

HEALTH WORKFORCE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Guidelines 2022 - 2023

For Victorian health professionals working in:

PRIVATE HEALTH

MMM 3 - 7

MMM 1 - 7 for Aboriginal
Medical Services
or ACCOs

MEDICINE

ALLIED HEALTH

NURSING

ABORIGINAL HEALTH

1. Program Overview

Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) is a not-for-profit government-funded organisation improving healthcare for rural, regional and Aboriginal communities in Victoria.

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 clinical 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. Scholarship and/or bursary payments are also eligible for health professionals working in Aboriginal Medical Services or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in MMM 1-7 locations.

HSWP funding is directly related to clinical training and upskilling health professionals who will provide services to rural and remote areas (including health professionals working in Aboriginal Medical Services or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in MMM1-7, and is assessed on the relevance, value for money and the likelihood to meet identified primary healthcare needs of the community.

"Please note, this grant is for reimbursement of costs that you have paid for a post-graduate course leading to a post-graduate qualification or professional development course or conference. Where you elect to source a FEE-HELP loan (HECS/HELP) to pay for the cost of the course

then for the purposes of this grant, you have not paid for the course and therefore cannot be reimbursed. Should you wish to be reimbursed then you should not apply for a FEE-HELP loan for the course."

2. Funding Available

The Health Workforce Scholarship Program will provide either:

- **Scholarship Payment** – a payment up to \$10,000 per financial year for up to two years to support full or part-time clinical 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; or
- **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 clinical upskilling, training or course fees, and related expenses such as accommodation and travel where appropriate.

All course and bursary activity must be completed by 30 June 2023. Scholarships may be provided for courses that extend beyond 30 June 2023 but the study period must conclude no later than 30 June 2027.

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 clinical training and upskilling primary health professionals who will provide clinical 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.

Scholarship funds only cover study fees and do not cover any travel or accommodation costs relevant to undertaking the study.

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

Postgraduate Qualification	Maximum Amount
Graduate Certificate	\$5,000
Graduate Diploma	\$8,000
Masters or 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 clinical 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 clinical training and upskilling health professionals who are providing, or who are planning to provide clinical 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;
- Provisional Psychology supervision costs (must be completing either 4+2 or 5+1 internship program);
- Courses for exam preparation for medical practitioners only;
- Courses which are undertaken as "bundles" will be reimbursed one component at a time, on provision of a certificate of completion for each component.

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.

All applicants for either a scholarship or bursary will need to provide a tax invoice (not paid) as part of the application process and then provide a receipt (paid in full) in order to be reimbursed for approved 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 face-to-face expenses;
- Text books, equipment (IT, clinical or diagnostic), software, memberships, subscriptions, exam fees, or similar;
- Placement related costs (e.g. meals, accommodation, travel, wages lost, or similar);
- Taxi/Uber, etc. fares, transfers, parking fees or similar;
- Upskilling where a course completion certificate or proof of attendance is not issued;
- General supervision, mentoring, membership, or similar costs to maintain your professional registration;
- Study funded by other sources;
- 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;
- Training unrelated to the applicant's primary degree is not eligible (e.g. leadership, management, personal self-improvement and marketing courses);
- 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:

- Work as a health professional in the fields of medicine, nursing or allied health (including Aboriginal Health Workers) who provide clinical 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
- Provide (or can demonstrate that you are about to provide) primary health services in rural Victoria (MMM 3-7 locations) or an Aboriginal Medical Services or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation in MMM 1-7 locations; and
- Propose to undertake clinical study or upskilling activities that will meet identified health needs in your community; and
- Propose to continue working clinically in a rural Victoria MMM 3-7 location or Aboriginal Medical Services or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation in MMM 1-7 locations, 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).
- Provide details of your Medicare Provider number for your current work location (provider number) OR provide evidence that your employer is a private or non-government organisation (business ABN).

The following health professionals are not eligible to apply:

- Any health professional employed solely by the Victorian Government;
- Employees of organisations who solely provide NDIS services;
- Employees of hospices, unless the employee provides home based care;

LIST OF ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONS

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner
- Aboriginal Health Worker
- Audiologist
- Chinese Medicine Practitioner
- Chiropractor
- Dental Assistant
- Dental Hygienist
- Dental Practitioner
- Dental Prosthetist
- Dental Therapist
- Oral Health Therapist
- Diabetes Educator
- Dietitian
- Exercise Physiologist
- Medical Practitioner
- Medical Radiation Practitioner
- Midwife
- Nurse
- Nurse Practitioner
- Nutritionist
- Occupational Therapist
- Optometrist
- Orthoptist
- Orthotics and Prosthetics
- Osteopath
- Paramedic
- Pharmacist
- Physiotherapist
- Podiatrist
- Psychologist
- Social Worker
- Sonographer
- Speech Pathologist

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 or MMM 1-7 if working in an Aboriginal Medical Service or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation)
- 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:

As part of your application you will need to provide evidence of the anticipated costs (i.e. the cost does not need to be paid at the application stage) of course fees, travel and accommodation if required.

Once your grant has been approved, as part of your reimbursement claim you will need to provide a tax receipt (paid in full) with the following:

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

Reimbursement will be assessed against ATO reasonable travel allowance standards for accommodation and travel only.

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:

- The amount offered (not necessarily full amount of course costs);
- Documentation required for evidence before we can pay you the scholarship or bursary;
- Details 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 arrangements can be discussed with the RWAV Senior Manager, Health Workforce Development.

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, or for course/study (including online) longer than 6 months. In this case, the applicant must continue providing services in a MMM 3-7 location, or Aboriginal Medical Service or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation in MMM 1-7 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 may be 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 which prevent the applicant from meeting their RoSO.

The RWAV Case Manager will 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 Grantee's 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; or
- 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.

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 Senior Manager, Health Workforce Development 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

T: 03 9349 7800

E: HWSP@rwav.com.au

Information including these guidelines and application form can be found on the RWAV [website](#).

