Health Workforce Queensland

Health Workforce Scholarship Program

Applicant Guidelines

September 2026

1. Introduction

> The Health Workforce Scholarship Program (HWSP) provides scholarships and bursaries to help qualified health professionals in remote and rural Australia retain and enhance their skills, capacity and scope of practice.

The HWSP is an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care's Health Workforce and Rural Access Program, administered in Queensland by Health Workforce Queensland.

The HWSP is available to qualified medical, nursing, midwifery, allied health, dental and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals providing primary health care in remote and rural Queensland in private practice, a non-government or not-for-profit organisation within a MM 3-7 location, or an Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) in a MM 1-7 location.

The objective of the HWSP is to improve access to the services needed in remote and rural areas by supporting an increase in skills, capacity and/or scope of practice of privately employed health professionals in order to target services to remote and rural areas where they are most needed.

The Health Workforce Needs Assessment (HWNA) is used to prioritise the workforce needs of communities within Queensland, the HWNA inform the priorities and allocation of scholarships and bursaries within Queensland.

Therefore, payments under the HWSP will be:

- Determined in response to identified local needs for health professionals who provide primary healthcare services to remote and rural areas;
- Justifiable against the perceived workforce benefit of the training.

The Health Workforce Scholarship Program will provide either:

Scholarship Payments:
Payments **up to $10,000** per **12-month period** for **up to 24 months** to support participants to undertake 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 or PhD.

Bursary Payments:
Payments **up to $10,000** per **12-month period** for participants to put toward the cost of upskilling, training or course fees and training-related expenses such as accommodation and travel, where appropriate.

Applicants can apply for multiple Scholarships and Bursaries for as long as the program continues, and the applicant remains eligible. Eligible applicants can apply for up to $10,000 in a 12-month period (combined between Scholarship and Bursary applications). Funding resets each year on the same date as your first approved application.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Who is Eligible?

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

You are:

- A health professional who has obtained their primary professional qualification (minimum Bachelor unless otherwise noted below), holds professional registration (AHPRA or equivalent) and is working in the role as:
  - An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker/Practitioner (minimum Certificate 4 in Primary Health Care); or
  - An Allied Health Professional, including but not limited to:
    - Audiologists
    - Chiropractors
    - Dietitians
    - Exercise physiologists
    - Medical radiation practitioners
    - Occupational therapists
    - Optometrists
    - Orthoptists
    - Orthotists/prosthetists
    - Osteopaths
    - Pharmacists
    - Physiotherapists
    - Podiatrists
    - Psychologists
    - Social workers
    - Sonographers
    - Speech pathologists
  - A Dentist; or
  - A Medical Practitioner; or
  - A Nurse or Midwife (minimum Diploma)
- Providing primary health care services to patients at a minimum 0.2FTE (equivalent to one day per week on average).
- Providing (or can demonstrate through a service or employment agreement that you are about to provide) primary health care services in rural Queensland (MM 3-7 locations). Or, an eligible health professional working in an Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) in MM 1-7 locations. Refer to the Health Workforce Locator.
- Proposing to undertake study or upskilling activities that will fill the established, high priority gaps in primary healthcare service provision within your community, as identified in the HWNA.
- Proposing to continue working for an eligible employer in a rural Queensland MM 3-7 (or MM 1-7 if you are employed by a AMS or ACCHS) location for the course duration and after completing your course. If the funding provided is greater than $5,000 for one course and/or course length is greater than 6 months you will be required to complete a return of service obligation (ROSO) for 12 months after the completion of the course with your eligible employer as per your original approval.

Courses and activities do not need to be accredited but will be assessed by Health Workforce Queensland for relevance, value for money and the likelihood of meeting the identified learning and community need based on Health Workforce Queensland's Health Workforce Needs Assessment.

2.2 Who and What is Not Eligible?

Who is Not Eligible?

Any health professional that is:

- Employed soley through the Federal, State or Local Government (e.g. employed in a public hospital, TAFE, university).
- Does not maintain regular patient contact hours of at least 0.2FTE (equivalent to one day per week on average).
- Solely working in a role providing management, leadership, teaching, supervision, aged/palliative care, NDIS or similar as this work is not considered providing primary health care to patients.

Scholarships or Bursaries Cannot be Used For:

- Upskilling specifically undertaken to gain new employment which is not advised on your application and not related to your current role.
- Retrospective costs (e.g. courses already completed before you apply).
- Overseas face-to-face courses.
- Study funded by other sources (e.g. your employer, other grants/funding providers).
- Textbooks, equipment, software, memberships, subscriptions, exam fees or similar.
- Fellowship supervision and exam related costs (including exam preparation courses).
- General supervision, mentoring, membership, or similar costs to maintain your professional registration.
- Meals, taxi, car hire, ride share, parking fees or similar expenses.
- Placement related costs (eg. meals and wages lost or similar).
- Upskilling where a course completion certificate or proof of attendance is not issued.

