



ACT Health

Nursing & Midwifery Post Graduate Scholarship Scheme

**Revised Scholarship Guidelines
2019**

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Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Scheme
Post Graduate Programs of Study

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

ACT Health promotes a learning culture through the provision of the Nursing & Midwifery Scholarship Scheme that enhances the ongoing professional development and skill levels of staff across the organisation.

Scholarships for postgraduate tuition fees have been offered since November 2000 to support clinical, education, research and leadership & management scopes of practice.

Applications for scholarship are invited twice each year from nurses and midwives who are:

- intending to enroll in new postgraduate educational programs
- re-enrolling to continue study programs previously awarded a scholarship.

The Nursing and Midwifery Office manage all aspects of the ACT Health Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Scheme on behalf of the ACT Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer.

Purpose of scholarship

The ACT Health scholarships provide financial assistance to nurses & midwives undertaking postgraduate programs of study to support their ongoing professional education and skill development that also encourages retention of skilled staff within the ACT public health system.

Identified areas of need

Applications for scholarships in areas of clinical, education, leadership, management or research practice are encouraged to apply.

The allocation of scholarships will be prioritised on areas of identified need as determined by ACT Health. These areas of need are subject to change and may differ from year to year.

Courses that do not lead to a qualification directly related to an applicant's scope of practice will not be supported.

New exclusion period

A two year scholarship exclusion period is now in place for staff who have received ACT Health Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship leading to an award level program of study at graduate certificate (AQF level 7), graduate diploma (AQF level 7), and master's degree levels (AQF level 8).

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Eligibility

To be eligible for an ACT Health Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship, applicants will:

- i. be enrolled or registered with the Nursing & Midwifery Board Australia and hold an unconditional practising certificate
- ii. be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia
- iii. be currently employed by ACT Health in a permanent position prior to scholarship application
- iv. be employed by ACT Health for a minimum period of one year at full-time equivalence
- v. hold a minimum of one year full-time equivalent post graduate clinical experience, not including the transition to practice year
- vi. hold a formal offer of a place in a postgraduate course from an education provider where the focus of study is on clinical, educational, leadership, management or research practice that directly relates to the applicant's scope of practice
- vii. declare if funding from another source has been received for the postgraduate program of study
- viii. declare if funding support for another program of study has been previously received from the ACT Health Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Scheme
- ix. submit recommendations supporting the application from a direct line supervisor and the Director of Nursing &/or Midwifery.

Scope for studies to be undertaken at institutions outside of the ACT

The ACT Health Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Scheme does not preclude studies being undertaken through education providers in other Australian States and Territories. Scholarships for international study are not supported through this Scheme.

Value

The value of each Scholarship will be dependent upon:

- educational and skill development requirements of staff in areas of prioritised need
- the award level of the program of study at graduate certificate (AQF level 7), graduate diploma (AQF level 7), and master's degree levels (AQF level 8)
- tuition fees for the program of study.

Scholarships are awarded for a period of up to one calendar year only and do not carry over to following years. If the proposed course of study will exceed one calendar year, applicants are required to re-apply for a continuing scholarship.

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ACT Health reserves all rights and has complete discretion to determine distribution of funds awarded to successful applicants. The availability of funding is dependent upon funding allocation that may vary from year to year.

Scholarship funding covers tuition fees only. Associated costs including course administration fees, student union, textbooks and the purchase of equipment are not funded by the Scheme.

Reimbursement of tuition fees will be paid in accordance with the following fee scale.

If tuition fees are:

- <\$1000.00, scholarship recipients will be reimbursed 100% of the fees
- >\$1001.00 and <\$3000.00, scholarship recipients will be reimbursed 75% of the fees
- >\$3001.00, scholarship recipients will be reimbursed 50% of the fees.

Applications

Applications must be lodged by the due date for submission. Late applications will not be considered.

Applicants are required to select the relevant application form from the following options:

- I. **Application Form for NEW Post Postgraduate Program of Study:** for nurses and midwives who are:
 - commencing new programs of study
 - continuing study not previously awarded a scholarship.

