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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release



GPRA & RACGP respond to registrar concerns

Following discussions between the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and General Practice Registrars Australia (GPRA) at GP'09 – The Conference for General Practice – in Perth last week, a new transitional arrangement has been announced for those registrars who have enrolled for the first time or will enrol for the first time in the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) in 2009 or 2010.

Late in 2008 the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' (RACGP) announced that the Fellowship Exams would be 'uncoupled' in 2009. This means that, whilst candidates still have three years to successfully complete the three assessments, they are now able to sit each segment of the exam – AKT (Applied Knowledge Test), KFP (Key Feature Problem) and OSCE – individually, and at their own pace.

"We believe the restructured examination provides a better and more flexible approach towards achieving Fellowship. The new arrangements allow the option of spreading the preparation time and costs of the exam over up to three years and allow improved feedback to help unsuccessful candidates focus on their areas of weakness," said Dr Chris Mitchell, RACGP President.

"The RACGP Fellowship examination processes undergo constant quality review and our examination fees reflect the real costs of quality improvements and the delivery of a world-class assessment," said Dr Mitchell.

Acknowledging the lack of advance communication with registrars prior to the announcement and the associated increases in examination fees, the RACGP has undertaken discussions with GPRA to seek some way to compensate those registrars most affected by the short notice of the fee increase.

"Following the presentation of a Convocation item at GP'09 last week by Dr Guest, we have identified the support of our members regarding this issue," said Dr Mitchell. "We are pleased to announce that we will make a special offer to all registrar candidates enrolling for the first time in the OSCE in 2009 or 2010."

Registrars who enrol in the OSCE for the first time in 2009 will be eligible to receive membership credit up to the value of the current New Fellow rate, while registrars enrolling for the first time in the OSCE in 2010 will be eligible for membership credit of 50% of this amount.

Eligible candidates who have already enrolled will be receiving a letter from the RACGP next week with further information. Registrars can also call the RACGP membership department on 1800 331 626 for more information from Monday 12 October 2009.

"This is a culmination of many discussions the two organisations have held over this issue in 2009. The open dialogue has led to improved understanding on both sides and GPRA acknowledges that although the headline examination fee has increased, there are significant savings under the uncoupled exam for those candidates that are unsuccessful on their first attempt," said Dr Chris Mitchell, RACGP President.

"I am very pleased that the RACGP has acknowledged the significant impact that this price increase has had on many registrars and is offering substantial recompense," said Dr Guest,

GPRA Chair. “This is a very positive move, which shows the desire of the college to not only listen to the concerns of registrars but also to engage positively with them into the future. We are pleased that the RACGP has now responded to the concerns raised by GPRA in relation to the examination changes and that the issue is now resolved.”

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About the RACGP

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) sets and maintains the standards for quality clinical practice, education and training, and research in Australian general practice, and represents Australia’s urban and rural general practitioners. Visit www.racgp.org.au.

About the GPRA

General Practice Registrars Australia Ltd. (GPRA) is the peak national representative body for GP Registrars. Since the inception of general practice vocational training in 1974, GP Registrar representation has played an integral role in maintaining educational relevance and standards. GPRA provides essential feedback on Registrar issues to relevant stakeholders and represents the future of General Practice. Visit www.gpra.org.au.