ORIENTATION: PART 2
About the College and general practice

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College structure

The College is governed by a Board that is supported by the National Advisory Council, the senior management team, an Educational Advisory Group, national Chapters and local Faculty boards.

The Board

The College is governed by an elected board made up of College Fellows supported by independent directors. The seven-member board comprises:

- an elected President
- three elected College Fellows
- a representative from Te Akoranga a Māui (the Māori Chapter)
- up to two members appointed by the Board
- the Chair of the National Advisory Council as an ex officio member.

The National Advisory Council (NAC)

The NAC is composed of:

- a Fellow appointed by each Faculty to represent that Faculty
- a Fellow appointed by each Chapter to represent that Chapter (with the exception of the Registrars’ Chapter who may appoint an Associate or Member)
- two College Members nominated by Te Akoranga a Māui
- chairs of Expert Advisory Groups as determined by the NAC
- the College’s CEO (ex officio and without voting rights).

The NAC is the listening post for all College members and relays to the Board critical viewpoints from the Faculties and Chapters regarding policy issues, priorities for policy work and other opinions.
The senior management team

The senior management team leads the College staff to achieve our strategic aims of growing the GP workforce, setting quality standards for practice, representing our members and contributing to equitable health care for all New Zealanders.

The Education Advisory Group (EAG)

The EAG provides the Board, chief executive and senior management team with expert advice for our education and training programmes, including the General Practice Education Programme (GPEP) for registrars, Fellowship Assessment standards, and continuing professional development (CPD) for Fellows.
Faculties
All members of the College belong to a regional Faculty where they have the opportunity to be involved in local discussion and decision making. The nine Faculties from north to south are:

1. Northland
2. Auckland
3. Waikato
4. Hawkes Bay
5. Wellington
6. Nelson/Marlborough
7. Canterbury
8. Otago
9. Southland

Sub-Faculties
There are a further four sub-Faculties, which are designed to build greater collaboration and connection, particularly in North Island regions.

1. Tairāwhiti
2. Taranaki
3. Whanganui
4. Manawatu

Chapters
Unlike Faculties, Chapters are optional groups of members that revolve around major national areas of practice. The five Chapters are:

1. **Te Akoranga a Māui** (Māori Chapter) is made up of College members who self-identify as Māori and have Māori whakapapa.
2. **Pacific Chapter** made up of members who identify as Pasifika, or members who serve communities with large Pacific populations or who are interested in Pacific health issues.
3. **Registrars' Chapter** is made up of doctors who are enrolled in the College's vocational training programme.
4. **Rural General Practitioners’ Chapter** is made up of College members who are involved in the provision of services within the scope of general practice in rural communities.
5. **Rural Hospital Generalists Chapter** – all Division of Rural Hospital Medicine members automatically belong to this Chapter.
What is a general practitioner and general practice?

**General practitioner**
A general practitioner (GP) is an appropriately qualified medical graduate who has particular knowledge and skills to provide personal, family, whānau and community-oriented, comprehensive primary care. A GP’s care continues over time, is anticipatory as well as responsive, and is not limited by the age, sex, race, religion or social circumstances of patients, or by their physical or mental states. GPs are registered with the Medical Council of New Zealand on the vocational register in the scope of general practice.

**General practice**
General practice is a responsive primary health system that responds to need, is readily available at all times and able to manage and prevent both common and life-threatening health problems. It provides diagnosis and treatment of patients’ medical problems, support and care, prevention, health promotion and attention to other health matters.* General practice can provide care across the continuum and takes the patient’s environment into consideration.

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† RNZCGP. The Value of General Practice. 2002:21

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Two areas of general practice in New Zealand warrant special mention – rural general practice and Māori health:

**Rural general practice**
Rural GPs face unique situations due to the communities in which they practise. “Rural GPs are generally pure generalists as they address health issues in areas where more specialised health services such as disability support, emergency and terminal care are not as accessible as those in urban areas. Some of the issues facing rural GPs require them to maintain a greater diversity of skills, work more onerous call rosters, and they face greater demands from the communities they serve.”

**Māori health**
The College has established Te Akoranga a Māui, a national Māori Faculty, to work towards the goal of ensuring Māori GPs, registrars and other doctors working in general practice receive culturally appropriate training and support. The College is also focused on the goal of having a general practice workforce that understands the diversity of Māori and their health needs. In 2007, it published Cultural Competence: Advice for GPs to create and maintain culturally competent general practices in New Zealand.
How a GP becomes vocationally registered

The Medical Council of New Zealand is the regulatory authority for all medical practitioners in New Zealand and is tasked with ensuring doctors are safe and competent to practise. The Medical Council registers trainee doctors on the general register. These doctors are required to work within a 'collegial relationship' that requires their practice to be overseen by an experienced colleague. If the Medical Council is satisfied that a doctor is safe to practise independently, it will register the doctor in a vocational scope of practice.

