



Criteria & Application Process for Accreditation of Advanced Palliative Medicine Training Positions

Background

Palliative Medicine has been a specialty since 2001 in New Zealand and 2005 in Australia. The Australian Medical Council requires the RACP to support and document an appropriate training program for the specialty, which it does through the Training Committee in Palliative Medicine (TCPM). Site accreditation of service and educational infrastructure is one part of the process of standards documentation.

Terms of Training

The four core training terms accredited by the TCPM are: Term 1 (Inpatient unit/Hospice), Term 2 (Community), Term 3 (Teaching Hospital/Consultation) and Term 4 (Cancer Care Setting). The process of accreditation examines each of these areas individually. The requirements for each must be fully met in the case of trainees working concurrently in more than one. The requirements for electives will vary according to the submission, but will be similar. Trainees should complete Terms 1, 2 and 3 at two or more sites (different supervisors and different work setting). A site is defined as one listing on the register of accredited sites (i.e. a service with multiple hospitals is considered as one site).

Accreditation Criteria

Training positions are accredited as part of the approval of training programs. The main criteria assessed for training are:

- A. Supervision.
- B. Clinical workload.
- C. Educational infrastructure.
- D. Research
- E. Exposure to related specialties.

A. Supervision

1. The Advanced Training Position shall have either:
 - A minimum staff of two Palliative Medicine Specialists holding the FRACP (Palliative Medicine) or FACHPM able to provide direct supervision to the trainee.
 - Or
 - A minimum staff of one Palliative Medicine Specialist holding the FRACP (Palliative Medicine) or FACHPM and one other medical staff member with substantial experience in palliative medicine able to directly supervise the trainee. In this case a second Palliative Medicine Specialist holding the qualifications above and approved by the TCPM shall be appointed as a secondary supervisor and must be available to supervise the trainee and support the other medical staff member by telephone and from time to time in person.

The purpose of having at least two individuals is to ensure that at least one Specialist is always available to provide supervision and advice. It is recognised that much of the supervision can be provided by telephone, but the trainee must be able to call upon the Specialist to provide supervision in person.

2. The Training Site must have at least 1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Palliative Medicine Specialists as staff members.
3. The two Palliative Medicine Specialists shall provide complete back-up cover for trainees involved in after-hours and on-call work.
4. Supervisors should be trained in the supervision of advanced trainees in palliative medicine. Supervisors must have attended College Supervisor Workshops at least once every 5 years.

B Clinical Workload

The trainee shall be provided with an adequate clinical workload. Supervisors shall ensure that the trainee is involved in all aspects of the work of the Service appropriate to the training term. This includes regular sufficient numbers of new patients. Opportunity to perform appropriate procedures including paracenteses should also be available.

Inpatient Palliative Care Units (Inpatient Hospices)

- 1.1 Should have a defined population of inpatients, preferably in a ward area devoted to palliative care.
- 1.2 Should have a minimum of 200 admissions per year per training position.
- 1.3 Should have an interdisciplinary team to manage patients.
- 1.4 The trainee should participate in an on-call service (where available) for Palliative Care, in conjunction with a Palliative Medicine Specialist.

Community Services

- 2.1 Should be providing service to a defined geographical area and patient population.
- 2.2 Should be providing service to a variety of sites, including patient homes and a variety of other sites.
- 2.3 Should be seeing a minimum of 200 new referrals per year per training position.

Hospital Palliative Care Consultation Services

- 3.1 Should be seeing a minimum of 250 new referrals per year per training position.
- 3.2 Should have at least 1.0 FTE Clinical Nurse Specialist or equivalent on the service.

Hospital Palliative Care Consultation Services in a Cancer Centre

- 4.1 At least 250 new referrals to the consultation / liaison palliative care service per year for each training position.
- 4.2 The site itself must be accredited to deliver Advanced Training in oncology (Medical Oncology, Radiation Oncology or Clinical Haematology).
- 4.3 At least 75% of the trainee's workload should be involved in the care of cancer patients.
- 4.4 The trainee should be involved in clinics.
- 4.5 The trainee must attend multidisciplinary cancer meetings/tumour boards.
- 4.6 The consultation / liaison service must also meet the minimum supervision requirements for core palliative medicine training, as outlined in part A above.
- 4.7 The trainee should have one supervisor who holds FRACP (Medical Oncology) or FRACP/FRCPA (Clinical Haematology) or FANZCR (Radiation Oncology), and one supervisor who is a Palliative Medicine Specialist holding FRACP (Palliative Medicine) or FACHPM.

C Educational Infrastructure

The trainee shall be provided with a suitable educational infrastructure for advanced training.

1. The trainee should be provided with:

- A medical library including access to general and palliative care specific journals
- Internet access to clinical literature and research databases
- A personal space appropriate to study

2. The trainee should attend:

- At least weekly interdisciplinary palliative care clinical meetings.
- Peer-review meetings and correlative imaging meetings
- Regular journal clubs

D. Research

1. The trainee should be provided with opportunities to undertake research including clinical trials, audits, QA activities, and/or continuing professional development during advanced training.

2. The trainee shall be encouraged to be involved in one project annually. Supervision is to be provided by the staff in the Department or other competent person.

