

# Health Workforce Scholarship Program

## Applicant Guidelines

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[ntphn.org.au](http://ntphn.org.au)

23 Albatross Street Winnellie NT 0820  
GPO Box 2562 Darwin NT 0801  
t 08 8982 1000 f 08 8981 5899

National Remote Health Precinct  
5 Skinner Street Alice Springs NT 0870  
PO Box 1195 Alice Springs NT 0871  
t 08 8950 4800 f 08 8952 3536

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# Health Workforce Scholarship Program

## 1. PROGRAM SCOPE

The Health Workforce Scholarship Program (HWSP) is a national initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health. The Rural Workforce Agency Network deliver the HWSP, with Health Workforce Queensland as the Lead Agency. Rural Workforce Agency Northern Territory (RWA NT) administers the Program in the Northern Territory (NT).

The HWSP is intended to increase access to health services in rural and remote areas by supporting an increase in skills, capacity and/or scope of practice of rural health workforce.

A scholarship or bursary payment is available to eligible health professionals to undertake further study, training or upskilling. Health professionals in the fields of medicine, nursing or allied health, including Aboriginal health workers, who provide services, or intend to provide services within a rural or remote primary health care setting are eligible to apply. For the purpose of the HWSP, rural and remote locations are areas classified as Modified Monash Model (MMM) 3-7.

To enquire about the HWSP, contact:

e: [grants@ntphn.org.au](mailto:grants@ntphn.org.au)

t: 08 8982 1000

## 2. WHAT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE

The HWSP offers two types of funding:

### 2.1 Scholarships

Scholarships of up to \$10,000 per year for a maximum of two years (\$20,000 excluding GST total) are available to eligible health professionals to attain the qualification of either a postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, Master's Degree or PHD. Scholarships can be used to cover or partially cover the cost of postgraduate course fees and course-related expenses such as accommodation and transport where appropriate. Scholarships are open all year round and applications will be assessed by the grants panel on the last Wednesday of every month.

### 2.2 Bursaries

Bursary payments of up to \$10,000 are available to health professionals in the field of medicine, nursing or allied health, including Aboriginal health workers, seeking to undertake training and upskilling. Bursaries can be used to cover the cost of training course fees and training-related expenses such as accommodation and

transport where appropriate. Bursaries are open all year round and applications will be assessed by the grants panel on the last Wednesday of every month.

Bursaries can be used for the following:

- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) recognised training packages
- VET courses, Certificate IV and above, where the employer can support the required block release requirements
- training that meets the professional development policy of the applicant's professional association
- recognised industry skills training and upskilling for individual health professionals and/or teams (Note: individual team members will receive individually managed grants)
- short courses, workshops and seminars

### 2.3 Multiple Bursary Applications

Eligible health professionals can apply for more than one bursary as long as the total value does not exceed \$10,000 per financial year. Where an applicant has been approved for one initial bursary, the HWSP panel will not approve subsequent bursary applications until the prior activity is successfully completed and the reimbursement process has been completed. The HWSP panel will recommend subsequent bursary applications applied for in the same financial year on a case by case basis.

## 3. ELIGIBILITY

### 3.1 Who is eligible?

**Use the checklist below to determine whether you meet the eligibility requirements for the HWSP.**

YOU ARE:

- A health professional who is currently practicing as:
- an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health worker/practitioner (VET Certificate III minimum)
  - a dentist or dental hygienist
  - a general practitioner or other doctor working in general practice
  - a nurse or midwife
  - an allied health professional:
    - audiologist
    - chiropractor
    - counsellor
    - diabetes educator
    - dietitian
    - exercise physiologist
    - nutritionist
    - occupational therapist

- optometrist or orthoptist
- osteopath
- pathologist
- paramedic
- pharmacist
- physiotherapist
- podiatrist
- prosthetist
- psychologist
- radiographer
- social worker
- speech pathologist

Are an Australian Citizen or hold Australian residency.

Currently providing full or part-time services in the private or non-government primary health care sector (e.g. Aboriginal controlled community health service, private practice or not-for-profit organisation). Please note those providing full-time services will be prioritised.

Providing primary health care services in the NT in areas classified as MMM 3-7. The MMM classification model can be obtained on the Department of Health website: [Health Workforce Locator](#)

Intending to continue working in rural and remote NT (MMM 3-7) locations after completion of the course/training (return of service obligations of 12 months apply to scholarships and bursaries greater than \$5,000).

*Note:* Health professionals who have not yet obtained specialist registration, including GP registrars, are eligible to apply for the HWSP. Please see return of service obligations below.

### 3.2 Who and what is NOT eligible?

Health professionals employed directly by, or sub-contracted to the commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies are ineligible to apply.

