation Medical Educator (RME)	RVTS Remediation Medical Educator (RME) is responsible for registrars managed under the <i>Registrar in Difficulty Policy</i> . The RME is responsible for implementing and monitoring Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) for registrars undertaking the Focused Learning Intervention Program (FLIP) or Remediation.
Supervisor	RVTS supervisors provide distance supervision, professional role modelling, one to one teleconference teaching, feedback, regular telephone advice and professional support to the registrar.
Support person	A person who supports a registrar and does not act as a spokesperson or advocate for the registrar.
Training reports	Documented reports from supervisors, MEs, RME, RTCs, clinical teaching visitors and other stakeholders that provide feedback on registrar performance.
Training Review	A documented process that examines and evaluates the work performance and training progression of a registrar against the RVTS Training Program requirements and against RVTS standards. A training review is conducted by a supervisor and RTC (may include an ME). The review occurs twice yearly throughout the training program and informs the development of the registrar's training plan. The outcome of a training review could determine whether a registrar is managed under the <i>Registrar in Difficulty Policy</i> .
Underperformance	Where a registrar does not meet the required minimum standard of performance.

## 6. Principles

The following principles underpin this policy:

- (1) Patient and registrar safety take precedence over all other considerations
- (2) Early intervention – the difficulty is identified as early as possible, with appropriate and timely intervention in order to maximise the opportunity/ies for resolution.
- (3) Local training setting support wherever possible – registrars and supervisors are best placed to negotiate and implement individually tailored support strategies. Involvement of colleagues and peers is encouraged, particularly if the difficulty relates to the training setting and/or relationships within the setting.
- (4) Support is centred on educational progress and professional development towards meeting the training program requirements.
- (5) Transfer of important educational information – selected information about the registrar's progress, performance information and existing support arrangements may be exchanged with RVTS when a registrar changes employment from one training placement to the next. RVTS staff may provide, on request, relevant information in accordance with the RVTS Privacy Policy.

## 7. Responsibilities

The CEO/Director of Training, Supervisors, Registrar Training Coordinators, and Medical Educators are responsible for the implementation of this policy. RVTS Registrars are responsible for adhering to the terms of this policy.

### 7.1 RVTS

- (1) RVTS is responsible for delivering training for registrars seeking fellowship with RACGP and / or ACRRM. This includes responsibility to:
  - set and monitor the standards of expected behaviour of registrars as described in RVTS policy documents
  - ensure registrars are supervised within a safe and supportive training environment, as detailed in the RVTS training site accreditation guidelines
  - provide education and professional development to registrars on creating an optimal learning environment through teamwork, good communication, collaboration, and constructive feedback
  - respond to concerns raised by registrars in relation to their supervisors and provide support to registrars.
- (2) RVTS will take all reasonable steps to:
  - monitor the well-being of registrars enrolled in the program;
  - monitor registrars':
    - performance (during training);
    - progression (through training); and
    - timeliness in:
      - completing their training assessments, and
      - sitting and passing their College examinations.
  - monitor registrars' training as required by the program; and

- respond to any adverse events or circumstances concerning a registrar that are brought to their attention.

## 7.2 Registrars

Registrars are responsible for:

- monitoring their health and well-being
- performing duties in a professional, respectful and ethical manner
- practising safely
- regularly checking with RVTS to monitor progress through training and to ensure that other data is current and correct
- actively reviewing their training performance, assessing areas of strength and improvement and monitor against their expected rate of progression through training
- actively seeking relevant and timely guidance on their performance and progress in training, particularly if they are concerned about an issue impacting on their ability to progress
- actively and constructively participating and contributing to support processes put in place to address identified difficulties
- maintaining confidential records of any relevant meetings or conversations with their ME /supervisor
- responding to issues or concerns raised by their ME /supervisor in a respectful and civil manner
- seeking professional health advice, as required
- notifying their employer regarding any workplace difficulties. (Be aware of and refer to their employer's workplace policies, with the understanding that issues related to employment and the management of these are the primary responsibility of the employer, rather than RVTS.)
- attempting to resolve difficulties in the training setting, in collaboration with their supervisor and/or ME.

