

Rural Allied Health – Undergraduate Scholarship Program 2012

Administration by the Victorian Healthcare Association

Rural Allied Health Undergraduate Scholarship Program

2011-12 Guidelines

The overall aim of the Rural Allied Health Undergraduate Scholarship Program is to improve the recruitment of allied health practitioners to rural Victorian locations. Research and practice indicates that a practitioner's rural background is a good predictor of their intention to work in a rural area. Therefore by encouraging people from a rural background to undertake undergraduate studies in an allied health discipline it is anticipated that recruitment of qualified practitioners to rural Victoria will be enhanced.

The Allied Health Undergraduate Scholarship Program seeks to encourage Victorian or Victorian border town students with a rural background to participate in undergraduate allied health studies in a metropolitan or rural location. It does this by providing financial assistance to these students to assist them in meeting the additional costs that they may face while making the transition into undergraduate studies.

It is anticipated that the following impacts will result from the provision of undergraduate allied health scholarships to students from a rural background:

- Increased awareness of undergraduate allied health discipline study opportunities amongst rural secondary school students.
- Increased completion levels for rural students in undergraduate courses.
- Increased participation by people from rural background in graduate entry courses.
- Increased recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified allied health professionals in rural Victoria.
- Improved skills and practice expertise of allied health practitioners in rural Victoria.
- Improved supply of allied health professionals in rural Victoria.

Scholarships

Scholarships to the value of \$5,000 for bachelor level degrees are available to students at the commencement of their course.

Scholarships will be available to Victorian students in one of the following eligible disciplines:

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

Eligibility

- Scholarships are available for students from rural Victoria or communities adjacent to the Victorian border relating to Victoria, who propose to enter into an undergraduate course in

a metropolitan or rural location in 2011-12. Rural Victoria **excludes** metropolitan Melbourne, Geelong and the Bellarine and Mornington peninsulas.

- Scholarship applicants must have resided in rural Victoria in the year prior to entering an undergraduate course. For example, applicants originally from rural Victoria who have resided in metropolitan Melbourne in the year prior to entering an undergraduate course are excluded from applying for this scholarship.
- Scholarships are open for application by first time undergraduate students, as well as graduate entry students into an undergraduate course.
- Scholarship applicants must be Australian citizens or permanent residents.
- Scholarships are granted for the first year of studies, and will not be granted retrospectively.
- Scholarships will only be granted once per eligible applicant.

Selection criteria

Applications for scholarships will be assessed against the following criteria:

- The applicant's academic record.
- The applicant's demonstrated understanding of rural communities and practice.
- The applicant's demonstrated interest in, and commitment to rural practice in Victoria.
- The applicant's financial status. Preference will be given to applicants whose financial situation may be a hindrance to their undergraduate studies, for example, those who qualify for Austudy/Abstudy, Youth Allowance and Family Tax Benefit.
- The level of need for health professionals from particular disciplines in rural Victoria.

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:

1. Give preference 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 students that they can contribute significantly as a result of their choice to practice in rural Victoria.
2. Participate in a rural students club at their University (where available) or nearest affiliated rural health club.
3. Promote rural practice as a viable career choice to rural students.
4. Provide notification of withdrawal from, or changes to their course of studies. Those changing courses to a non allied health course or withdrawing from university studies will be required to repay scholarships.
5. Participate in tracking and evaluation exercises in relation to their receipt of the scholarship.
6. 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.