The HWSP cannot be used for:

- retrospective costs
- conferences, symposia's, seminars or workshops that do not include formal training components
- undergraduate (Bachelor) degree programs
- expenses that include international travel and/or attendance at international continuing professional development (CPD) or education events
- study funded by other sources
- activities for which the commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibilities, this includes training and postgraduate studies for health professionals working in a public or private acute care setting.
- any placement costs associated with obtaining primary qualifications (HWSP is only designed to support health professionals who already hold a primary professional qualification).

## 4. HOW DO I APPLY?

Applicants are required to complete and submit the HWSP Bursary or Scholarship application form. The HWSP application forms can be found on our [website](#).

Applications should be emailed to [grants@ntphn.org.au](mailto:grants@ntphn.org.au).

### 4.1 What do I need to provide?

**Use the checklist below to ensure you provide the correct documentation when submitting your application.**

- Completed HWSP application form
- Evidence of employment in the primary health care sector in areas classified as MMM 3-7.
  - employment contract; or
  - an employment letter of offer.

Both the employment contract and letter of offer from the employer must:

- a. be on the employer's letterhead and from the HR manager or immediate manager
- b. be dated and signed
- c. state your name as the employee
- d. state your position title
- e. state your employment status (full time/part time)
- f. state the location of services provided
- g. state the employment start and end date (if not fulltime permanent employment)

- An up-to-date curriculum vitae.

## 5. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I APPLY?

### 5.1 Selection panel

RWA NT will establish a panel to facilitate the awarding of HWSP scholarships and bursaries. The selection panel will assess, shortlist, rank and select successful HWSP applicants based on the following criteria:

- consistency with HWSP program guidelines, aims, objectives and eligibility criteria
- relevance to NT rural and remote practice in the primary health care setting
- supporting service improvement, change management and best practice approaches to care and/or support service delivery
- cost-effectiveness and consistency with budget criteria
- consistency with RWA NT identified priority areas (Outlined below)

Applications will also be considered with regard to the pertinence of the topic or subject area, and its relation to the delivery of primary health care in areas classified as MMM 3-7 in the NT.

## Priority Area 1

- remote area nursing workforce
- Aboriginal health professionals
- allied health professionals
- pharmacy

## Priority Area 2

- all other health professionals

### 5.2 Panel Decision

Following the panel meeting, applicants will be advised in writing on the outcome of their application. Successful candidates will be advised:

- whether the grant is for a bursary or scholarship
- if any additional information is required to support the grant
- details of whether the grant requires a return of service obligation

### 5.3 Grant Agreement

Successful applicants will receive a grant agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the HWSP including grant amount.

Successful applicants will need to sign the grant agreement and return to RWA NT via email to [grants@ntphn.org.au](mailto:grants@ntphn.org.au)

If RWA NT does not receive the signed contract by the date nominated in the grant cover letter, RWA NT reserves the right to withdraw the offer for funding. A reminder email will be sent prior to the nominated date.

## 6. PAYMENT PROCESS

HWSP funding is paid to the grantee on a reimbursement basis. RWA NT will reimburse costs from the date that both parties signed the grant contract until 3 months following the educational activity completion date specified in the contract.

To make a claim, the grantee must complete a RWA NT Grant Reimbursement Form and provide a valid tax invoice with proof of payment or receipt to support the claimed expenditure.

## 7. RETURN OF SERVICE OBLIGATIONS

A Return of Service Obligation (ROSO) requires the grantee to continue providing services in a MMM 3-7 location for 12 months following the completion of their approved course. All Scholarships carry a ROSO of 12 months. Bursaries of \$5,000 (excluding GST) or greater also carry a ROSO and bursaries under \$5,000 may carry a ROSO at the panel's discretion.

The ROSO must commence within six months from the completion of the professional development activity supported through the scholarship or bursary. The contract will allow a timeframe of 18 months for the grantee to complete the 12 month ROSO. This is to allow flexibility for part time work at .5 FTE, personal leave, leave from work, or any unforeseen circumstances where a large portion of leave or absence from work needs to be taken.

When undertaking the ROSO the requirements are that:

- the grantee undertakes ROSO in the primary health care sector in the NT, in an area classified as MMM 3-7
- ROSO is undertaken in an eligible health service (i.e. Private practice, not-for-profit or Aboriginal Community Controlled health service)
- ROSO is completed at a minimum of .5 FTE for a total of 12 months within the 18 month period set out in the HWSP contract.

Failure to complete ROSO may result in action being taken to recover the total or a portion of the HWSP grant monies.

Health professionals who do not hold vocational recognition or specialist registration, including GP Registrars, are subject to the same ROSO as other grantees however, ROSO cannot commence until the applicant has achieved vocational recognition and/or specialist registration.

