

## Rural Allied Health Postgraduate Scholarship Program

### 2011-12 Guidelines

The overall aim of the Rural Allied Health Postgraduate Scholarship Program is to improve the retention of allied health practitioners working in rural Victorian locations. To meet this goal, the program supports rural allied health practitioners who have demonstrated their involvement in, and a commitment to, rural allied health practice to improve their skills and practice expertise through postgraduate studies. By encouraging and supporting rural allied health practitioners to undertake postgraduate study, it is anticipated that the quality and retention of qualified practitioners working in rural Victoria will be improved. The financial support provided to practitioners through the scholarship program will assist them in meeting the additional expenses (such as travel, accommodation, IT support) often borne by rural practitioners accessing education.

It is anticipated that the following impacts will result from the provision of postgraduate scholarships to rural allied health practitioners:

- Increased awareness of postgraduate study opportunities amongst allied health practitioners employed in public rural health services.
- Improved acquisition of skills and practice expertise by allied health practitioners working in rural Victoria.
- Increased retention of appropriately skilled allied health practitioners in rural health services.
- Increased participation of rural allied health practitioners undertaking postgraduate study.

#### Scholarships

The level of funding for Postgraduate Scholarships varies according to the level of qualification being attained:

PhD	\$10,000
Masters	\$7,500
Graduate Diploma	\$5,000
Graduate Certificate	\$2,500

Each scholarship granted will be paid at the commencement of postgraduate study.

#### Eligibility

- Postgraduate scholarships are available for permanent or contract employees of a public sector health service (RRMA 3-7) who intend to commence an eligible postgraduate course in 2011-12.
- Postgraduate studies for which scholarships will be granted are those including allied health discipline specific and non-discipline specific courses that are related to their employment, such as health management, health promotion and public health studies. However this does not include entry-level or undergraduate qualifications.
- Scholarships will only be granted once per applicant per postgraduate qualification.
- The following allied health professions are eligible to apply for a scholarship:

- Audiology
- Art Therapy
- Dietetics
- Medical Radiation (Diagnostic Imaging, Radiation Therapy, Nuclear Medicine)
- Occupational Therapy
- Hospital Pharmacy
- Medical Laboratory Science
- Biomedical Science
- Exercise Physiology
- Prosthetics/Orthotics
- Music Therapy
- Podiatry
- Psychology
- Orthoptics
- Physiotherapy
- Speech Pathology
- Social Work
- Medical Physics
- Health Promotion

- If other funds are received from the Services for Australian Rural and Remote Health (SARRAH) Professional Scholarship Scheme, to support postgraduate study, practitioners will be ineligible to receive a scholarship.

### **Selection Criteria**

Applications for scholarships will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Demonstrated relevance of postgraduate study to service demand.
- The applicant's demonstrated understanding of rural communities and practice.
- The applicant's demonstrated interest in, and commitment to rural practice in Victoria.
- Enrolment in eligible postgraduate studies or an intention to undertake postgraduate studies in 2011 in an accredited Australian tertiary institution.
- PhD, Masters, post-graduate degree, post-graduate diploma and post-graduate certificate courses will all be considered.
- Resident of Victoria and an Australian permanent resident.

Please note that scholarship funding is capped therefore not all applicants that meet the criteria will necessarily be granted a scholarship.

### **Terms and Conditions**

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a written agreement stating that they will:

- Give preference to continuing to working in public practice in rural Victoria after completing their studies. Although these scholarships are not bonded, it is hoped that the issues affecting rural Victoria, for example the recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified allied health professionals, will reinforce to recipients that they can contribute significantly as a result of their choice to practice in rural Victoria.
- Provide immediate notification (within one month of occurrence) of a change of contact details and employment.
- Where applicable notification (within one month of occurrence) of failure or withdrawal from postgraduate study.
- Participate in tracking and evaluation exercises in relation to their receipt of the scholarship
- Repay scholarship funding received if they fail to comply with the conditions of the agreement.

These guidelines take effect on 1 July 2011 and are subject to revision by Department of Health (DH). Changes to these guidelines may only be made by, or with the approval of, DH.