GPs who attain Fellowship of The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners are considered by the Medical Council to be suitable for registration in the vocational scope of general practice.

The College provides a CPD programme (the Maintenance of Professional Standards programme, also known as MOPS) to enable vocationally registered GPs to comply with the Medical Council's recertification requirements for medical practitioners in New Zealand.

Membership of the College

The College currently has approximately 4500 members, and there are four membership categories.

Categories of membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate in Training</th>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Fellow (FRNZCGP)</th>
<th>Associate in Practice</th>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand–registered doctors currently undergoing the General Practice Education Programme (GPEP) and the Division of Rural Hospital Medicine Training Programme.</td>
<td>Those who have passed both the GPEP Clinical examination and the GPEP Written examination and are finishing their postgraduate training. Members can take part in College affairs and have full voting rights.</td>
<td>Members who have completed their Fellowship assessment and are vocationally registered as a general practitioner with the Medical Council of New Zealand.</td>
<td>New Zealand–registered doctors who are engaged in general practice, rural hospital medicine or other aligned scopes of practice. They must comply with Medical Council of New Zealand requirements. They may take part in College affairs but have no voting rights.</td>
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How GPs attain Fellowship of the College (FRNZCGP)

To obtain Fellowship of the College, trainees – medical graduates – complete the three-year General Practice Education Programme (GPEP). It comprises:

- **10 months of basic vocational training (GPEP1),** which involves 42 weeks of general practice training, leading to the GPEP Clinical and Written examinations.

- **26 months of advanced general practice training (GPEP2/3),** which involves:
  - practising in a collegial relationship
  - undertaking a series of activities to assess the trainee’s competence to practise independently
  - a final Fellowship assessment visit to assess the trainee’s eligibility for Fellowship.

FRNZCGP is awarded on successful completion of these requirements.

The Fellowship award ceremony is held annually at the College conference.
A brief history of the College

In 1955, New Zealand members of the UK Royal College of General Practitioners established a local Council and, in 1972, a referendum of members overwhelmingly supported the formation of a New Zealand College of General Practitioners. The College was incorporated on 13 August 1973 under the Charitable Trusts Act – the first specifically New Zealand College in any medical discipline. In 1979, the New Zealand College obtained permission to use the ‘Royal’ title and it officially became The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners.

Some milestones in the College’s history:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>The training programme, now known as <strong>GPEP (General Practice Education Programme)</strong>, began in Southland</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>The inaugural <strong>College conference</strong> was held in Christchurch. The first issue of the College’s journal <strong>New Zealand Family Physician</strong> was published</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>The current <strong>College emblem</strong> was approved by the Board</td>
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<td>1981</td>
<td>HRH The Duke of Edinburgh became the first Honorary Fellow of the New Zealand College</td>
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<td>1983</td>
<td>The College moved from Christchurch to Wellington</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>The College took control of the Family Medicine Training Programme from the Council for Postgraduate Medical Education</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>The <strong>Maintenance of Professional Standards (MOPS) programme</strong> began (the College’s continuing professional development (CPD) programme)</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>The <strong>Aiming for Excellence</strong> standard for general practice was established</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>The Māori Faculty, <strong>Te Akoranga a Māui</strong>, was established</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>The <strong>CORNERSTONE</strong> general practice accreditation programme was established</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>The <strong>Division of Rural Hospital Medicine (DRHM)</strong> was established to provide doctors with an accredited training programme to become Fellows of Rural Hospital Medicine</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>The <strong>Journal of Primary Health Care</strong> was launched, replacing the <strong>New Zealand Family Physician</strong></td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>For the first time, GP registrars had the option of being College employed for their first year of training</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>The <strong>Foundation Standard</strong> was implemented</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>The Board agrees to the establishment of a Pacific Chapter</td>
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You can read more about the history of general practice in New Zealand, the College and the College’s training programme in the following two books, which you’ll find in the Lundia (near the staff room):

- *A history of general practice and of The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners*  
  – RE Wright-St Clair

- *The amoeba, the snail and the octopus*  
  – H Rainey and P Anyon
The College emblem explained

**The serpent-entwined gavel:** The gavel represents authority, and the serpent is a reference to the staff of Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine.

**Tāniko:** On either side of the emblem is the tāniko pattern, a traditional form of Māori weaving, which emphasises the College’s New Zealand identity.

**Cum Scientia Caritas:** The College’s motto, which means ‘with knowledge and compassion’.

The pattern of lines and circles in the centre of the emblem combine various symbols representing man, woman, procreation and the family, thus indicating the work of the GP as a family physician:

- **Man**
- **Woman**
- **Man + Woman = Union**
- **Man + Woman + Union = Procreation**
- **Man + Woman + Procreation = Family**

**The owl:** The owl represents wisdom and vigilance.