

# VPMTP Application Guidelines

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## Introduction

The following guidelines are for the benefit of applicants, palliative care services and the members of the interviewing panels, for the Victorian Palliative Medicine Training Program (VPMT).

These guidelines are intended for:

- VPMT New Advanced Trainee (AT) applicants
- VPMT Ongoing Advanced Trainee (AT) applicants
- Six Month Registrar applicants
- Paediatric Palliative Care Registrar applicants
- VPMT Fellowship applicants

The VPMT aims to coordinate high quality specialist training across a variety of different Palliative Medicine settings. With this in mind, in 2023 the VPMT redeveloped the interview and allocation process. The new process aims to provide trainees with positions across a broader range of services and locations, tailored to their individual training needs.

The Royal Australian College of Physicians (RACP) requires trainees to undertake their core training in more than one service and this will be one of the conditions to be met in allocation of trainees. All new Advanced Trainees (post academic year 2023/24) should expect to be placed at a rural or regional service for six months during their two years of core training.

In 2025, the VPMT introduced an Accommodation and Travel Bursary to support trainees who live more than 70km from Melbourne when placed regionally at Albury/Wodonga, Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Shepparton and Traralgon. This also applies to any regional or rural trainee who is matched and placed in metropolitan Melbourne, or required to travel more than 70km from principal place of residence to the service.

The guidelines provide generic information for all applicants, along with specific information for the different types of applications.

## Training Pathways Overview

The training pathway for advanced specialist training in palliative medicine is the same for both RACP Fellowship and Chapter Fellowship, however, the entry requirements are different:

- RACP Fellowship - A completion of Basic Physician Training
- Chapter Fellowship - A Fellowship from another prescribed college such as the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

To be recognised as a Palliative Care Specialist, doctors must complete three years of supervised training in an Adult or Paediatric setting and undergo work-based assessments.

Trainees can apply through the VPMT to the RACP accredited services that will enable them to complete the required training for either Adult Medicine or Paediatric Medicine.

Adult Medicine – 3 Years (full time)	Paediatric Medicine – 2 years (full time)
<b>Core Terms (6 months each setting)</b>	<b>Core Terms (total of 24 months)</b>
Term 1 - Inpatient setting	Core training
Term 2 - Community setting	
Term 3 - Consultation Service / Teaching Hospital	
Term 4 - Cancer Care Setting	
<b>Non-Core Terms (6 months each setting)</b>	<b>Non-Core Terms (6 months each setting)</b>
Term 5 – Consultation/community/inpatient/ palliative medicine	Relevant specialty
Term 6 - Elective	Elective

### Advanced Training in Palliative Medicine (single fellowship) -

Advanced Trainees training in palliative medicine (a single specialty) will be matched to non-core terms (if requested) by VPMT as they require these to complete their training time to obtain fellowship. We do encourage trainees to complete non-core terms in other specialties, but respect those trainees who may want to consolidate their learning in palliative care settings rather than other specialties.

### Dual Advanced Trainees (fellowship in palliative medicine and another specialty) -

Dual Trainees only need to complete their core terms of palliative care training (T1-4) as they can cross accredit two rotations from their primary specialty across to their palliative medicine non-core terms (5&6). This can either be done prospectively or retrospectively (as RPL, which needs to be applied for within the first 6 months of starting a palliative care advanced training.) It is important that dual trainees understand this - For more information on obtaining RPL, refer to [Advanced Training - New Curricula](#)

*VPMT CAN ONLY GUARANTEE* to match to terms (T1/2/3/4) in this instance and do not routinely offer matching for (5&6) terms

VPMT cannot commit to matching dual ATs to non-core pall care rotations as they are not required for them to complete their training time. The demand for palliative medicine training and rotations is high.

If new fellows feel they would like further experience prior to applying for consultant positions then the VPMT recommends applying for VPMT funding for a Fellowship position. These options are available on the website. Also refer to section 3.4.



