

Research Internship Programme

GUIDELINES 2023

Introduction

The Office of the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, ACT Health Directorate promotes a culture of innovation, learning and development through the provision of various scholarships and programmes made available to midwives and nurses across the ACT public health sector. These programmes have been developed to support the ongoing commitment and investment in continual professional development of all nurses and midwives, to enhance their level of skill and knowledge relevant to their areas of practice.

The Research Internship Programme is available to Registered Nurses and Midwives levels 1 and 2, including Enrolled Nurses, and provides successful candidates the opportunity to complete the Graduate Certificate in Health Research course part-time with a paid secondment component for 12 months. Successful candidates will be provided with mentorship and support from the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre's Clinical Chairs in Midwifery, Nursing and Mental Health Nursing.

Aims and Outcomes

The aims of the Research Internship Programme are:

- To facilitate supervised midwifery and nursing led research within the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD), Canberra Health Services (CHS) and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (CPHB),
- To increase the capacity of the midwifery and nursing workforce in research and related skills (e.g., research appraisal and project management),
- To enhance the professional development of registered midwives and nurses in the ACTHD, CHS and CPHB, and
- To promote a culture of inquiry and practice informed by evidence.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the Research Internship Programme, applicants must:

- Be permanently employed as a Registered Nurse or Midwife level 1 or 2, including Enrolled Nurse, (with a practicing registration) within the ACTHD, CHS or CPHB,
- Be willing and available to be seconded to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre 0.5FTE (weekdays) for 12 months, with management approval,
- Be supported by their Director of Nursing/Midwifery (DON/M), and
- Be willing to enrol in and committed to completing the Graduate Certificate in Health Research with the University of Canberra on a part-time basis for 12 months.

Graduate Certificate in Health Research with University of Canberra

The Graduate Certificate in Health Research is a 12-credit point (CP) course that aims to enhance the research skills of participants, providing them with a pathway to higher degrees by research if desired.

Successful internship recipients will undertake the Graduate Certificate in Health Research course on a part-time basis enrolling into 6 CP per semester to complete the course within 12 months.

The study pattern is as follows:

Semester 1

- Epidemiology and Principles of Research PG (9594) - 3 CP
- Research Planning PG (6486) - 3 CP

Semester 2

- Research Project in Health PG (9593) – 6 CP

Under the guidance and mentorship of a SYNERGY Clinical Chair, interns will plan and complete a research project relevant to clinical practice designated by the Clinical Chair.

Interns may spend up to 0.2FTE of the total 0.5FTE secondment in the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre on their studies towards the Graduate Certificate in Health Research course, with the remaining allocated time devoted to supporting SYNERGY research activities.

The University of Canberra has waived the tuition fees associated with the Graduate Certificate in Health Research course for participants in the SYNERGY Research Internship Programme. All other course costs, including textbooks (most of these are freely available within the University), equipment and research project related costs are met by the intern.

Paid Secondment Component

Successful internship recipients will be seconded from their work area within ACTHD, CHS or CPHB to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre on a 0.5FTE basis for a period of 12 months, from the first week of semester one, to complete coursework and research components of the Graduate Certificate in Health Research.

The recipient's work area is required to invoice the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre within 10 working days of the end of each quarter (3 monthly) for reimbursement of the equivalent

of one full shift per week. **If the invoices for reimbursement are not submitted on time the work area risks losing their funding for the quarter.**

Conditions

The following conditions apply for successful candidates of the Research Internship Programme. Interns must:

- Be enrolled in the Graduate Certificate in Health Research course, 6 CP per semester, at the University of Canberra and is expected to successfully complete all requisite units within the timeframe of two consecutive semesters beginning semester 1 of the year of the internship.
- Undertake a research project that is relevant to clinical practice but within the scope of a 12-credit point unit of study. The supervising SYNERGY Clinical Chair will work with the intern to develop the project.
- Present a copy of their results **each semester** to their DON/M and the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre.
- Allocate weekdays to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre (can be negotiated) and may be a morning shift or 9am-5:30pm.
- Spend 0.5FTE in the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre which is located on the main Canberra Hospital campus in Garran.
- Advise their supervising SYNERGY Clinical Chair if they are not progressing satisfactorily in their studies or if a unit is not passed, as soon as practicable.
 - a. The Clinical Chair will develop a support plan with the intern, where possible, to facilitate success.
 - a. The secondment may be terminated if it is determined by the Clinical Chair that a support plan will not facilitate successful completion of the Graduate Certificate in Health Research and the Research Internship Programme.
 - b. If a unit of study must be taken a second time, the intern is responsible for the full tuition and course fees.
 - c. The intern will not continue in their position at mid-way review if they have not completed Semester 1 of the unit coursework.
 - d. The intern must be committed to using their own time outside of working hours to successfully complete their Graduate Certificate in Health Research studies.
 - e. If the Graduate Certificate in Health Research course is not completed within 12 months, the intern will be required to pay full tuition and course fees for any units that they subsequently enrol into.
 - f. Any units that are not passed will need to be repeated at the intern's own cost.
 - g. If the intern's research project is not completed within 12 months, individuals are expected to continue to work on their research project outside of work time in the following year to ensure completion.

