

Position Description

Clinical Toxicologist – Victorian Poisons Information Centre

Classification:	ZZ88 - VPIC Toxicologist
Business unit/department:	Pharmacy - Victorian Poisons Information Centre
Work location:	Austin Hospital <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Agreement:	AMA Victoria - Victorian Public Health Sector Medical Specialists Enterprise Agreement 2022-2026
Employment type:	As per contract
Hours per week:	As per contract (on-call service)
Reports to:	Medical Director, Victorian Poisons Information Centre
Direct reports:	Nil
Financial management:	Budget: N/A
Date:	April 2026

Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Position purpose

The VPIC Clinical Toxicology Consultant is responsible for providing and promoting safe, effective and efficient care for poisoned patients referred via the Victorian Poisons Information Centre (VPIC), presenting to the Austin Hospital Emergency Department, and for those who are admitted as inpatients to Austin Health.

About the Directorate/Division/Department

The Victorian Poisons Information Centre (VPIC) commenced operation in 1962. It was located at the Royal Children’s Hospital (RCH), Melbourne from 1976 to 2008. In August 2008, the centre relocated to the Emergency Department at the Austin Hospital, to integrate with the Austin Toxicology Service (ATS). VPIC is directed administratively as part of the Austin Hospital Pharmacy Department.

VPIC provides members of the Victorian public with information and advice about:

- First aid in the event of poisoning, suspected poisoning, bites and stings, mistakes with medicines, etc.
- The need for medical assessment.
- Prevention of poisoning.
- Referral to other information sources as indicated.

VPIC provides health professionals with information and advice about:

- Ingredients in products involved in poisoning or exposure.
- Assessment of the severity of a poisoning or exposure.
- Potential toxic effects from a poisoning or exposure.
- Treatment and management.

VPIC is one of four Poisons Information Centres within Australia. It operates Monday to Friday (0800 to 2130 hours), and Saturday and Sunday (0800 to 2100 hours). Outside these times, calls are diverted to the New South Wales Poisons Information Centre, which operates on a 24-hour basis. VPIC works approximately 80 overnight shifts (12 midnight to 0600 hours) per year, to assist the other Poisons Information Centres in taking calls from across Australia.

VPIC also has access to a range of other consultants (clinical pharmacologists, mycologists, and botanists), who can provide specialist advice if needed.

Position responsibilities

All VPIC clinical toxicologists should be competent in the following areas:

- Provision of expert care for the management of the poisoned patient including:
 - Resuscitation
 - Decontamination
 - Provision of specific antidotes
 - Provision of appropriate supportive care
 - Utilisation of extracorporeal techniques
 - Recognition of the contribution of patient co-morbidities
 - Assessment and initial management of psychiatric co-morbidities
 - Disposition planning
 - Management of the poisoned patient requiring care in a critical care setting including the Intensive Care Unit
 - Management of victims of chemical exposures including terrorist attacks
 - Management of chronic poisoning including environmental and occupational exposures
 - Management of envenomation
 - Management of drug and alcohol withdrawal states
- Provide comprehensive management of inpatients and outpatients.
- Respond promptly (within 10 minutes) to the health professional who has contacted the Austin Toxicology Service for clinical advice.
- Document advice given in all clinical consultations prior to the end of every on-call shift period.
- Participate in Unit meetings and activities.
- Provide an on-call service as required.
- Provide a consultative service to other Units as required.
- Supervise trainees and junior medical staff.
- Assist the Director in administrative duties as required, including the development and review of policies and procedures for the provision of services, updating as needed to reflect best practice and evidence-based medicine.
- Assist in the evaluation of the delivery of services and in implementing appropriate quality and risk management initiatives.
- Demonstrate a commitment to working as a team member with peer medical, junior medical, nursing and other clinical staff to provide efficient, safe and quality care across the continuum.

Teaching, training and research

- Contribute to the supervision, education, and training of junior medical, nursing, and other clinical staff, including participating in their performance appraisal and feedback processes.
- Participate in both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching activities.
- Commitment to facilitate, conduct and participate in clinical and/or basic research.
- Participate in the auditing and review of clinical practices to improve clinical outcomes.



Our actions
show we care



We bring
our best



Together
we achieve



We shape
the future

Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice

Core Scope of Clinical Practice

Procedures, therapies, and competencies that a Fellow from the respective specialist medical college would be competent in practicing. This only applies to practice at Austin Health and its campuses.

- Provision of expert care for the management of poisoned patients.
- Management of the poisoned patient requiring care in a critical care setting including the Intensive Care Unit.
- Management of chronic poisoning including environmental and occupational exposures.
- Management of victims of chemical exposures including terrorist attacks.
- Management of envenomation.
- Management of drug and alcohol withdrawal states.