## Section 1: Information For All Applicants

### 1.1 Application Process

All applications for the VPMT Registrar positions are accepted online via the VPMT website ([vpmt.org.au](http://vpmt.org.au)) by clicking: [Apply Now](#).

The combination of a submitted application form, cover letter and CV will be assessed to determine your suitability for interview.

Please note:

- Cover letters should **not exceed** one page.
- CVs should **not exceed** four pages.
- One referee **must be** from your current workplace (or most recent position if you have been on leave of any kind), and the second referee **must be** a supervisor from a prior position within the last two years.

If you have any issues with the online application process, please email VPMT: [vpmt@svha.org.au](mailto:vpmt@svha.org.au)

#### 1.1.1 How to determine application type

Every new applicant to VPMT is required to successfully pass the **VPMT Entry Interview**, however far you may be through your RACP Advanced training.

There are four categories on the application form to choose from:

##### 1. Advanced Trainee

For all new applicants and any Advanced Trainees in palliative medicine (from Victoria or interstate) who have **not** successfully taken/passed the VPMT Entry Interview: when asked 'Are you already an ongoing trainee in Palliative Medicine, appointed through the VPMT?' - you should answer 'NO'.

For all Advanced Trainees in palliative medicine who have successfully passed the VPMT Entry Interview and been appointed through VPMT: when asked 'Are you already an ongoing trainee in Palliative Medicine, appointed through VPMT?' you should answer 'YES'.

Note: **Any interstate applicant** will need to undergo an Entry Interview and therefore is required to apply as a **New VPMT Advanced Trainee**, this includes any applicants who are already interstate Palliative Medicine Advanced Trainees (*refer to page 7 for more information*).

##### 2. Six Month Registrar

For Advanced Trainees in any other specialty seeking a 6-month registrar position in Palliative Care. To check your eligibility, please visit: <https://www.vpmt.org/training/six-month-registrar>

##### 3. Paediatric Palliative Care Six Month Registrar

For Advanced Trainees in Paediatric Palliative Medicine or Advanced Trainees in Paediatrics seeking a six-month position in Paediatric Palliative Care.

#### 4. VPMTP – Funded Fellowship

For Advanced Trainees in Palliative Medicine near the completion of their training who wish to consider 6-12 months of post completion of RACP fellowship training, to increase their experience prior to becoming a palliative medicine consultant. NB. You must have completed your palliative medicine advanced training in Victoria to be eligible.

### 1.2 Interview Process

All applicants will be notified of the date and time of their interview approximately one week in advance.

Please note:

- All interviews will be held in person at Caritas Christi Hospice, Kew.
- Interviews are held between 12:30pm – 6:30pm.
- Please arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before your scheduled interview time.
- The panel will consist of three to four Palliative Medicine consultants who will ask you questions.
- Interviews for New Advanced Trainee applicants will also include a short clinical communication skills scenario with a trained actor.
- Applicants who would like to be considered for part-time supernumerary funding will be interviewed on the same day as their appropriate cohort.
- Referee reports do not contribute to your final interview score.

### 1.3 Interview Dates

Applicant Type	Dates	Interview Type	Supporting Documents Used	Duration (approx.)
VPMT New Advanced Trainee	18 August 2026 19 August 2026 20 August 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Person</li> <li>Communication Skills Role Play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CV</li> <li>Cover letter</li> </ul>	40 mins
VPMT Ongoing Advanced Trainee	19 May 2026 21 May 2026 26 May 2026 28 May 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Person</li> <li>Annual Training Discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CV</li> <li>Cover Letter</li> <li>Training Needs Form</li> </ul>	30 mins
Six-month Registrar	11 August 2026 13 August 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CV</li> <li>Cover Letter</li> </ul>	20 mins
Paediatric Palliative Care Registrar	4 August 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CV</li> <li>Cover Letter</li> </ul>	20 mins
VPMT Fellowship (Metro & Regional/Rural / Research)	6 August 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In person</li> <li>10-minute presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fellowship Position Plan</li> <li>Supervisor Letter</li> </ul>	30 mins

