

VPMT 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.

These guidelines are intended for:

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

The VPMTP aims to coordinate high quality specialist training across a variety of different Palliative Medicine settings. With this in mind, in 2023 the VPMTP 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.

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

Section A: 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) by clicking: [Apply Now](#).

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

The application form includes a question about VPMT part-time supernumerary position funding. There are funds to support flexible training in a limited number of positions across Victoria. The aim of this funding is to allow trainees who need to work part time to fulfil their requirements, If you would like to be considered for one of these positions, please answer ‘yes’ to this question (*refer to pages 5-6 for more information*).

The combination of your submitted application form, cover letter, CV and referees 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, and the second referee must be a supervisor from a prior role within the last two years.

1.1.1 How to determine application type

In order to be part of the VPMT, each applicant is required to have successfully passed the **VPMT Entry Interview**, however far you may be through your Advanced Trainee training.

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

1. Advanced Trainee

For any Advanced Trainees in palliative medicine (from Victoria or interstate) who have not successfully 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?’ – answer ‘yes’.

1. Six Month Registrar

For Advanced Trainees in any other specialty seeking a 6-month registrar position in Palliative Care.

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. VPMT – Funded Fellowship

For Advanced Trainees in Palliative Medicine near the completion of their training who wish to consider 6-12 months of post RACP fellowship training, to increase their experience prior to becoming a palliative medicine consultant.

1.1.2 Interstate applicants

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 6 for more information*).

1.2 Interview Process

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

Please note:

- Interviews will be either online or at Caritas Christi Hospice, Kew, depending on the type of application (New Advanced Trainees online, Ongoing Advanced Trainees in person).
- Interviews are held between 12:40pm – 4:40pm.
- Please arrive no earlier than 15 minutes before your scheduled interview time.
- The panel will consist of three to four Palliative Medicine consultants who will ask you questions. Your answers will be evaluated.
- Interviews for New Advanced Trainees will also include a short clinical communication skills scenario with a trained actor.
- 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	20 August 2024 21 August 2024 22 August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online Entry Interview Communication Skills Role Play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV Cover letter 	40 mins
VPMT Ongoing Advanced Trainee (Commenced IN 2024/2025)	27 August 2024 28 August 2024 29 August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Person Annual Training Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV Cover Letter Training Needs Form 	20 mins
VPMT Ongoing Advanced Trainee (Commenced BEFORE 2024/2025)	27 August 2024 28 August 2024 29 August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV Cover Letter Training Needs Form Preference List 	20 mins
Six-month Registrar	14 August 2024 15 August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV Cover Letter 	20 mins
Paediatric Palliative Care Registrar	6 August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV Cover Letter 	20 mins
VPMT Fellowship (Metro & Regional/Rural / Research)	29 August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person 10-minute presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fellowship Position Plan Supervisor Letter 	30 mins

1.4 Allocation Process

- VPMT Ongoing Advanced Trainees (who commenced BEFORE 2024) will be allocated according to training requirements, considering the ranking at interview and position preferences.
- VPMT Ongoing Advanced Trainees (who commenced IN or AFTER 2024) in their second and third year of Advanced Training, will be allocated positions following an Annual Training Discussion to determine their ongoing requirements.
- New VPMT Advanced Trainees (who commenced AFTER 2024) will be allocated to remaining positions based on training needs and preferences discussed during the interview.
- Six-month stand-alone registrar applicants will be allocated positions considering their performance at interview and their position preferences.
- Paediatric Trainees are allocated separately.
- VPMT Fellowship Trainees are allocated separately.
- Community positions at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne City Mission, Werribee Mercy, and one position at Barwon Geelong are funded by the RACP organised Specialist Training Position (STP)

scheme. It is a requirement of the STP scheme that only RACP Advanced Trainees be appointed to these positions.

- Applicants who would like to be considered for part time supernumerary funding will be interviewed on the same day as their appropriate cohort, and a decision made at the conclusion of interviews (*refer to pages 5-6 for more information*). Those who are unsuccessful will be allocated to a full-time position if this has been declared on their application.

