

Allied Health & Alcohol and Other Drug Postgraduate Scholarships Program

Semester 1, 2023 Application Guide

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Scholarship program overview

The Victorian Department of Health (the department) is offering Allied Health and Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Postgraduate Scholarships from semester 1, 2023.

This document has been prepared to guide applicants through the application process.

Who are the scholarships for?

These scholarships are available to eligible*:

1. Social workers, occupational therapists and psychologists working in state-funded mental health services (including those delivered by non-government organisations), and
2. AOD practitioners working in state funded AOD services.

* Please see below for additional eligibility requirements.

What is the purpose of the scholarships?

This initiative has two main objectives:

1. To build allied health and AOD practitioner workforces that are capable to deliver high quality interventions that are aligned with the priorities of the reformed mental health system and AOD sector, and the needs and preferences of the consumers, service-users and families and carers who use these services.
2. To improve retention in these workforces by providing opportunities to acquire qualifications and skills in a particular area of practice and increase prospects for career development.

What do the scholarships offer?

Scholarships of up to \$13,000 are available to contribute towards recipients' course fees for their postgraduate studies. Applicants can use the scholarship for any postgraduate qualification (incl. Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Master, or Doctorate) where they can demonstrate it supports the development of their mental health or AOD practice.

How do individuals apply?

Applicants must read and understand this application guide before completing their application. The Australian College of Nursing (College) is administering the scholarships for the department. To apply, please complete the application form on the College's website: [Allied Health and AOD Postgraduate Scholarships – Australian College of Nursing \(acn.edu.au\)](https://www.acn.edu.au) by 10 October 2022. For more information, please contact the College on 1800 117 262 or scholarships@acn.edu.au.

Key dates

Activities	Key dates
Applications open	29 August 2022
Applications close	10 October 2022
Applicants notified of the outcome	Early November 2022

Background

The Victorian Government has committed to implementing all 9 interim and 65 final report recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (Royal Commission) and is doing so via the department's Mental Health and Wellbeing Division.

[Victoria's mental health and wellbeing workforce strategy 2021-2024](#) (the Strategy) was released in 2021 in response to Recommendation 57 from the Royal Commission's final report. The Strategy sets out the Victorian Government's vision and implementation plan for the state's mental health and wellbeing workforce.

To support the early implementation of the Strategy, the department is delivering a scholarship program for social workers, occupational therapists and psychologists working in state-funded mental health services (including those delivered by non-government organisations) and AOD practitioners working in state-funded AOD services.

Scholarship program details

Who can apply?

Anyone who fulfils all the below eligibility criteria is encouraged to apply for a scholarship. This includes social workers, occupational therapists and psychologists working in state-funded mental health services as well as AOD practitioners working in state-funded AOD services.

To promote a diverse workforce as envisioned by the Royal Commission and the Strategy, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, workers with disabilities and culturally diverse workers in the mental health and AOD sector are strongly encouraged to apply.

The College and selection panel will screen all applications based on the eligibility criteria below:

Eligibility criteria

To be able to apply, applicants:

1. Must be:
 - A) a social worker, occupational therapist or psychologist working** in a state funded mental health service
 - OR
 - B) an AOD practitioner employed in a state funded AOD service
2. Must have at least two years' experience working in your discipline** in your current sector
3. Must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident or New Zealand citizen
4. Must be eligible to enrol in a relevant postgraduate qualification
5. Must be able to provide a letter of recommendation from their line-manger and/or discipline senior (if relevant), confirming length of employment in the sector and how the service will support the applicant's learning (e.g., through study leave, flexible workload, etc). Applicants will be prompted to upload this in the College's application process.

** Please note that individuals qualified in social work, occupational therapy and psychology and working in generic, psychosocial or case management roles can apply.

Which courses are eligible?

These scholarships will contribute towards postgraduate qualifications, including Graduate Certificates, Graduate Diplomas, Masters, and Doctorates, at accredited tertiary institutions. Scholarships are available to individuals already part way through their courses and scholarship recipients may defer their enrolment once.

Practice based research degrees

Qualifications must be focussed on direct clinical practical skills. Qualifications to support skills in practice-based research will therefore be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If an applicant's research is solely theoretical and not clinical skills-based, they will not be considered.

Psychologists seeking practice endorsement

These scholarships can contribute to postgraduate training in areas that enable psychologists to gain practice endorsement (for example, a Master of Clinical Psychology).

The mental health and wellbeing workforce capability framework

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that their postgraduate qualification supports the development of their mental health or AOD practice.