### 1.4 Allocation Process

- VPMT Ongoing Advanced Trainees (who commenced IN 2024 onwards) in their second and third year of Advanced Training, will be allocated positions following an Annual Training Discussion which will determine their ongoing requirements.
- Successful VPMT New Advanced Trainee applicants will be allocated to remaining positions based on training needs and preferences discussed during their Entry Interview.
- Successful Six-month stand-alone registrar applicants will be allocated positions considering their performance at interview and preference list
- Paediatric palliative care applicants will be notified after interviews in a separate process to that described above.
- VPMT Fellowship funding applicants will be notified after interview in a separate process to that described above.
- Community palliative care registrar positions at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne City Mission, Werribee Mercy, and one position at Barwon Health are funded by the RACP organised Specialist Training Program (STP) scheme. It is a requirement of the STP scheme that only RACP Advanced Trainees be appointed to these positions.

## 1.5 Application Outcome

- Applicants will be notified of their position allocation approximately seven days after the interview period concludes.
- Applicants who are unsuccessful for part-time supernumerary funding, will be allocated to a full-time position if this has been declared on their application.
- When applicants are offered a position, they **must** accept or decline the offer **within 24 hours** by email to VPMTP ([vpmtp@svha.org.au](mailto:vpmtp@svha.org.au)).
- Services are informed of the allocated trainee/s by VPMTP within 3 business days of the trainee's confirmation.
- The successful trainee **must wait** 5 business days (after accepting their position) before contacting their allocated service director via email to confirm their acceptance of the position directly. Please cc: [vpmtp@svha.org.au](mailto:vpmtp@svha.org.au), to this confirmation email.
- Trainees are requested to wait a further 5 working days from their initial email sent to the service director, before contacting directly by telephone to discuss employment details.
- The service directors/representatives will make the necessary arrangements for trainee employment by sending a written offer followed by a formal contract of employment. All employment negotiations and confirmations are the responsibility of the service director/representative and trainee.
- If a trainee decides to withdraw from the position after initial acceptance, they are responsible for notifying both the service director **and** the VPMTP Medical Training Coordinator as soon as possible. This will allow the position to be offered to another applicant or readvertised. The VPMTP cannot always offer alternative training options as the demand for these is so high.

## Section 2: Part-Time Training

The VPMTP is committed to supporting flexible training in Palliative Medicine wherever possible. Advanced Trainees are able to train part time with VPMTP in 2 ways:

- Job Sharing; and
- Part-Time Supernumerary Registrar Position

### 2.1 Job Sharing

The majority of part time training is carried out by organising to job –share full time registrar positions.

To help you consider if job sharing as an option for part time training, please read the following document: **VPMTP Job Share Guidance**, which is available at [vpmtp.org/apply-now](http://vpmtp.org/apply-now)

### 2.2 Part-Time Supernumerary Registrar Position

The VPMTP recognises that organising a job share during advanced training is sometimes difficult to arrange, VPMTP is able to offer funding for 0.5FTE supernumerary position to one registrar, at a suitable service each year. Applicants who would like to be considered for part-time supernumerary funding will be interviewed on the same day as their appropriate cohort (ie. New AT, Ongoing AT or 6-month registrar). All applicants will be considered, and a decision made at the conclusion of all interviews. Applicants should be prepared to discuss the reason that they would like to work part-time at interview.

As part of your application for Advanced Training or six-month registrar position, a question will ask if you would like to apply for part time supernumerary position - select 'Yes' to this question.

It is important to note that there is only funding for one position each year.

Also indicate if you would like to be considered for a full-time position if you are unsuccessful in the part time supernumerary position application.

In your cover letter, include an explanation to support your application. This should address why you prefer to work in a part-time capacity.

The successful applicant will secure funding for a 12-month (0.5 FTE) part time position. The applicant will be able to select their preferred job from a selection of positions at various Victorian palliative care services. The available positions will be given to the successful applicant, after interview.