This will be assumed if the Clinical Toxicologist has a Fellowship of the RACP, ACEM, ANZCA or JFICM, or equivalent, and an ongoing continuous practice in this specialty.

Extended Scope of Clinical Practice

Procedures, therapies, and competencies that a Fellow from the respective specialist medical college would be competent in practicing after additional training, qualifications and experience as determined by the Head of Unit* has been completed. This only applies to practice at Austin Health and its campuses.

*The Head of Unit is expected to apply guidelines from the respective specialist medical college and appropriate state, national and international guidelines.

- None identified.

Emergency / life-threatening situation

In a medical emergency, any medical staff member who is credentialed at Austin Health is permitted to provide necessary patient care, as best able, and outside their defined scope of clinical practice to provide life-saving measures and/or to prevent serious harm.

Please note

Recognising the dynamic and rapidly advancing nature of medical practice, if you believe a novel competence, practice or procedure should be included within your specialty's scope of clinical practice, please speak to your Head of Unit, and refer to the 'Introduction of a New Technology / Clinical Practice' policy on the HUB (<http://eppic//Document/1193>).

For general accreditation the following need to be satisfied

- Demonstrated continuing professional development.
- Regular attendance at audit.
- Participation in one or more of the following:
 - Teaching or research
 - Organising audit
 - Clinical governance
 - Other role within Austin Health but outside of the unit/specialty
 - College role

For each area where special expertise needs to be demonstrated

Some or all of the following criteria will be used to assess accreditation:

- Specialist training or a specific fellowship.
- Significant accumulated total experience in the field.
- Recent experience (adequate number of cases per year in previous years).
- Satisfactory completion of an acceptable outside organisation's credentialing requirements.



Our actions
show we care



We bring
our best



Together
we achieve



We shape
the future

Selection criteria

Essential skills and experience:

- A commitment to Austin Health values.
- Must be a registered Medical Practitioner in Australia with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).
- Fellowship of the RACP, ACEM, ANZCA or JFICM.
- Possesses (or is in the process of obtaining) an academic post-graduate qualification in clinical toxicology (Diploma of Medical Toxicology, Cardiff University / Certificate in Medical Toxicology, WikiTox), or is currently acquiring such qualification.
- Possesses extensive experience in clinical toxicology.
- Demonstrated commitment to high quality patient care.
- Demonstrated commitment and ongoing activity in research and/or clinical audit activities.
- Involvement in teaching and training of medical, technical, and nursing staff, including at undergraduate and post-graduate level.
- Attendance and active involvement in relevant departmental, organisational, and external meetings (i.e., College, Association and National/International bodies).
- Demonstrates engagement, teamwork, and collaboration.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively at all levels.
- Demonstrated understanding of, and commitment to, Clinical Governance.

Desirable but not essential:

- A sound understanding of information technology, including clinical systems.

Professional qualifications and registration requirements

- Current general registration as a Medical Practitioner with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).
- Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP), Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM), Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), or Joint Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine (JFICM).
- Post-graduate qualification in clinical toxicology (e.g., Diploma of Medical Toxicology, Cardiff University; or Certificate in Medical Toxicology, WikiTox), or actively acquiring such qualification.
- Relevant Australian visa/entry requirements if non-resident.

Quality, safety and risk – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Maintain a safe working environment for yourself, colleagues and members of the public by following organisational safety, quality and risk policies and guidelines.
- Escalate concerns regarding safety, quality and risk to the appropriate staff member, if unable to rectify yourself.
- Promote and participate in the evaluation and continuous improvement processes.
- Comply with the principles of person-centered care.
- Comply with requirements of National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and other relevant regulatory requirements.

Other conditions – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Adhere to Austin Health's core values: *our actions show we care, we bring our best, together we achieve, and we shape the future.*
- Comply with the Austin Health's Code of Conduct policy, as well as all other policies and procedures (as amended from time to time).



Our actions
show we care



We bring
our best



Together
we achieve



We shape
the future

- Comply with all Austin Health mandatory training and continuing professional development requirements.
- Provide proof of immunity to nominated vaccine preventable diseases in accordance with Austin Health's immunisation screening policy.
- Work across multiple sites as per work requirements and/or directed by management.

General information

Cultural safety

Austin Health is committed to cultural safety and health equity for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People. We recognise cultural safety as the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.

Equal Opportunity Employer

We celebrate, value, and include people of all backgrounds, genders, identities, cultures, bodies, and abilities. We welcome and support applications from talented people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, people with disability, neurodiverse people, LGBTQIA+ and people of all ages and cultures.

Austin Health is a child safe environment

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. Austin Health has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse and commits to protect children. We take allegations of abuse and neglect seriously and will make every effort to mitigate and respond to risk in line with hospital policy and procedures.



Our actions
show we care



We bring
our best



Together
we achieve



We shape
the future