If training or supervision difficulties remain unresolved, the registrar should contact their RVTS RTC who will escalate to the ME or DOT

## 7.3 Remediation Medical Educator (RME)

The Remediation Medical Educator (RME) is responsible for:

- approving Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) submitted under the Registrar in Difficulty Policy
- notifying the DOT / CEO of an approved PIP
- advising the DOT / CEO of any registrar of concern for ongoing management
- notifying the DOT / CEO of a reported adverse incident or event
- notifying the DOT / CEO of any registrars considered for withdrawal from training
- making recommendations for the management of a registrar of concern
- overseeing the management and monitoring of registrars managed under the *Registrars in Difficulty Policy*.



## 7.4 Director of Training / CEO

(1) The Director of Training (DOT) / CEO has the following responsibilities:

- Actively monitor registrar progression, supervision, and training setting issues within and across RVTS to improve training quality.
- Provide advice, support and management oversight to RMEs and RTCs who are supporting registrars in difficulty
- Be familiar with relevant workplace and RVTS policies on Bullying, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment and other related policies
- Provide advice and guidance to the supervisor to resolve if necessary, a registrar-supervisor issue.
- Advise the RME and/or the registrar on the applicability of workplace and/or RVTS policies relevant to the registrar's workplace responsibilities.
- Advise and support the RME to report a registrar to the relevant Medical Registration Authority where there is notifiable conduct
- Upon advice from the RME discuss vocational options with the registrar if there is evidence that the registrar is not likely to succeed in the training program.

(2) The DOT / CEO (under this policy) is responsible for advising the Board of any registrar:

- being managed under the *Registrar in Difficulty Policy*
- involved in a reported adverse incident or event
- being considered for withdrawal from training.

## 8. Process for Managing Registrar in Difficulty

The following policy guidelines (where issued) form part of this policy and prescribe the processes to be followed and the forms to be used. In the event of an inconsistency between the policy and the guidelines, the intent of the policy is to prevail.

### 8.1 Monitoring performance

(1) Registrar performance and progression will be managed according to the *Performance and Progression Policy*.

(2) As outlined in the registrar *Performance and Progression Policy* registrars will be monitored with specific reference to, and not limited by, a registrar's:

- data entries and statements in the RVTS RMS
- training reports from their Medical Educators (MEs) and/or supervisor, and/or Registrar Training Co-ordinator (RTC), and/or clinical teaching visitor
- training assessments and outcomes
- attendance at mandatory workshops, training webinars and other structured teaching activities
- examination and assessment outcomes and timeliness
- completion of RVTS online modules
- participation in RVTS online forums
- participation in training webinars
- other relevant College assessments and requirements.

## 8.2 Factors for consideration

Factors which may be considered for a Registrar to be managed under this policy include:

- failure at FRACGP and/or FACRRM exam segments
- failure to comply with mandatory requirements of training without reasonable explanation
- failure to notify change of circumstances
- unsatisfactory reports in RVTS formative assessment
- other significant documented concern from external organisations e.g. AHPRA, Medical Board of Australia, Colleges etc.

## 8.3 Interventions

(1) Registrars identified under clause 8 as not meeting these requirements may enter a Focused Learning Intervention Program (FLIP) or Remediation.

(2) Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) are required under the FLIP and Remediation processes and are to be prepared by the RVTS Remediation Medical Educator (RME) in consultation with the registrar, RTC and/or supervisor.

(3) The terms of the PIP must:

- be agreed to by the RME, supervisor and the registrar
- address the underlying issues in relation to the registrar's performance and progression
- include measurable outcomes that will assist the registrar to address the performance or progression issues or concerns
- contain timeframes for completion
- be signed by the registrar
- be accompanied by a formal agreement that the registrar will complete the PIP.