Qualifications that are aligned with the priorities set out in [the Victorian Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Capability Framework](#) (the Capability Framework) will be highly regarded.

The Capability Framework, including its 15 distinct capabilities, aims to clearly articulate the knowledge, skills, and ways of working that a diverse, multidisciplinary, and evolving workforce needs to deliver care, support and treatment in the mental health and wellbeing system.

Applicable courses include (but are not limited to) postgraduate qualifications in:

- Mental health practice
- AOD, substance use and addiction
- Trauma-informed practice
- Disability
- Infant, child and youth mental health
- Family therapy
- Practice based research
- Psychology specialisations (for example, a Masters in Neuropsychology).

How much funding is available?

Scholarships of up to \$13,000 (and no more than 90 percent of the value of the qualification) will be available to contribute to the course fees of any eligible postgraduate course. A co-contribution will therefore be required.

50 scholarships are available for social workers, occupational therapists and psychologists working in mental health services and 20 scholarships are available for AOD practitioners working in AOD services. This ratio reflects the size disparities between the two workforces, acknowledging that the mental health workforce is currently larger.

Please make sure, when applying, to indicate the full course costs associated with your chosen qualification.

What is the selection process?

A selection panel will assess all eligible applications based on the selection criteria below:

Selection criteria

Applicants will be asked to complete a statement of up to 200-words addressing each of the following selection questions:

1. Describe your career and approach to practice in the mental health or AOD sector and your career goals over the next five years. (200 words)
2. Describe how the qualification that you are proposing to undertake will support the development of your mental health or AOD practice and career goals. Consider how the qualification will improve the experience of consumers and families, carers, and supporters at your service. (200 words)
3. Provide an example of a time when you collaborated with the lived and living experience workforces at your service. (200 words)

Weighting

Applicants working at a service delivery location situated in regional or rural Victoria as well as those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander will be prioritised.

What happens after selection?

The College will notify applicants of the outcome of their application via email by early November 2022.

Scholarship Recipients

Scholarship recipients must provide the College with evidence via supporting documents to begin receiving funds. Supporting documentation required includes:

- the letter of recommendation from your service
- evidence of previous tertiary qualifications
- proof of enrolment in a postgraduate course at an accredited tertiary institution
- proof of Australian citizenship, permanent residency, or New Zealand citizenship.

Once the required evidence has been provided to the College, scholarship recipients will receive funds for their semester 1, 2023 units via a direct electronic transfer to their account following the census date.

Funding will be disbursed to the recipient incrementally based on evidence of enrolment for each semester. Evidence of the completion of prior funded units will be required before the College can pay a recipient for additional units.

Scholarship recipients can accept their scholarship offer prior to enrolling in their course. However, scholarship recipients will need to provide proof of enrolment in a postgraduate course prior to receiving the scholarship funds. Scholarship recipients may defer their enrolment once.

Responsibilities, conditions and commitments for scholarship recipients

The following provides a high-level overview of recipients' responsibilities, conditions and commitments. Please note that the College will provide a more comprehensive statement to scholarship recipients.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that they have read this guide, obtained employer support and compiled all necessary documentation before submitting an application. Applicants should ensure that their application meets the eligibility requirements detailed in this guide.

Late applications will not be accepted.

To receive funding, recipients must provide evidence of enrolment and completion of units.

Scholarship recipients are responsible for enrolling and paying course fees (or deferring fees) or HECS-HELP by the due date and are responsible for debts incurred in the course of study including FEE-HELP and HECS-HELP loans. More information about FEE-HELP and HECS-HELP is available at the Commonwealth Government's Study Assist website <<https://www.studyassist.gov.au/>>

Scholarships may be classed as taxable income depending on your financial situation. Please note the department cannot provide advice to applicants/recipients about taxation. For further information consult your taxation agent or visit Australian Taxation Office website [Is my scholarship taxable? | Australian Taxation Office \(ato.gov.au\)](#)

Deferral: Recipients must notify the College within 14 business days of the change in study arrangements. Recipients may defer studies for the maximum of one year and retain their scholarship. Deferrals longer than one year will require the funds to be returned to the scholarship provider.

Withdrawal: Recipients must notify the College within 14 business days of withdrawal. All or part of scholarship money may be required to be returned as determined on a case-by-case basis. Students are encouraged to be aware of their university's fees policy as most universities will not refund course fees if the student withdraws or defers after the census date.

It is expected that recipients intend to remain in employment within the Victorian public mental health sector or public AOD sector, following the completion of the postgraduate course.

The department may contact scholarship recipients through the ACN for participation in promotional activities, where recipients have expressed their consent.