3. What Funding is Available?

The HWSP offers two types of funding:

- **Scholarship:** Funding is approved on an upfront basis toward the cost of completing a postgraduate course leading to a postgraduate qualification.
- **Bursary:** Funding is either approved as reimbursement or upfront for completing a short course, workshop, or attending a conference.

If you are unsure which funding you are eligible for, please select the option you believe is correct when completing your application and the Scholarship Program team will review your choice.

Applicants can apply for multiple Scholarships and Bursaries for as long as the program continues and the applicant remains eligible. Eligible applicants can apply for up to $10,000 in a 12-month period per applicant, and your funding year begins on the date of your first approved course.

3.1 Scholarship Funding Amount

> Scholarships of up to $10,000 per year can be provided for up to two years study, to attain a postgraduate qualification of either a postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, Master or PhD.

Scholarship values will be determined against the perceived workforce benefit of the training. Scholarships must be directly related to training and upskilling health professionals who are providing or planning (with evidence) to provide primary healthcare services to remote and rural areas.

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

3.2 Bursary Funding Amount

> 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 within a 12-month period.

Bursaries will be determined against the perceived workforce benefit of the training. Bursaries must be directly related to training and upskilling health professionals who are providing or planning (with evidence) to provide primary healthcare services to remote and rural areas. Bursaries can be used for courses such as:

- Online or face-to-face: short courses, workshops, conferences and seminars;
- Vocational Education and Training courses;
- Recognised industry skills training and upskilling for individual health professionals; and/or
- Provisional Psychology supervision costs (must be completing either 4+2 or 5+1 internship program).

Travel related reimbursements limits are as follows:

- Accommodation up to $250 per night (reasonable dates considered) for one bedroom accommodation and;
- Flight costs (must be considered reasonable - eg. economy) or;
- Private car mileage up to $500 per application.
- If you must travel more than 100km to reach the airport you may claim both flights and travel mileage - otherwise you may only claim flights OR travel mileage.

Applicants will need to provide a tax invoice and receipt to be reimbursed for your approved expenses (up to the approved limits only). If rounds are oversubscribed priority may be given to course costs and therefore, travel related expenses may be funded at a reduced amount.

4. How Do I Apply?

> Applications for the Health Workforce Scholarship Program are submitted through rounds throughout the year as listed on the website. Please click here to view upcoming round details on the Health Workforce Queensland website.

You can only submit your application during an open round.

The application must meet the requirements for the round (including that the course start date falls within the dates identified for the round) or it will be declined without review.

If your application is approved and your course is delayed to a new round or cancelled, your application will be closed and you will need to reapply.

Where rounds are under-subscribed, or where new priorities emerge, Health Workforce Queensland may accept applications throughout the year that will meet identified priorities.

Please note: Application limits apply per round, as listed on the website. Any applications received over this limit will be rejected.

Applications will be assessed based on:

- The location of your employment and service provided;
- Applicant criteria;
- Proposed professional development activity;
- Planned increase in skill, capacity and/or scope of clinical practice;
- Meeting one or more identified primary health workforce needs; and
- Demonstration of primary healthcare service provision to a remote or rural community.
- Prioritisation of applications is based on several criteria, including but not limited to: working hours, rurality, priority locations, professions (as outlined in our Health Workforce Needs Assessment), and employment within Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

Please note that submitting an application does not mean you will be offered a scholarship or bursary.

5. What Does the Applicant Process Entail?

5.1 Apply online via the Self-Service Portal

- You will be required to provide your employment, qualification and proposed professional development activity information.
- Please do not forward any documentation with your application. If it is conditionally approved, we will request the relevant documentation from you.
- If you work in an ineligible location and provide outreach services to an eligible location, we will request documentation detailing the outreach services provided.
- Fully completed applications will be reviewed as per the outcome date specified under the *Upcoming Application Rounds* section on Page 6 of this document.
- Unsuccessful applications will receive email notification of Application Not Approved.

5.2 If your application is reviewed and is conditionally approved, the following steps will occur:

- Successful applications will receive an email indicating your application has been *Approved*. To progress your application, you will need to upload documents as per your approval email.
- Once required documents have been uploaded to the Self-Service Portal, they will be reviewed within 30 business days.
- If all documents are reviewed and approved, a Payment Agreement will be issued within 3 business days.
- If documents are incorrect or missing information you will be notified by email with what documents need to be provided. Once required documents are uploaded they will be reviewed within 30 business days.
- If you do not provide the required documents by the due date outlined in your approval email, your application will be closed and funding unassigned from your application.

5.3 You will receive a Payment Agreement via email, which will document the funding to be paid towards your professional upskilling activity and ROSO requirements, where applicable.