(4) Registrars who are to be managed under this policy may be advised not to sit any College summative assessment pending the satisfactory completion of the approved PIP.

(5) Registrars who fail or unreasonably refuse to enter into a PIP under this policy (as required) will be referred to the CEO for consideration under the *Withdrawal from Training Policy*.

## 9. Management of Focused Learning Intervention Program (FLIP)

(refer also: *Diagram 1 –FLIP process flowchart below*)

### 9.1 Relevant circumstances

Registrars will require a focused learning intervention under the following circumstances:

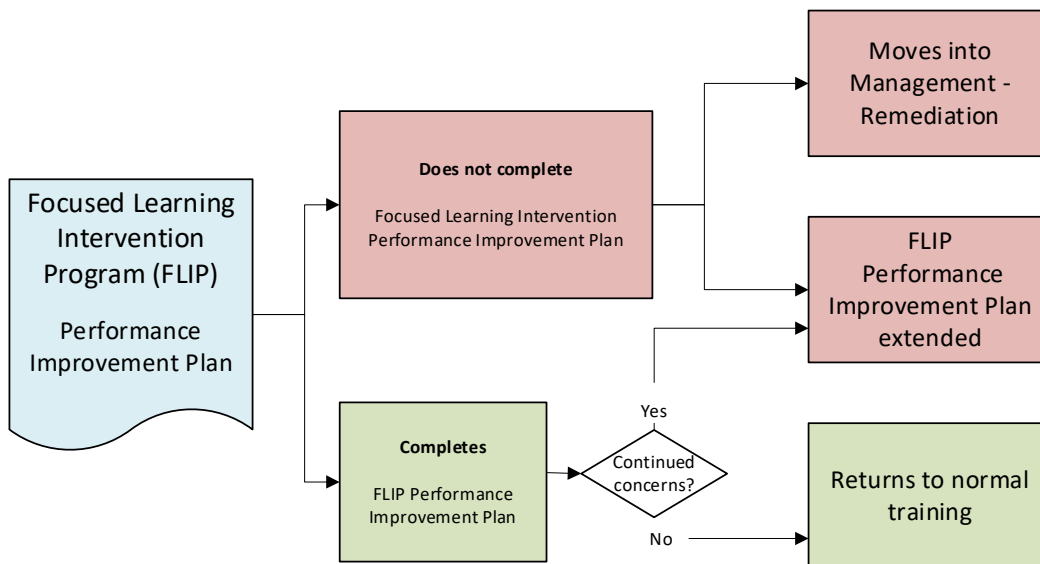
- failure at any one segment of FRACGP and/or FACRRM Fellowship exams
- failure to comply with mandatory requirements of training without reasonable explanation
- failure to notify change of circumstances

- unsatisfactory reports in RVTS formative assessment
- other significant documented concern from external organisations e.g. AHPRA, Medical Board of Australia, Colleges etc., or
- failure to comply with RVTS Code of Conduct.

Registrars identified as having health issues that impact on performance and progression may benefit from support under a FLIP or Remediation. Application of the *Registrar in Difficulty Policy* in these circumstances will be at the discretion of the Director of Training (DOT).

Diagram 1

### Management - Focused Learning Intervention



### 9.2 RVTS Responses

(1) Where a registrar is identified as a Registrar in Difficulty by the RME under this policy, RVTS will:

- seek the opinion and advice of the Supervisor, ME mentor and RTC to discuss the intention to manage the registrar under the *Registrar in Difficulty Policy*
- advise the registrar of the intent to manage their performance under the *Registrar in Difficulty Policy*
- counsel the registrar to withdraw from College summative assessments if appropriate

(2) The RME and registrar meet to develop a PIP and record the plan in the registrar's file (with copies of correspondence, notes and other relevant information)

- RME will advise the RTC
- notify the registrar (in writing):
  - that they are to be managed under this policy

- of the reasons why, they are being managed under the *Registrar in Difficulty Policy*
- that they are required under clause 8.3 to enter into a PIP to address the issues or concerns
- ensure the registrar:
  - is involved in the preparation of the PIP
  - agrees to the terms of the plan and signs the plan
  - is provided with feedback that clearly articulates the areas of concern and the standard that the registrar is expected to achieve
  - is provided with access to learning materials and appropriate support inclusive of pastoral and/or peer support for the duration of the plan.