3. Trainees shall be supported generally and with time to attend and present at scientific meetings of local, national and international societies.

E. Exposure to related specialties

The trainee will have access to services such as medical oncology, haematology, radiation oncology, pain or anaesthetic service.

Application Process

Training sites must apply for accreditation, which depends on fulfilment of the requirements and completing the process of accreditation. Accreditation of training will not be granted to trainees if the site is not accredited. Current training sites wishing to increase the number of accredited training positions must also complete the accreditation documentation and process. Sites with more than one trainee must ensure that the requirements for supervision and clinical experience are met for each concurrent trainee.

Step 1

Download and complete the application form for accreditation from the RACP website. Once the forms are completed, they should be returned to the Education Officer for Palliative Medicine at the RACP.

Step 2

The application form will be reviewed by the member of the TCPM with the portfolio of Site Accreditation. Any deficiencies in the information will be communicated to the site involved.

Step 3

When all the information provided is sufficient, the TCPM will acknowledge the application by letter and invite the director of the service to communicate with the Education Officer to arrange a time for a teleconference and/or a site accreditation visit.

Step 4

Representatives of the TCPM will conduct a visit or teleconference. The accreditation team will need to meet or talk with:

- The Director of the Palliative Care Service
- Staff Specialists of the Palliative Care Service
- Any current registrars of the Palliative Care Service
- The Senior Palliative Care Nurse (or Manager) of the Service
- The Director of the Program that oversees Palliative Care/or the Director of Medical/Clinical Services of the hospital (20 minutes)

It is expected that all interviews would be completed in one half-day period. The accreditation team may provide informal feedback to the Director of Palliative Care Service at the end of the interviews.

Step 5

A draft report will be prepared by the site accreditation team and will be sent to the Director of the Palliative Care Service for feedback. The final report will be presented to the TCPM for ratification. After ratification, the report will be forwarded to the Director of the Palliative Care Service. The report will also indicate when the next accreditation will take place, which is usually 5 years time. Information about the accreditation of the site will be uploaded onto the RACP website.

Types of Accreditation

The current TCPM training program is divided into 6 terms of 6 months full time equivalent (FTE).

These are:

- **Term 1:** Inpatient/Hospice (core)
- **Term 2:** Community (core)
- **Term 3:** Teaching Hospital/Consultation (core)
- **Term 4 for pre-2017 trainees:** Palliative Medicine Variable (core)
- **Term 4 for trainees commencing training from 2017 onwards:** Cancer Care Setting (core)
- **Term 5 for pre-2017 trainees:** Oncology (core)
- **Term 5 for trainees commencing training from 2017 onwards:** Palliative Care Variable or Related Specialty (non-core)
- **Term 6:** Elective (non-core) or other specialty related to Palliative Medicine or completion of a Masters program in an area of study related to palliative medicine or 6 months of a PhD program in an area of study related to palliative medicine.

These terms can be combined or done concurrently. Completion of a Masters program during advanced training will be considered as concurrent training (that is, trainees must include their Masters study as part of their normal working hours). This must be prospectively approved. Training sites will be accredited as “core” or “elective” training sites. Training sites that are able to fulfil all accreditation criteria will be accredited as “core” training sites. Training sites that are unable to fulfil all of the accreditation criteria may be accredited as “elective” training sites. These units will have to provide assurance and evidence that adequate training will be provided.

Trainees will therefore be allowed to train at these sites for a maximum of 12 months for their elective terms.

Provisional Accreditation

Provisional accreditation may be granted to sites that are waiting to be reviewed and accredited by the TCPM through the normal accreditation process. This is to ensure that existing trainees at the site are not disadvantaged. Sites that are accepting trainees for the first time will be prioritised for a site visit during the year of that first year of training.

Clinical Diploma of Palliative Medicine Trainees

Sites must be specifically accredited for Clinical Diploma training. Sites wishing to take only Clinical Diploma of Palliative Medicine trainees still need to apply for accreditation, but a teleconference or site visit may not be required. The site will be accredited for a maximum of five years.

Accreditation of Overseas Advanced Training Positions

Training obtained overseas is acceptable, provided the proposed training position meets accreditation criteria. Overseas training positions will be assessed and approved based on information provided by the trainee’s supervisor and/or Head of Department in the form of a letter and completion of application forms for site accreditation. The supervisor will also receive the RACP handbook *Requirements for Physicians Training or Chapter Training Manual* includes the requirements of advanced training in palliative care for information. A site visit will not normally be considered.

Accreditation Cycle

Sites accredited for advanced training are reviewed every five years. The TCPM may also

undertake to review a site at its discretion before the end of the cycle.
Sites accredited only for clinical diploma training will need to be renewed every two years.

Appeals Process

If a site does not gain accreditation or reaccreditation or is not satisfied with the decision or the accreditation process, then it has the right to request that the TCPM reconsider its decision. If the TCPM upholds its original decision, the applicants may request review of the decision by the Chapter of Palliative Medicine Committee. If the Chapter of Palliative Medicine Committee upholds the decision of the TCPM, the applicants may appeal to the RACP Appeals Committee. The decision of this committee will be forwarded to the applicant, the TCPM and the Chapter of Palliative Medicine Committee.