- You will need to accept the terms and conditions of the Payment Agreement by signing the Agreement and uploading to the Self-Service Portal.

5.4 For scholarship and upfront bursary recipients, you are required to upload receipts to the Self-Service Portal to reconcile the funding provided.

5.5 All funding recipients are to upload documentation to Self-Service Portal, indicating the successful completion of the professional development activity to complete the application.

Please note that you have 30 days AFTER your course end date to upload ALL documents needed to complete the application. If not, REPAYMENT will be REQUIRED.

If your application has any changes, such as course dates, employment etc, please email scholarships@healthworkforce.com.au immediately. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that your request will be approved as any changes are reviewed as a new application and pending program funding availability and guideline requirements.

6. Return of Service Obligations

> Return of Service Obligation (ROSO) will be applied on applications over $5,000 or for course/study longer than 6 months.

This includes cases where an applicant applies for course costs on one application and then submits an application for each face-to-face workshop, they attend to complete this course. If these applications go over $5000 or 6 months collectively, a ROSO Obligation will apply. Please note that any one course can only be approved for a maximum 2-year period (even if over multiple applications).

A ROSO requires an applicant to continue providing services with an eligible employer for 12 months on completion of the course and must be completed in a MM 3-7 location or Aboriginal Medical Service or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service in MM 1-7 locations.

The ROSO will be clearly stated in your Payment Agreement with Health Workforce Queensland. Where a health professional accepts a scholarship or a bursary and does not complete the required service obligations as stated in their Payment Agreement, Health Workforce Queensland will recover the funding.

Applicants who are unable to meet their ROSO due to exceptional circumstances are able to negotiate alternatives with their Health Workforce Queensland Scholarships Program Coordinator. Exceptional circumstances means any circumstances beyond the control of the applicant, which were not reasonably foreseeable by the applicant at the time they entered into the Payment Agreement and which prevent that applicant from meeting their ROSO.

The Health Workforce Queensland Scholarships Program Coordinator will, however, seek to find alternatives to allow the applicant to meet their ROSO before a waiver will be considered. Health Workforce Queensland reserves the final right to hold the applicant to their ROSO and can recover the debt where a mutually agreeable outcome cannot be found.

7. Case Management

> Successful applicants will be case managed by Health Workforce Queensland Scholarships Program Coordinator throughout their scholarship/bursary activity.

8. Complaints, Waivers and Appeals

> Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal the outcome of their application should initially explain their situation to Health Workforce Queensland's Training and Events Team Leader to determine if there are other avenues to access funding and/or support to meet their upskilling or professional development needs.

Please email **scholarships@healthworkforce.com.au**

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

9. Definitions

Scholarship:
Payments up to $10,000 per 12-month period for up to 24 months to support participants to undertake full or part-time studies (maximum of $20,000 in total over a 24-month period) to attain the qualification of either a postgraduate Certificate, postgraduate Diploma, Master or PhD.

Bursary:
Payments up to $10,000 within a 12-month period for participants for development and upskilling to contribute toward the cost of training or course fees and training related expenses such as accommodation and transport, where appropriate.

Health Workforce Needs Assessment (HWNA):
Aggregates evidence themed around primary healthcare workforce access, quality and sustainability, and identifies issues and trends for these priority areas.

Reimbursement:
Applications approved for reimbursement funding are funded when invoice/s and receipt/s have been received and approved from the applicant.

Upfront:
Applications approved for upfront funding are funded when invoice/s have been received and approved from the applicant. Applicants are required to provide receipt/s to reconcile the funding provided.

Retrospective Costs:
Costs incurred prior to submitting an application to the Scholarships Program. Courses that have been completed prior to submitting an application are retrospective and not eligible for funding. For courses that have started (but not completed), we can assess the costs to be incurred from the application submission date for funding but not the costs incurred prior as they are retrospective costs.

Case Management:
The process of mutual engagement between Health Workforce Queensland and the applicant to ensure the right level of support and mutual responsibility is in place for a successful outcome.

Payment Agreement:
The contract between the funding recipient and Health Workforce Queensland, which documents the amount to be paid towards your professional development activity and Return of Service Obligations, if applicable to your application.

Return of Service Obligation (ROSO):
Refers to the commitment a participant makes to the Australian Government when accepting public money to build their capacity to provide services. ROSO will only be associated with all scholarships and bursary scholarship support over $5,000 and or/training lengths of six months or more. The ROSO will not exceed 12 months and must be completed in an equivalent MM3-7 or higher or in an AMS/ACCHS.

Exceptional Circumstances:
Any circumstance/s beyond the control of the participant, which were not reasonably foreseeable by that participant at the time they entered into the contract and which prevent that participant from meeting their ROSO.

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 to study for a postgraduate Certificate, Diploma or Master. Many universities and training organisations will recognise your career to date as prior learning and admit you to postgraduate study on that basis.