



Australian Government

Department of Health

Specialist Training Program (STP)

COVID19 Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

There have been many queries from specialty medical colleges in relation to posts funded under the Specialist Training Program, Integrated Rural Training Pipeline (IRTP) and the STP Training More Doctors in Tasmania (STP TAS) project as well as the continuation or commencement of support projects and marketing projects for 2020 impacted by the current COVID19 crisis.

Registrars in rural and private hospitals provide important services. We recognise that the nature of some posts may change in this period, with a shift towards more critical work. The preference is that registrars in rural health services should be redeployed within rural networks to assist with the COVID19 response. Rural local health districts should be involved in these decisions, in consultation with colleges.

These guiding principles and FAQs will support colleges to continue to deliver on the aims and objectives of the STP at this time. While recognising the challenges with the continuation of specialty training at this time, we request that colleges keep a record of the impacts of the COVID19 situation on STP, IRTP and STP TAS funded posts and activities.

A template is provided for colleges to record and report any STP, IRTP or STP TAS posts that have been impacted by the COVID19 response. We request that this is submitted in line with your next report to the department in August 2020 and February 2021.

Reporting

STP, IRTP and STP TAS reporting will continue in accordance with current agreement reporting timelines. We also ask that colleges continue to enter data into the RIDE portal. Further information is provided in the FAQ below.

Where possible:

- Specialty medical colleges to support the continuation of specialist training in STP, IRTP or STP TAS funded positions
- Minimise disruption for training posts funded under the STP, IRTP and STP TAS
- Actively continue the administration of Rural Support Loading (RSL) and Private Infrastructure and Clinical Supervision (PICS) funds (where applicable) to support trainees
- Specialty medical colleges to continue the delivery of STP Support Projects and marketing projects to support specialty training, trainees and supervisors. If projects cannot continue, must be postponed or cancelled, colleges may submit to the department amended proposals for support projects.

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These are temporary measures for the STP, IRTP and STP TAS that are strictly only applicable during the current COVID19 health crisis. The department will continue to monitor the situation for emerging issues that may impact specialist medical colleges and training. These FAQs will be updated as required.

For queries, please contact the STP team on Postgraduate.Training@health.gov.au in the first instance as this inbox is covered by all the STP team, even if remote work arrangements are in place.

Specialist Training Program - COVID19

Frequently Asked Questions

1. [A health service has requested that a trainee in an STP / IRTP / STP TAS funded post be redeployed within the health service they are currently training in to support the COVID19 response, can funding continue to be applied?](#)
 2. [A health service has requested to redeploy a trainee in an STP / IRTP / STP TAS funded post to work in another health service within the local health network, district or region, can funding continue to be applied?](#)
 3. [A health service has requested to redeploy a trainee in an STP or STP TAS funded post to work in another health service outside of the current local health network, district or region to any rural area classification area, can funding continue to be applied?](#)
 4. [A health service has requested to redeploy a trainee with IRTP funding attached to the trainee to work in another health service within the current local health network, district or region \(RA2-5 or MMM2-7\), can funding continue to be applied?](#)
 5. [A health service has requested to redeploy a trainee at a private health service to work in a public health service \(MMM1-7 or RA1-5\), can funding continue to be applied?](#)
 6. [Can the college administer all Rural Support Loading \(RSL\) and Private Infrastructure and Clinical Supervision \(PICS\) funds to STP and IRTP funded posts?](#)
 7. [STP support project/s for 2020 have had to be postponed, what do we do now and how will that impact our funding and contractual obligations?](#)
 8. [Due to the nature of the STP support project/s for 2020, these have had to be cancelled. What do we do now and how will that impact our funding and contractual obligations?](#)
 9. [Can colleges submit an STP support project proposal to expend interest monies accumulated during the current SFA period?](#)
 10. [Can colleges change payment arrangements with health services, if requested, for example, to provide up-front funding of the full STP, IRTP or STP TAS funding instead of two or more payments per year for training posts?](#)
 11. [Will college governance and administration funds be impacted?](#)
 12. [Can the college re-allocate funds to a reserve list post from a post vacated by a trainee due to redeployment measures for COVID19?](#)
 13. [Can STP marketing projects be rescheduled for later in 2020 or early 2021?](#)
 14. [How do we enter the post data on the RIDE portal when a post has been impacted by the COVID19 crisis?](#)
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1. A health service has requested that a trainee in an STP / IRTP / STP TAS funded post be redeployed within the health service they are currently training in to support the COVID19 response, can funding continue to be applied?

Yes, the Department will support the continuation of funding to posts where a trainee has been redeployed to assist within the health service to the COVID19 response. The contract in place between colleges and health service enables the continuation of funding to the health service. This case applies for any IRTP funded trainee where funding follows the trainee.

2. A health service has requested to redeploy a trainee in an STP / IRTP / STP TAS funded post to work in another health service within the local health network, district or region, can funding continue to be applied?