Services who have hosted supernumerary positions in the past, include Alfred Health, Cabrini, Eastern Health, Melbourne Health / Werribee Mercy, Northern Health, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (VCCC), Royal Melbourne Hospital and St Vincent's Hospital.

Unsuccessful applicants will be allocated to a full-time position, if this preference has been declared on their application.

## Section 3: Specific Information Based on Application Type

### 3.1 New Advanced Trainee Applications – Entry Interview

#### 3.1.1 Interview process

- New Advanced Trainee applicants will be invited to attend an Entry Interview. All Entry interviews are held in person.

***Note:** It is expected that any interstate applicants will travel to Victoria for the Entry Interviews to ensure equity with the interview process. Only those living or travelling internationally who meet the eligibility criteria for interview will be accepted for an online interview. Please contact VPMT to discuss your request.*

- All applicants will be notified of the date and time of their interview approximately one week in advance.
- Applicants will be asked a series of questions by a panel of three to four palliative care consultants.
- A communication skills role play with an actor will be an assessed component of the interview. This is intended to assess existing clinical communication skills, however, is not an assessment of your palliative care skills.

#### 3.1.2 Interview scoring

- Applicant responses will be marked, however there will be no ranking.
- Referee evaluations do not contribute to your final interview score.

### 3.1.3 Interview dates

Applicants will be scheduled for an interview on one of the following dates:

- 18 August 2026
- 19 August 2026
- 20 August 2026

## 3.2 VPMT Ongoing Advanced Trainees - Annual Training Discussion

All trainees will be sent an annual Training Needs Form, at least one month prior to interview. This form needs to be completed and returned to the VPMT by email: [vpmt@svha.org.au](mailto:vpmt@svha.org.au) by the specified due date.

### 3.2.1 Annual Training Discussion process

- All trainees will be notified of the date and time of their Annual Training Discussion (ATD) approximately one week in advance.
- All ATD's will be held in person.
- Trainees will be asked a series of questions that build on the annual Training Needs Form, by a panel of three to four Palliative Medicine consultants.

### 3.2.2 Annual Training Discussion scoring

- Trainee responses will be recorded; however, this is **not** a scored process.
- Referee evaluations contribute to the allocation process to provide optimised training.

### 3.2.3 Annual Training Discussion dates

Trainees will be scheduled for an Annual Training Discussion on one of the following dates:

- 19 May 2026
- 21 May 2026
- 26 May 2026
- 28 May 2026

## 3.4 VPMT Fellowship Funding Applications

When an Advanced Trainee in Palliative Medicine is nearing the completion of their training, they may wish to consider 6 -12 months of post RACP fellowship training to further their experience as a Palliative Medicine Physician or Specialist.

The VPMT fellowship funding allows candidates to conceive and develop a program of experience and learning which enhances the clinical skills they have developed as trainees. The Fellowships are highly regarded by employers and often allow Fellows to establish and prove themselves as competent specialist level practitioners before making the transition to consultant practice.

In 2027, the VPMT can offer funding for up to 2.5 FTE HMO20, 12-month Fellowship positions:

- **VPMT Funded Fellowship** (up to 1.0 FTE- can be allocated)

Fellowship position to be located at either a Metro or Rural/Regional service.

- **VPMTP Funded Rural/Regional Fellowship** (up to 1.0 FTE can be allocated)  
Fellowship position to be located at a Rural/Regional service. Applications are welcomed from new fellows – up to 5 years after fellowship.

**Note:** Applications for funding for positions based in a Rural/Regional area will be eligible for either funding type.

- **VPMTP Funded Palliative Nexus Research Fellowship** (0.5FTE)  
Fellowship position focussed on research, based at PMCC.  
*Note: Please contact [vpmtp@svha.org.au](mailto:vpmtp@svha.org.au) if interested in the Nexus Research Fellowship, for the position description.*

### 3.4.1 Planning and preparing an application for:

- VPMTP Funded Fellowship
- VPMTP Funded Rural/Regional Fellowship
- VPMTP Funded Nexus Research Fellowship

Whilst the first step in the development of a Fellowship proposal is often to identify the Palliative Care service to work in, it is important to note that the focus of the fellowship program should be your professional development needs as a Fellow, and *not* the needs of the service.