### 9.3 Performance Improvement Plans (PIP)

Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) must:

- be in writing and reflect what was agreed to by the registrar
- be dated and signed to by the registrar and RME
- detail and provide written feedback outlining the issues or concerns to be addressed and the responsibilities of the registrar and the other parties under the plan (including supervisor, and RTC)
- detail what is required of the registrar to address the issues or concerns, how it is to be done, the expected (and agreed) outcomes and the relevant timeframes for completion
- detail the additional training and support (if any) required
- outline the budget requirements (if any) to support the plan
- identify who will have oversight of the registrar and monitor the plan for progress and achievement
- set out any other material relevant to the plan.

### 9.4 Completion of FLIP

Following completion of a focused learning intervention, the registrar will:

- have satisfactorily met the requirements of the FLIP and will return to regular training
- move to Remediation
- remain in the FLIP for extra support based on training concerns even though they passed assessment, or
- exit the program under the *Withdrawal from Training Policy*.

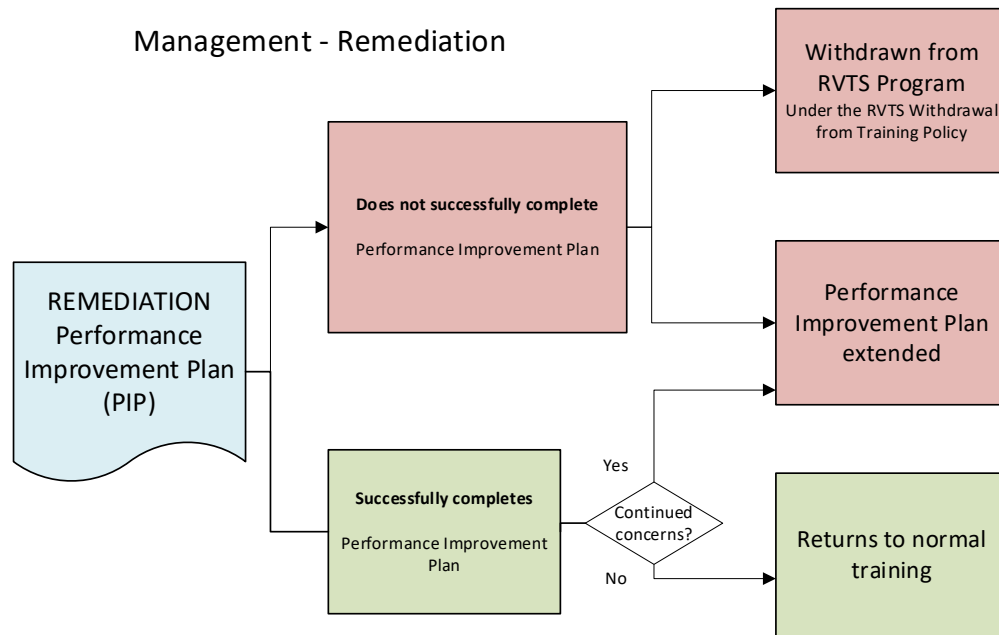
## 10. Management of Remediation

(refer also: *Diagram 2 –Management - Remediation process flowchart below*)

A registrar is managed under the remediation process under the *Registrar in Difficulty Policy* when:

- requirements or outcomes of the initial FLIP have not been met
- serious performance issues have been identified
- where a registrar has failed two attempts at any segment of either RACGP or ACRRM Fellowship examinations.