1.5 Application Outcome

- Applicants will be notified of their position allocation approximately seven days after the interview period concludes.
- When applicants are offered a position, they **MUST** accept or decline the offer **within 24 hours** by email to VPMT (vpmt@svha.org.au).
- Services are then informed of the allocated trainee/s by VPMT within 3 business days of the confirmation.
- Once the position has been accepted via VPMT, the trainee must wait 5 business days and then contact their allocated service director via email to confirm their acceptance of the position directly. Please cc: vpmt@svha.org.au, to this confirmation email.
- If a trainee decides to withdraw from the position after initial acceptance, they are responsible for notifying the service director **and** the VPMT Medical Training Coordinator as soon as possible. This will allow the position to be offered to another applicant.
- Trainees are requested to wait a further 5 working days from the initial email sent to the service director, and contact 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.

Section B: Part-Time and Job Share

2.1 Part-Time Supernumerary Registrar Position

The VPMT is committed to supporting flexible training in Palliative Medicine as much as possible. 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.

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 disseminated to applicants for consideration.

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

2.2 How to Apply

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.

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

Section C: Specific Information Based on Applicant Type

3.1 New Advanced Trainee Applicants – Entry Interview

3.1.1 Interview process

- New Advanced Trainee applicants will be invited to attend an Entry Interview. All Entry interviews are held online.
- 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 clinical 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:

- 20 August 2024
- 21 August 2024
- 22 August 2024

3.2 VPMT Ongoing Advanced Trainee Applicant (commenced IN 2024/25 Academic year)

All applicants 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 by the specified due date.

3.2.1 Interview process

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

- Applicants 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 Interview scoring

- Applicant responses will be recorded, however there will be no ranking.
- Referee evaluations contribute to the allocation process.

3.2.3 Interview dates

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

- 27 August 2024
- 28 August 2024
- 29 August 2024

3.3 VPMT Ongoing Advanced Trainee Applicant (commenced BEFORE 2024/25 Academic year)

All applicants will be sent an Annual Training Needs form and Position Preference List, at least one month prior to interview. These forms need to be completed and returned to the VPMT by email: vpmt@svha.org.au by the specified due date.

3.3.1 Interview process

- All applicants will be notified of the date and time of their interview approximately one week in advance.
- All interviews will be held in person.
- Applicants will be asked a series of questions by a panel of three to four Palliative Medicine consultants.

3.3.2 Interview scoring

- Applicant responses will be marked.
- Referee evaluations do not contribute to your final interview score.
- The panel will have the Position Preference List form to facilitate allocation to a suitable position

3.3.3 Interview dates

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

- 27 August 2024
- 28 August 2024
- 29 August 2024

3.4 VPMTTP Fellowship Applicants

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 VPMTTP 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 2025, the VPMTTP can offer funding for three 12-month Fellowship positions:

- **VPMTTP Funded Fellowship** (1.0 FTE- can be allocated at lesser FTE)
Fellowship position to be located at either a Metro or Rural/Regional service.
- **VPMTTP Funded Rural/Regional Fellowship** (1.0 FTE can be allocated at lesser FTE)
Fellowship position to be located at a Rural/Regional service.
Note: Applications based in a Rural/Regional area will be eligible for either funding type.
- **VPMTTP Funded Palliative Nexus Research Fellowship** (0.5FTE)
Fellowship position focussed on research.
The VPMTTP Funded Palliative Nexus Research Fellowship is being offered for the first time in 2025/26, please contact vpmttp@svha.org.au in the first instance, if interested in the position description.

3.4.1 Planning and Preparing an Application for:

- **VPMTTP Funded Fellowship**
- **VPMTTP Funded Rural/Regional 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 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 Fellowship was established to promote development in these non-clinical domains, and your 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 9 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.**

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 either a Word or 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

If successful in securing an interview, 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.

3.4.4 Fellowship Completion

At the completion of the Fellowship Term, **a brief 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 VPMTP Medical Training Coordinator (vpmtp@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.