

HEALTH WORKFORCE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Guidelines July 2020

For Victorian health professionals working in:

PRIVATE HEALTH

MMM 3 - 7

MEDICINE

ALLIED HEALTH

NURSING

ABORIGINAL HEALTH

1. Program Overview

The Health Workforce Scholarship Program (HSWP) is part of the Australian Government Department of Health's Health Workforce Program Guidelines.

The objective of the HSWP is to improve access to the services needed in rural and remote areas (defined as locations categorised as Modified Monash Model (MMM 3 -7) by supporting an increase in skills, capacity and/or scope of practice of privately employed health professionals in the fields of medicine, nursing and allied health.

Under the HSWP, health professionals working in rural and remote locations (MMM 3-7) are eligible to apply for scholarships and bursaries to pursue further education or attend training courses.

HSWP funding is directly related to training and upskilling health professionals who will provide services to rural and remote areas, and assessed on the relevance, value for money and the likelihood to meet identified primary healthcare needs of the community.

2. Funding Available

The Health Workforce Scholarship Program will provide either:

- **Scholarship Payment** – a payment up to \$10,000 per year for up to two years to support full or part-time studies (maximum of \$20,000 in total over two years) to attain the qualification of either a postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, master degree or PhD;

- **Bursary Payment** – a payment up to \$10,000 (maximum of \$10,000 in total in one financial year) for participants to put towards the cost of upskilling, training or course fees and training, and related expenses such as accommodation and travel where appropriate.

All course and bursary activity need to be completed by 30 June 2023.

The HSWP is managed nationally by the Rural Workforce Agency Network and locally in Victoria by the Rural Workforce Agency, Victoria Limited (RWAV).

2.1 Scholarship Funding Amount

Scholarship allocations will be determined by the relevance, value for money and the likelihood to meet identified primary healthcare needs of the community. Scholarships must be directly related to training and upskilling primary health professionals who will provide services to rural and remote areas.

Scholarships are single payments depending on the course that is being studied. Payments are awarded as a contribution towards the annual cost of the course.

Funding through the HSWP is via reimbursement. Grantees are required to pay for the activities and associated costs, and then apply to RWAV for reimbursement.

Postgraduate Qualification	Amount
Graduate Certificate	\$5,000
Graduate Diploma	\$8,000
Masters and PhD	\$10,000

If a course extends beyond one year, you must make a new application for the second year of funding.

2.2 Bursary Funding Amount

HWSP bursaries are payments up to \$10,000 that cover the cost of training or course fees and/or cover, or partially cover, training related expenses where appropriate.

Applicants can make more than one bursary application up to the total value of \$10,000 per financial year.

Bursaries must be directly related to training and upskilling health professionals who are providing, or who are planning to provide services (with evidence), to rural and remote areas (MMM 3-7) in Victoria.

Courses and activities do not need to be accredited, but will be assessed by the relevance, value for money and the likelihood to meet identified primary healthcare needs of the community. Bursaries can be used for courses such as:

- Short courses, workshops, conferences and seminars;
- Vocational education and training courses (e.g. Australian Skills Quality Authorisation (ASQA) recognised training packages);
- Training that meets the professional development requirements of the applicant's professional registration and/or association (including fellowship preparation courses);
- Recognised industry skills training and upskilling for individual health professionals;
- Resources for exam preparation.

Applicants will need to provide a tax invoice and receipt in order to be reimbursed for approved expenses.

Travel reimbursements for accommodation, airfares and kilometres will be payable according to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) rates considered reasonable for claims for domestic travel allowance expenses.

2.3 Expenses Not Covered by the HWSP

Scholarships and bursaries will not be available for:

- Activities and related costs occurring before your application is submitted;
- Overseas expenses;
- Purchasing of equipment (eg. IT items and medical instruments);
- Study funded by other sources; and/or
- Activities for which other Commonwealth, State, Territory or Local Government bodies have primary responsibility. This includes training for health professionals working solely in a public hospital;
- Any other expenses that are deemed unreasonable by RWAV.