Yes, the Department will support the continuation of funding to posts where a trainee has been redeployed to another health service within a training network, district or region in any MMM1-7 or RA1-5 area to assist in the COVID19 response. For example, a trainee moves from Port Augusta Hospital to work in Whyalla Hospital within the same local health network of Flinders and Upper North.

3. A health service has requested to redeploy a trainee in an STP or STP TAS funded post to work in another health service outside of the current local health network, district or region to any rural area classification area, can funding continue to be applied?

Yes, the Department will support the continuation of funding to posts where a trainee has been redeployed to another health service outside the current local health network, district or region. Noting that the ability to continue funding and pass on funding to support the trainee will be dependent on the agreements between the college and the health services for the STP funds and any agreement between health service networks, regions for the redeployment of staff. In-line with guiding principles the preference is that registrars in rural health services should be redeployed within rural networks to assist with the COVID19 response.

4. A health service has requested to redeploy a trainee with IRTP funding attached to the trainee to work in another health service within the current local health network, district or region (RA2-5 or MMM2-7), can funding continue to be applied?

Yes, the Department will support the continuation of funding to a trainee with IRTP funding attached who has been redeployed to another health service within the local health network, district or region in an RA2-5 or MMM2-7 area to assist in the COVID19 response. The trainee must be supported to return to the 'home' health service once the COVID19 crisis ends.

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5. A health service has requested to redeploy a trainee at a private health service to work in a public health service (MMM1-7 or RA1-5), can funding continue to be applied?

Yes, the Department will support the continuation of funding to a trainee who has been redeployed from a private health service to a public health service temporarily to assist in the COVID19 response. Trainees in private sector posts, particularly where they were involved in elective work may be shifted back into public hospital networks. The private setting will retain its 2020 STP funding (depending on the nature of secondment arrangements) as it is expected that private settings will already have budgeted for such expenditure.

6. Can the college administer all Rural Support Loading (RSL) and Private Infrastructure and Clinical Supervision (PICS) funds to STP and IRTP funded posts?

The department supports the administration by colleges of all RSL and PICS funds to eligible posts. These funds can be in one payment per annum, pending the college having sufficient funds to support this action.

7. STP support project/s for 2020 have had to be postponed, what do we do now and how will that impact our funding and contractual obligations?

Colleges can plan to reschedule support projects in the 2020 year. The department cannot yet advise on the option to carry over support projects to the 2021 year. We will advise once we have more information.

8. Due to the nature of the STP support project/s for 2020, these have had to be cancelled. What do we do now and how will that impact our funding and contractual obligations?

The department invites colleges to submit a proposal to the department for the reallocation of funds to a new support project or projects for the STP in 2020.

9. Can colleges submit an STP support project proposal to expend interest monies accumulated during the current SFA period?

Colleges can submit a proposal for an STP support project to the department for the use of interest monies accumulated during the current SFA period. As identified in the STP Operational Framework, projects 'will directly benefit trainees in posts supported under the program'. These projects will enhance the delivery of the program and provide the trainee with high quality specialist training experiences. The college will prioritise projects that are targeted at rural trainees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees.

10. Can colleges change payment arrangements with health services, if requested, for example, to provide up-front funding of the full STP, IRTP or STP TAS funding instead of two or more payments per year for training posts?

If the college is able to support changes in payment arrangements to health services with available funds, the department supports this action. Additional funds outside of the current agreements and payment timeframes will not be made available to colleges to facilitate this option. Any changes to payments are to be reported in the six monthly financial reports.

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11. Will college governance and administration funds be impacted?

The department will not alter governance and administration funds for colleges either under existing agreements or as proposed in new Deeds of Variation or Standard Funding Agreements for colleges for the 2021 academic year.

12. Can the college re-allocate funds to a reserve list post from a post vacated by a trainee due to redeployment measures for COVID19?

The college can only re-allocate funds to a reserve list post in the event the post is permanently vacated for the academic year and unlikely to be filled again. Colleges must manage vacancies in line with the [STP Operational Framework](#).

13. Can STP marketing projects be rescheduled for later in 2020 or early 2021?

The department invites colleges to submit amendments for consideration to marketing projects proposed for delivery in 2020. The department cannot yet advise on the option to carry over marketing projects to the 2021 year. We will advise once we have more information.

14. How do we enter the post data on the RIDE portal when a post has been impacted by the COVID19 crisis?

The RIDE portal records data relating to the FTE fill of each funded post. In the case of redeployment of specialty trainees to assist in the COVID19 response, if the trainee is still working and funds continue to be applied to a post and the trainee, regardless of the location of the trainee, colleges are expected to continue to enter data into the RIDE portal as if the post was filled.

If a trainee officially leaves a post and the post becomes vacant, with funds for the post unspent, then colleges are expected to reflect that the post has been partially filled with an appropriate FTE reflecting the actual time spent in the post.

Any post impacted by the COVID19 crisis must be recorded in the separate Excel template provided and submitted to the department with the August 2020 and February 2021 report.

For queries, please contact the STP team on Postgraduate.Training@health.gov.au.