- Present their final project at the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre Grand Rounds, or another appropriate forum.
- If requested, provide SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre, ACT Health Directorate, within fourteen (14) days, written progress reports or any other information required.
- Provide a written reflection (no longer than 500 words) to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre on completion to include:
 - a. Personal and professional learnings from taking part in the Research Internship program, and
 - b. How learnings from the program will be implemented in the student's workplace and career

Leave

Interns are responsible for negotiating annual leave and other leave over the period of the internship to ensure all requirements of the Graduate Certificate in Health Research course are met. Long service leave and purchased leave will not be supported for the duration of the internship.

Assessment of Applications

Opportunities for the Research Internship Programme will be advertised within ACTHD, CHS and CPHB, with applications considered on merit by a panel of senior nurses and midwives and at least one nursing or midwifery academic. Granting of the internship will be based on written responses to selection criteria, academic transcripts and an interview where necessary. Internships are often made available to new graduate nurses and midwives and in this case the application process for the internship will be integrated with the application for a new graduate position.

Should an applicant be dissatisfied with the panel's decision, an appeal process has been established.

Written requests with review of panel decisions must:

- Be provided within two weeks of the applicant receiving notification of the panel's decision,
- Identify the basis of the appeal, and
- Be addressed to the supervising Clinical Chair, SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre: synergy@act.gov.au.

The decision of the Clinical Chair is final.

Agreements

Successful candidates will receive an Internship Programme Agreement. Interns are required to sign the Agreement, have their signature witnessed, and return it to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre by the due date specified in the letter of offer.

The intern's DON/M will receive a Letter of Agreement for Funding. The DON/M is required to sign the Letter of Agreement for Funding and return it to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research

Centre by the specified due date. The Letter of Agreement includes the commitment of the intern's work area to invoice SYNERGY every quarter.

Extension and Suspension

All requests for variation to the Research Internship Programme Agreement must be notified in writing to the supervising Clinical Chair, SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre and the DON/M of the health service.

Be advised that as a 12-month internship, there is limited opportunity to vary any aspect of the programme. Intermission from the academic program may be negotiated in extenuating circumstances. Interns must discuss this with their supervising SYNERGY Clinical Chair and their DON/M. Leave can only be accommodated for one semester and such leave can be applied for one time only. In this case, the paid research time (0.5 FTE) will be suspended for the period of leave and the intern will be rostered to practice for their full FTE equivalent. The paid research time (0.5 FTE) will be reinstated in week 1 of the first semester of study following intermission.

If the Graduate Certificate in Health Research course is not completed within the agreed period, a request is to be made in writing to the Clinical Chairs for an extension of time for submission of results. An extension of time to complete the academic program does not include additional internship programme funding.

In the event of illness which reduces the effective tenure of the internship programme, the intern will not automatically be entitled to an extension of the original period of the internship programme. ACTHD, CHS and CPHB may, on formal application, agree to an internship programme extension if the extension can be met by the health service's operational requirements.

Termination

The Research Internship may be terminated at any time:

- If in the opinion of the ACTHD, CHS, CPHB or supervising SYNERGY Clinical Chair, the intern's performance is unsatisfactory in accordance with fair performance management principles,
- If the intern terminates enrolment or does not enrol in the required units of study within the Graduate Certificate of Health Research course,
- If the intern fails to complete or pass a unit of study within the Graduate Certificate of Health Research course,
- If the intern ceases employment with ACTHD, CHS or CPHB, and/or
- If the intern fails to observe the conditions of the Internship Programme Agreement.

Contact

SYNERGY Nursing & Midwifery Research Centre: synergy@act.gov.au