



### **What is the Bonded Medical Program?**

The Bonded Medical Program was established in 2001. There are two schemes; the Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS) and the Bonded Medical Places (BMP) Scheme. The MRBS Scheme closed to new participants after the 2015 academic year.

The Bonded Medical Program provides students a Commonwealth supported medical place in a medical course at an Australian university in return for a commitment to work in regional, rural and remote areas for a specified period.

### **What are the new arrangements?**

New arrangements will create a modern, flexible administrative system with greater capacity to support bonded students and doctors to work and stay in regional, rural and remote areas.

New arrangements will be available to participants of the Bonded Medical Program from 1 January 2020.

A new IT system, the Bonded Return of Service System (BRoSS) will support the new arrangements. BRoSS will support participants through each phase of their medical career until all return of service obligations (RoSO) are completed. It will be easy to use and have in-built guidance to support users.

### **Key features of the new MRBS Scheme Return of Service Obligations (RoSO)**

- a 3 year RoSO (reduction from 6 years)
- the 3 year RoSO can be reduced by 1:1 credit for all RoSO worked under the previous arrangements.
- Eligible locations for bonded participants are classified using any of the following:
  - Modified Monash Model 2-7
  - Distribution Priority areas (DPA) for General Practitioners
  - Outer Metropolitan District of Workforce Shortage for all other specialities
- RoSO may be non-continuous, full or part-time or fly in/fly out work
- fellowship (medical specialisation) is not essential.

#### **Timeframes**

- completion of all RoSO within 18 years from completion of the medical course
- 18 months RoSO can be worked pre-fellowship
- if fellowship is not attained by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> year after completion of the medical course, all RoSO must be completed within the remaining 6 years of the 18 year timeframe.

#### **Administration**

- clear processes for consideration of exceptional circumstance to extend the time frame to complete RoSO for medical reasons
- clearer consistent management of withdrawals
- breach is triggered by a failure to:

- complete the medical course within university requirements and timeframe
- complete all RoSO obligations within 18 years of completing the medical course
- breach will result in a 6 year Medicare ban (reduced from 12 years).

#### **Support**

- access to BRoSS web portal and mobile phone application to log on and update personal details and plan, track and self-manage RoSO
- BRoSS will directly link participants with the Rural Workforce Agency in their state/territory to receive support through each phase of the program.

### **Eligibility to opt in**

MRBS Scheme scholars will be eligible to opt in any time after receipt of their final MRBS scholarship payment. All other MRBS Scheme participants are eligible to opt in from 1 January 2020.

From 1 January 2020 MRBS Scheme participants will be able to email the Department of Health (the department) advising they would like to opt in.

The department will review the participant's record to check all current contract obligations are up to date.

### **Considerations for current participants**

The decision to opt in will depend on the benefits the new MRBS Scheme offer the participant and what phase or stage they are at under existing arrangement.

The opt in period is open ended. All participants are encouraged to keep their current contractual obligations up to date in preparation for opt in. Participants who choose not to opt in keep their existing contract and obligations.

### **What if my obligations under my current contract are not up to date?**

Please contact the MRBS team to talk through the options available to you. This is recommended regardless of whether you choose to opt in to the reformed MRBS Scheme or stay on your existing contract.

**Email:** [MRBSScholarships@health.gov.au](mailto:MRBSScholarships@health.gov.au)

**MRBS Information Phone Line:** 1800 248 720  
(Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5pm AEST)

### **Further information**

For more information on the new arrangements for the Bonded Medical Program please see the Department of Health website:

<http://www.health.gov.au/new-arrangements-bonded-medical-program>.



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