3. Eligible Health Professionals

To be eligible for the HWSP, you will need to meet the following criteria:

- a. Working as a health professional in the fields of medicine, nursing or allied health (including Aboriginal Health Workers) who provide services full or part-time in the private or non-state government primary health sector (e.g. general practice, private allied health practitioner or a non-government agency); and
- b. Provide (or can demonstrate that you are about to provide) primary health services in rural Victoria (MMM 3-7 locations); and
- c. Propose to undertake study or upskilling activities that will meet identified health needs in your community; and
- d. Propose to continue working in a rural Victoria MMM 3-7 location after completing your course (as there may be a requirement to complete a return of service agreement of 12 months after the course is completed).

Any health professional employed solely by the Victorian Government is not eligible to apply.

LIST OF ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONS

- **General Practitioners**
- **Nurses**
- **Nurse Practitioners**
- **Allied Health Practitioners within the following disciplines:**
 - » Aboriginal Health Worker
 - » Dietetics and Nutrition
 - » Exercise Physiology
 - » Occupational Therapy
 - » Oral Health
 - » Osteopathy
 - » Orthotics and Prosthetics
 - » Physiotherapy
 - » Podiatry
 - » Psychology
 - » Speech Pathology
 - » Audiology
 - » Optometry
 - » Pharmacy
 - » Radiography
 - » Sonography
 - » Social Work

4. Application Process

All applications must be made through the MyRWAV portal accessed on the RWAV website prior to the educational activity taking place.

Applications will be assessed based on:

- a. The location of your employment (MMM 3-7)
- b. Applicant criteria
- c. Professional development activity
 - Planned increase in skill capacity and/or scope of clinical practice; and
 - Meeting one or more identified primary health workforce needs; and
 - Demonstration of primary health service provision to rural and remote community.

You may be asked to provide more information to support your application.

Submitting your application does not guarantee you will be offered a scholarship or bursary.

4.1 Information Required in Application

I. Proof of Employment in a letter that:

- Is on your employer's letterhead and from your immediate manager. If you are self-employed please provide your ABN and detail services provided, location/s, hours of service delivery;
- Is dated and signed within the last three months;
- States your name as the applicant, including evidence of a name change if the receipt is not in your professional registration name;
- States your position title;
- States your employment status (full-time/part-time hours);
- States the location of primary health services provided;
- States the length of your employment in your present position;

II. For Scholarships Only:

Official confirmation of enrolment or receipt of your university fees on official university documentation for the Australian postgraduate course specified in your application:

- This document must include your name, the name of the course, the year of study and a list of the subjects in which you are enrolled;
- Generic information about course subjects cannot be accepted for payment;
- A letter of offer is not acceptable;

If enrolment confirmation is unavailable at the time of application or you are waiting to receive notification of scholarship outcome prior to enrolling, you can upload details of the course you intend to enrol in and provide us with your enrolment confirmation when you receive it.

III. For Bursaries Only:

Provide evidence of payment of course fees, and details of travel and accommodation if required. Reimbursement will be assessed against ATO reasonable travel allowance standards for accommodation and travel only.

Invoice and receipt must include:

- Details of course/conference including dates and location;
- Name of attendee;
- GST;
- ABN of course/conference provider.

On-line cart receipts are not acceptable.

IV. A brief statement addressing the following questions:

- What is the health need that has been identified in your community?
- How will the local community benefit from your upskilling or training

V. Any other supporting documentation relevant to the application.

5. Approved Applications

If your application is successful, we will email you a letter of offer for either a scholarship or bursary. The offer will outline:

- a. The amount offered (not necessarily full amount of course costs);
- b. Documentation required for evidence before we can pay you the scholarship or bursary;
- c. Detail of whether your funding requires a return of service obligation;

We require all supporting documentation to enable payment.

Please note applications may take up to six (6) weeks to be assessed, approved and processed.

5.1 Grant Agreement

You will receive a Grant Agreement via email documenting the amount to be paid towards your studies.

You will need to accept the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement and return a signed copy.

If we do not receive your accepted contract by the nominated date, we will withdraw the offer of funding.

5.2 Payment Process

Funding through the HWSP is via reimbursement. Grantees are required to pay for the course and travel costs as outlined in the Grant Agreement and then apply to RWAV for reimbursement.