[Refer to criteria for scholarship application at ATTACHMENT 1].
- II. **Application Form for CONTINUING Post Postgraduate Program of Study:** for nurses and midwives who are seeking continuing scholarship support for their postgraduate program of study.

Applicants for continuing post postgraduate programs of study in the same courses will complete an abridged application form. *[Refer to criteria for scholarship application at ATTACHMENT 2].*

ACT Health reserves the right not to assess applications that are:

- incomplete
- lodged after the advertised deadline for submission of applications.

Acknowledgement of receipt of application

All scholarship applications will be acknowledged via email by the Nursing and Midwifery Office at the time of submission.

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Assessment of application

Each application will be assessed on merit by a Nursing & Midwifery Scholarships Panel whose membership will comprise senior nursing and midwifery representatives from across ACT Health.

The principle function of the Panel is to review all applications for scholarship based upon responses to the selection criteria, supervisor recommendations and DON/M endorsements. Ensuring a transparent, merit-based, fair and equitable process for all applicants is a key responsibility and commitment of ACT Health and the Review Panel.

Notification of panel decision

Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their scholarship submission upon completion of the panel review process.

Appeal mechanism

Should an applicant be dissatisfied with the decision of the panel, an appeal mechanism has been established to review applications on an individual basis.

Requests for review of panel decisions must:

- be provided within eight (8) weeks of receipt of notification of a panel decision
- be in writing
- identify the basis of the appeal
- be forwarded to: The ACT Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer
 ACT Health
 2-6 Bowes Place Phillip ACT 2606
 PO Box 11 | Woden | ACT | 2606

Further to the appeal process, the decision of the ACT Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer is final.

Agreement and reimbursements

All successful applicants will receive an ACT Health Nursing & Midwifery Post Graduate Scholarship Scheme Agreement (the Agreement). Applicants are required to sign the Agreement, have their signature witnessed and return it to the Nursing & Midwifery Office by the due date specified in the letter of offer.

Scholarship recipients are advised that it is an ACT Health requirement that the Agreement is returned by the due date. If the Agreement is not returned, it will be assumed that the recipient does not wish to accept the scholarship offered.

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Scholarship payments will be administered as a reimbursement for tuition fees upon submission of results. To claim reimbursement, the following information is to be provided to the Nursing and Midwifery Office at the end of each teaching period, including:

- itemised results for the relevant teaching period from the education provider
- itemised fee invoice or receipt for payment of tuition fees for the relevant period
- Commonwealth Assistance Notice for Australian citizens
- a current payslip from ACT Health or Calvary Public Hospital Bruce that provides confirmation of current postal address
- checklist confirming submission of required documentation, address and banking details.

Reimbursement of fees is provided through electronic funds transfer directly into scholarship recipients nominated bank accounts. Recipients will be required to provide relevant banking details including, the BSB number, account number and the account name of the recipient.

Please note:

ACT Health will assume scholarship recipient do not wish to be reimbursed and contracts will be terminated where the above required documentation is not returned within six (6) weeks of completion of each teaching period.

Please phone or email the Nursing & Midwifery Office if your results have not been received in this time.

Scholarship recipients are advised that money not used for the particular activity for which it was sponsored, must be returned to ACT Health.

Extension and suspension of the scholarship

All requests for variation to the Scholarship Agreement should be notified in writing to the Nursing and Midwifery Office.

If the course of study is not completed within the agreed period, a request is to be made in writing for an extension of time for submission of results. An extension of time does not automatically include additional Scholarship funding.

Illness which reduces the effective tenure of the Scholarship will not automatically entitle the recipient to an extension of the original period of the Scholarship. ACT Health may on application, agree to a scholarship extension if deemed appropriate.

A scholarship may be suspended at any time at the recipient's request.

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Termination of scholarship

An ACT Health Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship may be terminated at any time:

- at the recipient's request
- if in the opinion of ACT Health the recipients performance is unsatisfactory
- if the recipient terminates enrolment or fails to observe the conditions of the Scholarship Agreement.

Lapse of scholarship

A scholarship will be deemed to have lapsed:

- upon completion of the course of study
 - when all money has been paid according to the agreed amount as stated on the Nursing & Midwifery Post Registration Scholarship Scheme: Agreement
- or**
- within 6 weeks of completion of each semester of study when no request for reimbursement of fees has been received.

