



13 October 2020

More must be done to restore the trust of GP trainees in the RACGP

General Practice Registrars Australia (GPRA) calls on the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) to extend leniency to enable the affected exam candidates to undertake the transitional Remote Clinical Exam (RCE) or the 2021 Clinical Competency Exam (CCE) without the usual prerequisite pass in the written exam. Additionally, the RACGP must commit to an investigation which is open, independent, and informed by the trainee experience.

“GPRA welcomes the announcements from the College Board and Executive regarding the immediate refund of the exam fees, waiving of fees for one resit, and leniency on the exam attempts cap, as these are entirely appropriate first steps towards reparations,” says GPRA President Dr Sama Balasubramanian.

“However, further measures are urgently needed to restore the confidence of trainees in the RACGP and these measures must be trainee-centric and flexible. This begins with removing the prerequisite for affected exam candidates of having to pass the written exams before sitting the clinical exam,” says Dr Balasubramanian.

“Furthermore, the promise to undertake an external investigation of the incident is welcome. However, if the College is truly committed to an independent review it must seek trainee input both externally from GPRA, as the only independent GP trainee organisation in Australia, and internally with the RACGP National Faculty of GPs in Training. There must also be a forum for the general GP trainee constituency to comment,” says Dr Balasubramanian.

“There must be a firm commitment that the investigation will be open and transparent with findings publicly released and available to all exam candidates. The College must undertake to conduct this independent review as a matter of urgency, with the learnings

from the investigation used to ensure that the events of last Friday never happen again,” says Dr Balasubramanian.

“What the College does going forward to restore confidence amongst, and show respect for, its future Fellow GPs is of utmost importance. The College must deliver on its commitments and ensure its actions truly reflect that College is absolutely committed to better supporting its trainee members,” says Dr Balasubramanian.

“GPRA believes that honesty and transparency will begin healing the pain felt by trainees and their loved ones and would go a considerable way to restoring trainee faith in the process,” says Dr Balasubramanian.

“GP trainees have already had their progress to Fellowship significantly disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the initial delays in scheduling of the College examinations. The past few days have unnecessarily exacerbated these delays and have seemed like an eternity to affected exam candidates. Many are dealing with heartache, despair and anger,” says Dr Balasubramanian.

“GPRA thanks candidates who took the time to contact us to share their experiences. We hope that they have been able to find support and care during this traumatic time. As the healing process begins, we hope that candidates can find ways to move forward to become the next generation of GPs that Australia needs and deserves,” says Dr Balasubramanian.

“As the only independent voice of all GP trainees, GPRA will advocate to the RACGP and other stakeholders to make sure this happens,” says Dr Balasubramanian.

ENDS

Enquiries:

GPRA | enquiries@gpra.org.au | 03 9629 8878