Diagram 2



### 10.1 RVTS Actions

Under this policy, RVTS will:

- seek the opinion and advice of the supervisor, medical educator mentor and RTC to discuss the intention to place the registrar into remediation, then notify each party of the outcome;
- notify the registrar of the intent to place them in remediation;
- counsel the registrar to withdraw from College summative assessments if appropriate;
- develop a PIP in conjunction with the registrar and record in registrar's file (with copies of correspondence, notes and other relevant information);
- notify the registrar (in writing):
  - that they are to be managed under the *Registrar in Difficulty Policy*, noting reasons for this decision; and
  - that they are required under clause 3 to enter into a PIP to address the issues or concerns.
- ensure the registrar:
  - is involved in the preparation of the PIP;
  - agrees to the terms of the plan and signs the plan;
  - is provided with feedback that clearly articulates the areas of concern and the standard that the registrar is expected to achieve;
  - is provided with appropriate support and learning materials inclusive of pastoral and/or peer support during the duration of the plan;
  - is advised that failure to demonstrate adequate improvement in performance or non-adherence to the PIP can mean withdrawal from the training program (under the *Withdrawal from Training Policy*);
  - is provided with the *Reconsiderations, Review and Appeals Policy*.

## 10.2 Performance Improvement Plans (PIP)

Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) must:

- be in writing and reflect what was agreed to by the registrar and the RME
- be dated and signed to by the registrar and copied to the registrar's supervisor
- be approved by the RME
- detail the responsibilities of the registrar and the other parties under the plan (including: supervisor, DOT, CEO, RTC)
- detail what is required of the registrar to address the issues or concerns, how it is to be done, the expected (and agreed) outcomes and the relevant timeframes for completion
- set out the consequences for failing to adhere to the agreed PIP
- detail the additional training and support (if any) required
- outline extra resources to be provided by RVTS (if any) to support the plan
- identify who will have oversight of the registrar and monitor the plan for progress and achievement
- set out any other conditions relevant to the plan.

A PIP will commence on the date of approval by the RME or on the agreed date of commencement set out in the plan, whichever is the earlier.

## 10.3 Approvals

The DOT / CEO is notified that a registrar is to be managed under the *Registrar in Difficulty Policy* and that the registrar is required to meet the requirements of a PIP.

Where a proposed PIP is approved then the RME must:

- notify the registrar in writing of the approval;
- provide a copy of the approved plan to the registrar, supervisor, medical educator mentor and RTC;
- place a copy of the PIP, the agreement and the approval in the registrar's file;
- advise the registrar of any additional requirements (including any progress report requirements) in writing and provide a copy to the registrar and the registrar's supervisor.

## 10.4 Non-approvals

Non-approved plans will be returned for amendment and/or further discussion and be resubmitted for approval.

## 10.5 Unsuccessful remediation

Registrars approved for support under this policy who do not complete the PIP (as required) to the reasonable satisfaction of RVTS will be referred to the DOT / CEO for consideration under the *RVTS Withdrawal from Training Policy*.

## 10.6 Refusal to comply

Registrars approved for support under this policy who refuse to complete the remediation plan (as required) shall be withdrawn under the *RVTS Withdrawal from Training Policy*.

## 11. Related documents

- RVTS Privacy Policy
- Performance and Progression Policy
- Withdrawal from Training Policy
- Reconsiderations, Review and Appeals Policy
- RVTS Handbook
- RVTS Code of Conduct – Registrars and Supervisors
- RACGP Vocational Training Standards
- RACGP Vocational Training Pathway Examination Eligibility Policy
- RACGP Fellowship Exams Candidate Handbook
- ACRRM Training Policies
- ACRRM Fellowship Assessment Handbook

## 12. 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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Maintained by: Quality and Governance Manager

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