



Specialist Training Program Site Liaison Fact Sheet

What is the Specialist Training Program?

The Specialist Training Program (STP) is a Commonwealth initiative providing annual trainee salary support of \$102,500 for training posts in expanded settings outside traditional public teaching hospitals.

The STP also provides:

- Rural Support Loading (RSL) of up to \$22,500 for trainee expenses in regional, rural, and remote settings. Please refer to the RSL Guidelines for important information on the use of RSL funds.
- Private Infrastructure and Clinical Supervision (PICS) allowance, of up to \$30,000 per annum for clinical supervision and private infrastructure. PICS is currently administered by the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators (RACMA). However, from 2018 each College will manage PICS payments for their respective STP training posts.

For more information on STP, please see the [STP Operational Framework](#) on the Department of Health website.

Specialist Training Program Funding and applications for funding

STP funding is provided by the Department of Health. RACP administers the program and funding on behalf of the Commonwealth. The funding cycle can vary with three years of funding announced for 2018 – 2020.

The Department of Health manages applications for funding, or Expressions of Interest (EOI), via an online system. Successful applicants are notified at the completion of the EOI and other suitable applications may be placed on a Reserve List and can be offered STP funding in future if a successful applicant is defunded due to vacancy.

Funding and Administration Agreements (FAA)

RACP administers STP funds by entering into a Funding and Administration Agreement (FAA) with 'training sites' for the current STP funding cycle. The FAA is signed by the legal entity and includes:

- information about the new training position (also referred to as the STP Post),
- information on the training location (rotational facilities) where the trainee will rotate to while in this STP funded position
- the number of STP posts included in the FAA
- a schedule of payments to be made to the legal entity for the term of the FAA
- the nominated Liaison Officer for the FAA
- other details about the training position.

Funding agreements are assigned a number e.g. FA-NSW-100 and each training position or STP Post is assigned a unique identifier e.g. #1234. When further funding is announced



RACP will issue new funding agreements or amendments to funding agreements as required.

The funding agreement outlines all contractual obligations of each legal entity including reporting requirements. It is vital these contracts are read and understood by the signatory and other key staff of the organisation that will be involved in managing the STP post, in particular the Liaison Officer, Supervisor and Finance staff.

Roles and responsibilities of the Site Liaison Officer

A key contractual obligation is that the legal entity assigns a site Liaison Officer as the key contact between the legal entity and the RACP. It is recommended that only one site Liaison officer is assigned per FAA.

The Site Liaison Officer has several key responsibilities as follows:

- Ensure reporting requirements outlined in the funding agreement are met by submitting accurate Progress Report data for each academic semester by the deadlines set out in the FAA.
- Ensure assigned account details and logins for the RACP STP online web portal are kept confidential and not shared with other staff (Liaison Officers will be held responsible for any information provided to the RACP and the Department of Health via the online portal)
- Ensure all information on the legal entity and training posts is up-to-date at all times.
- Ensure new funding agreements are reviewed by the relevant officers, key information such as the Australian Business Number (ABN) and legal entity name are correct and that the FAA is signed by an authorised officer of the legal entity (Director/CEO/Other).
- Submit all other relevant documentation as requested by RACP such as RSL forms with receipts and other documentary evidence.
- Ensure STP funding is expended as per requirements set out by the Department of Health in the STP Operational Framework and the RACP RSL and PICS Guidelines.
- Ensure all communications sent by RACP are noted and communicated to other key staff within the organisation, as these may contain information about important upcoming changes to the management of the STP by the College.
- Notify RACP of changes to rotational facilities immediately as this may affect RSL and PICS payments and will require approval from the Department of Health.
- Notify RACP when there is a change of Liaison Officer due to extended leave or when the current officer leaves the organisation.

What can STP Salary Support funding be used for?

STP salary support funding can only be used as a salary contribution for RACP trainees (including Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMG)) rotating through the post. Funding is paid to the legal entity (in some cases this will be a public teaching hospital, while the trainee rotates to the private hospital or expanded setting).



STP salary support funding **cannot** be used for:

- post-Fellowship training
- general practice training
- direct costs associated with accreditation of training posts
- overseas trainees employed by hospitals in other countries seeking a rotation through expanded settings within Australia
- training posts which are not considered to be new posts (refer to the STP Operational Framework).