You should choose a service of sufficient size and complexity to be able to offer you the necessary experience and supervision.

In addition to competence in clinical palliative medicine, consultants need to be adequately experienced in three following areas:

- Research;
- Education; and
- Management/leadership/governance.

The VPMTP Fellowship funding was established to promote development in these non-clinical domains, and your fellowship position plan should be tailored towards **at least two of these areas of work** (you do not need to include all three). Research is not a mandatory component of the general metro and rural Fellowships.

Using the guidance in section 3.4.2 (*refer to page 12 for more information*), you should draft your intended **Fellowship Position Plan**. It must be discussed, developed, and approved by the service **before** you submit the Fellowship application.

As part of your submission, please **provide a signed letter from the Service Director or their proxy acknowledging that they believe your position plan is both suitable and achievable in your proposed timeframe.** (this can be brought to the interview)

**Please allow sufficient time to plan for this.** A really good fellowship proposal may take months to formulate.

### 3.4.2 Fellowship Position Plan

Prepare a Fellowship Position Plan and attach as a PDF, to the application form accessed via the VPMT website.

**Structure your Fellowship Position Plan including the following headings:**

#### 1. Service Site Description

Location and catchment, type of staffing, type of service and services provided.

#### 2. Clinical Duties and Responsibilities

Describe the plan of your clinical duties and responsibilities – these should not exceed 50% of Fellowship time. Please create a proposed weekly timetable to support your application.

#### 3. Areas of Professional Development

Address the 2-3 areas relevant to your development needs (does *not* need to include research). Please provide an example weekly timetable and a Gantt Chart to support your application.

##### 3.1 Research Based Experience

Please provide details of your plan to improve your research knowledge and skills. If you are planning a project, choose a topic of interest and develop a research question. Any research project must be completed by the end of your Fellowship term and results included in your final written report. Please give initial details of a project plan/timeline.

##### 3.2 Education Based Experience

Please provide details of your plan to improve your skills as an educator. Eg, teaching and supervision: students, junior doctors, registrars – journal club, presentations, case studies, etc.

##### 3.3 Management/Leadership/Governance Based Experience

Please provide details of your plan to improve your experience of management / leadership / governance. A consultant should have an adequate understanding of effective leadership and be able to outline the managerial aspects of running a palliative care service.

#### 4. Signed Letter from Supervisor

As detailed in the Planning and Preparation section, please include a signed letter of support from your Service Director or nominated supervisor.

### 3.4.3 Interview Process

Applicants are required to prepare a ten-minute presentation to the panel to outline and address the objectives of their Fellowship plan. Applicants can choose to use PowerPoint / Canva to support your presentation.

Applicants need to identify and reflect on areas of professional development required to work confidently as a specialist, and to demonstrate support from the service director in developing the fellowship position plan.

This proposed plan will be reviewed and discussed during the interview and is an integral part of the panel's assessment of the application, in addition to the responses to the interview questions.

Applicants should be prepared to consider recommendations from the interview panel and may be requested to resubmit their position plan should it be deemed appropriate before funding is agreed.

#### 3.4.4 Fellowship Completion

At the completion of the Fellowship Term, **a written report of approximately 1000 words will be required** that outlines how the Fellow has successfully achieved their goals and objectives for the term, and if any obstacles were encountered.

This should be submitted to the VPMT Medical Training Coordinator ([vpmt@svha.org.au](mailto:vpmt@svha.org.au)) one week prior to the end of the Fellowship term.

*The RACP Standards and Criteria for Advanced Training in Palliative Medicine have been considered when developing these guidelines as they form the basis for accreditation of all services.*

*Document Reviewed by Medical Training Coordinator: 01/06/2026*