All scholarship and bursary recipients are required to complete the course of study for which they are awarded funds and provide proof of completion. Failure to complete the studies or training may result in action being taken to recover the total or a portion of the HWSP grant.

## 8. CASE MANAGEMENT

The Case Manager will be the primary contact at RWA NT for all HWSP grantees. Successful applicants will be made aware of whom their case manager is once awarded a scholarship or bursary.

The Case Manager will maintain regular contact with the grantee and is responsible for ensuring the grantee fully understands their obligations with respect to the HWSP, including ROSO.

Where required, the Case Manager will develop an agreed case management plan with the grantee to assist in monitoring progress against completion of the HWSP.

The case management framework will include, but not necessarily be limited to the following:

- support and access to any RWA NT resources that may be relevant to the grantees needs
- facilitate access to other support services required
- monitor progress of postgraduate studies and/or training programs at key milestones, e.g. at completion of units of competency, at the end of academic semesters etc.
- assisting the grantee with ROSO where applicable, including monitoring progress and to determine how new skills are being utilised
- meetings and/or regular contact with the grantee depending on distance to location



The Case Manager with the appropriate approvals is also responsible for ensuring sign off on completion of the grantees HWSP obligations as per the Grant Agreement, collecting evaluation information and/or instigating debt collection if all other avenues for completing requirements have failed.

## 9. CHANGES TO HWSP ACTIVITIES

Written approval from RWA NT is required to change the proposed HWSP activity in any way. In considering a response to a change request, RWA NT will consider identified geographical and priority areas, the relevance of the new activity to the applicant's original application, and any other matters considered relevant to the HWSP.

Deferment is at the discretion of RWA NT, and is usually only permitted where the training provider cancels the activity or training program or under exceptional circumstances.

## 10. COMPLAINTS, WAIVERS AND APPEALS

Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal the outcome of their application should initially explain their situation to the RWA NT HWSP Case Manager to determine if there are other avenues to access funding and/or support to meet their relocation and professional development needs.

If the matter is not resolved, applicants can appeal to the Executive Manager Health Workforce Branch. The Executive Manager Health Workforce Branch will review and consider the appeal and will be the final arbiter for any appeal on the HWSP. You will be formally advised the outcome of the appeal once the panel have come to a decision and have been provided with enough evidence and documentation to review the appeal.

Grantees who are unable to meet the Return of Service Obligation (ROSO) due to exceptional circumstances may be eligible to negotiate alternative ROSO pathways with the Case Manager. Exceptional circumstances means any circumstances beyond the control of the grantee, which were not reasonably foreseeable by the grantee at the time they entered into the Grant Agreement, and which prevent that grantee from meeting the 12 month employment period ROSO. The Case Manager will however seek to find alternatives to allow the grantee to complete their ROSO before a waiver will be considered. RWA NT reserves the final right to hold the grantee to their ROSO and can recover the grant monies paid where a mutually agreeable outcome cannot be found.

## 11. ARTICULATION WITH OTHER RWA NT GRANT PROGRAMS

Eligible health professionals in the NT can only access one RWA NT grant program at a time. Once the grantee has completed their grant requirements, they are then eligible to apply for other RWA NT workforce grants and programs.

## 12. DEFINITIONS

**Scholarship:** a grant of up to \$10,000 per year (\$20,000 for two years) to support health professionals to undertake full or part-time studies to attain the qualification of either a postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, Masters or PhD, and to support course-related expenses such as accommodation and transport, where appropriate.

**Postgraduate:** a level of qualification offered by education providers. Postgraduate qualifications are open to people who already hold undergraduate (Bachelor) degrees and/or, in many cases, people who can demonstrate equivalent experience in the workplace. You do not always need qualifications to be eligible for postgraduate studies. Many universities and training providers will recognise an applicant's career to date as prior learning and admit to postgraduate study on that basis.

**Bursary:** a grant of up to \$10,000 for development and upskilling to contribute towards the cost of training or course fees and training related expenses such as accommodation and transport, where appropriate.

**Primary health care:** health professionals working in the primary health care sector, providing health related and/or clinical services as first point of contact within a rural or remote community for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of ill-health and for ongoing management of chronic disease.

**Grant Agreement:** an agreement between RWA NT and the approved grantee, which sets forth the terms and conditions of the HWSP.

**Case management:** the process of mutual agreement between RWA NT and the grantee to ensure the right level of support and mutual responsibility is in place to ensure the grantee fulfils grant obligations.

**Return of Service Obligations (ROSO):** the commitment the grantee makes to the Australian Government when accepting public money by continuing to provide services for up to 12 months in a MMM 3-7 location.

**Exceptional circumstances:** any circumstances beyond the control of the grantee, which were not reasonably foreseeable by the grantee at the time they entered into the Grant Agreement and which prevent that grantee from meeting the 12 month employment period.