Recruitment for STP Training Positions

What happens if I can't recruit a trainee?

STP training sites must report vacancies of STP funded training positions to RACP STP as soon as possible. RACP is required to manage vacant STP posts and ensure they are filled at all times. Where STP training positions are vacant for more than six months the STP Vacant Post Policy will be activated (refer below).

Can I recruit a Basic Trainee instead of an Advanced Trainee?

A Basic Trainee can be recruited if funding is for that level of training position (refer to Schedule A in the FAA) as outlined in the original application.

If the STP funded position is for Advanced Training only and there are difficulties recruiting an Advanced Trainee, the post must be reported as vacant in the next Progress Report. Permission from the STP Advisory Group must be sought prior to placement of a Basic Trainee in an Advanced Training position where recruitment of an Advanced Trainee has been difficult.

My trainee is going on maternity/personal leave – do I need to recruit a replacement?

Yes, STP does not fund maternity or other long-term leave. The Department advises that STP posts that will be unfilled for more than six months in these circumstances should have another trainee recruited to the position.

STP Vacant Post Policy

Liaison Officers are required to report vacant training positions in the Progress Report to the RACP. The RACP must be formally notified if a training post that has been vacant for six months will be filled in the next period/semester.

If the training position is not filled in the next period/semester, funding for the vacant training position will be discontinued and the legal entity will be formally notified by the College.

The FAA with the legal entity will be amended to reflect the change. Where the discontinued post is the only training position under the funding agreement the FAA will be terminated.

STP funding will then be offered to a training position on the STP Reserve List (established by the Department following the EOIs for STP funding).



How and when is funding paid to sites?

STP funding is paid twice per year by the College, in 50 per cent instalments, following receipt of a Progress Report per 'semester' in February and August.

Payments are made for all posts listed in a funding agreement and not per individual post.

To receive funding:

- the site liaison officer submits a Progress Report (February and August) via the STP online web portal
- the STP Unit processes the report
- when the report is approved, the STP funds can be paid either via a recipient created tax invoice (RCTI) for those that opt in via the FAA, or manually.

RSL and PICS payments will be processed and paid in conjunction with the Progress Report in 2017 and will be paid in two instalments. All documentary evidence and receipts for expenses incurred for the current year must be submitted in semester two. RSL and PICS funds can only be paid for approved items (please refer to the RSL and PICS Guidelines on the RACP STP website) before payments are made to the training site.

How is funding calculated?

STP payments are calculated based on information provided in Progress Reports. Funds can be affected by:

- the number of posts operated by the site
- trainee(s) placed over the current semester
- full-time equivalency of the trainees
- trainees' eligibility for funding i.e. the trainee must be registered with the RACP

NOTE: From 2018 a trainee must spend a **minimum of three months** (120 days) in as STP training position for STP funds to be paid.



How do I complete and submit the Progress Report?

Progress Reports are submitted via the STP online web portal. Due dates for the Progress Reports are listed in the funding and administration agreement.

Each Progress Report requires you to:

- validate the trainee information for the previous semester that was submitted in the previous Progress Report
- submit start and finish dates of each trainee for the current semester (and their RACP Member Identification Number (MIN))
- confirm the rotational facilities (note: any changes must be reported to RACP immediately)
- complete the RSL Estimate of Expenditure section, if relevant for the training posts.

Following approval of the Progress Report, the STP Unit will generate a RCTI where the legal entity has opted to receive them. Once the RCTI is created, the Liaison Officer will receive email notification and payment will be made by the College within two weeks. Where a legal entity has opted out of RCTIs, RACP will send an invoice request to the Liaison Officer. Invoices submitted prior to this will not be paid. Invoices should be emailed and must match the information requested by the STP Unit.

Accreditation

As most training facilities vary their training locations to encompass a broad spectrum of experiences, all STP settings **and rotational facilities** must be accredited by the RACP before trainees can be placed there. Changes in training locations should be reported to the STP Unit immediately, as they may affect a number of aspects of STP administration, including eligibility for RSL and PICS payments, site accreditation and in some cases, eligibility to participate in the STP.

If you have any questions about the STP contact the STP Unit at stp@racp.edu.au or on 02 9256 9665.