Scholarship confirmation

It is expected that scholarship recipients will acknowledge ACT Health in all reports, publications and conference papers prepared or delivered by the recipient in connection with the program of study. Recipients will also inform the Nursing & Midwifery Office of the acknowledgment.

Scholarship recipients who complete research components as part of their course of study are also encouraged to engage with Synergy: the Research Centre for Nursing & Midwifery Practice to showcase their achievements in research and their contribution to evidence-based practice across the ACT.

Income tax requirements relating to scholarships

Reimbursements received from some scholarship categories may be subject to taxation. It is recommended that all scholarship recipients obtain advice from a registered accountant or from the Australian Taxation Office.

Fringe benefit tax

ACT Health incurs liability for Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) on the Nursing & Midwifery Post Graduate Scholarship Scheme. To reduce the amount of this liability and maximise the amount of funds available for scholarships, ACT Health provide the Australian Tax Office with documentation from each scholarship recipient covering the nature and the purpose of the expense incurred.

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All scholarship recipients will be sent a *Fringe Benefit Declaration* form to complete and return that will cover the period from 1st April to 31st March of each year. Completion of the form **will not** result in personal financial liability.

Commonwealth HECS-HELP and FEE-HELP schemes

Scholarship recipients who enrol in undergraduate units or full fee paying postgraduate units may be eligible for Commonwealth assistance through HECS-HELP, or FEE-HELP arrangements.

HECS-HELP is a loan scheme for eligible students enrolled in Commonwealth supported places. Further information on HECS-HELP study support can be accessed through the link: <http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-paying-my-fees/hecs-help/pages/hecs-help-welcome>

FEE-HELP is a loan scheme that assist eligible fee paying students pay all or part of their tuition fees. Further information on FEE-HELP study support can be accessed through the link: <http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-paying-my-fees/fee-help/pages/fee-help-welcome>

Other sources of funding

Applicants may wish to also explore alternative sources of funding available from other organisations including:

- professional organisations
- tertiary institutions.

ACT Health also provides a Studies Assistance Scheme. Further information and application forms are available through the Staff Development Unit

<http://healthhub.act.gov.au/employment-resources/staff-development/support-further-study>

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Criteria for NEW Scholarship Application

Applicants will be required to address a number of criteria in the online application form and attach the following series of requisite documents in support of the submission.

Criterion 1	Applicants details
Criterion 2	Registration with the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia
Criterion 3	Employment details
Criterion 4	Professional education & employment history
Criterion 5	Professional practice commitment
Criterion 6	Course details
Criterion 7	Scholarship assistance sought
Criterion 8	Applicant's declaration
Criterion 9	Applicants Checklist
Supporting documentation: <i>to be uploaded with application</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NMBA unconditional registration certificate: <i>current</i> ▪ Current payslip ▪ Resume (2 pages) ▪ Supervisor's recommendation ▪ Director of Nursing &/or Midwifery endorsement ▪ Letter of offer from the education provider ▪ Fee schedule from the education provider ▪ Copy of fixed term contract (<i>if applicable</i>) ▪ Visa Grant Notice(<i>if a permanent resident of Australia</i>)

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Criteria for CONTINUING Scholarship Application

Applicants will be required to address a number of criteria in the online application form and attach the following series of requisite documents in support of the submission.

Criterion 1	Applicants details
Criterion 2	Registration with the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia
Criterion 3	Employment details
Criterion 4	Professional practice commitment
Criterion 5	Course details
Criterion 6	Scholarship assistance sought
Criterion 7	Applicant's declaration
Criterion 8	Applicants Checklist
Supporting documentation: <i>to be uploaded with application</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NMBA unconditional practicing certificate: <i>current</i> ▪ Current payslip ▪ Resume (<i>2 pages</i>) ▪ Supervisor's recommendation ▪ Director of Nursing &/or Midwifery recommendation ▪ Fee schedule from the education provider ▪ Copy of fixed term contract (<i>if applicable</i>) ▪ Visa Grant Notice(<i>if a permanent resident of Australia</i>)