In situations where the Grantee is experiencing financial hardship, alternative funding arrangement can be discussed with the RWAV HWSP Program Manager.

5.3 Return of Service Obligations

A Return of Service Obligation (RoSO) is required for applications receiving a scholarship/bursary equal to the value of \$5,000 or more. In this case, the applicant must continue providing services in a MMM3-7 location for 12 months on completion of their course.

The RoSO will be clearly stated in your Grant Agreement with RWAV.

Applicants with RoSO will be case managed and supported during their period of service to ensure they are able to successfully complete their commitments.

Where a health professional accepts a scholarship or a bursary and does not complete the required service obligations as stated in their contract, RWAV will recover the funding.

Applicants who are unable to meet their RoSO due to exceptional circumstances are able to negotiate alternatives with their RWAV Case Manager. Exceptional circumstances are circumstances beyond the control of the applicant, which are not reasonably foreseen by the applicant at the time they entered into the contract and prevent the applicant from meeting their RoSO.

The RWAV Case Manager will however, seek to find alternatives to allow the applicant to meet their RoSO before a waiver will be considered. RWAV reserves the final right to hold the scholar to their RoSO and can recover the debt where a mutually agreeable outcome cannot be found.

5.4 Case Management

Successful applicants who have a Return of Service Obligation will be case managed by RWAV throughout their scholarship/bursary activity.

The case management framework may include (but is not limited to):

- A case manager being assigned and the grantees understanding of their obligations are reinforced (having been agreed at the time of acceptance of the funds);
- The case manager maintaining regular contact to track progress and determine how new skills are being utilised;
- Monitoring progress of postgraduate studies and/or training programs at key milestones;
- Provision of program information updates to the grantee;
- The case manager signing off on completion, collecting evaluation information and instigating debt collection if all other avenues for completing RoSo requirements have failed;

Details of the case management to be provided will be stated in your Grant Agreement with RWAV.

6. Changes to HWSP Activities

Written approval from RWAV is required to change the course/activity outlined in your Grant Agreement. RWAV will review any new activity against the identified health/workforce need, the original application and the reason for the change.

Changes to a proposed course/activity is at the discretion of RWAV and is usually only permitted where the training provider cancels the training or under exceptional circumstances. RWAV reserves the right to cancel the Grant Agreement if the original activity cannot be completed.

7. Termination of Grant Agreements

RWAV may terminate a Grant Agreement if it reasonably believes the Grantee:

- Transferred to a different activity without consent from RWAV;
- Has breached the Grant Agreement;
- Provided false or misleading information in their application;
- Fails to complete the activity;
- Fails to complete the RoSO.

8. Debt Recovery

Where a Grantee does not fulfil their Grant Agreement, RWAV will seek to recover the relevant monies. The debt recovery process will be as follows:

Each Grantee will be asked to sign a Grant Agreement, confirming that they have understood the terms and conditions of the agreement including the process for debt recovery should the grantee be unable to meet their obligations.

Each Grant Agreement will clearly state the grantee's requirements, including:

- The funded course/activity;
- The amount of funding available;
- The return of service obligation (if applicable); and
- The process for debt recovery if the above is not met.

The RWAV Case Manager will support the Grantee during the Grant Agreement period to address issues as/before they arise. This will minimise the need for debt recovery in most cases.

Where this fails, and the Grantee is unable to meet their obligations, the Case Manager will contact the Grantee to inform them that the debt recovery process will begin.

9. Complaints and Appeals

Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal the outcome of their application should initially discuss their situation with the RWAV HWSP Program Manger to determine if they may be eligible to access funding and/ or support from other sources to meet their upskilling or professional development needs. Please email HWSP@rwav.com.au.

If the matter is not resolved applicants can appeal to the RWAV Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to consider their case. The RWAV CEO is the final arbiter for any appeal on the HWSP.

10. Further Information

Any questions relating to the HWSP in Victoria should be directed to:

Grants administrator, RWAV

Email: HWSP@rwav.com.au Telephone: (03) 9349 7800

Information including these guidelines and application form can be found on the RWAV website www.rwav.com.au

