

Health Workforce Scholarship Program

APPLICANT GUIDELINES 2025-2029

UNDER REVIEW

phn NORTHERN TERRITORY
An Australian Government Initiative

RURAL Workforce AGENCY NT

1. Introduction

The Health Workforce Scholarship Program (HWSP) is an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, administered in the Northern Territory (NT) by the Northern Territory Primary Health Network (Northern Territory PHN) incorporating Rural Workforce Agency Northern Territory (Rural Workforce Agency NT).

The HWSP is available to qualified health professionals in the fields of medicine, nursing, midwifery, allied health, dental and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals providing primary health care services in rural and remote NT in private practice, a non-government organisation within a Modified Monash Model (MMM) 3 - 7 location, or an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) in a MMM 1 - 7 location.

The objective of the HWSP is to improve access to the services needed in rural and remote areas by supporting an increase in skills, capacity and/or scope of practice of privately employed health professionals to target services to rural and remote areas where they are most needed.

The HWSP offers two types of funding:

Scholarships payment

A payment up to $10,000 per 12 month period for up to 24 months to support participants to undertake full or part-time studies (maximum of $20,000 in total over two years) to attain the qualification of either a postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, Master or PhD.

Bursaries payment

A payment up to $10,000 within 12 months for participants to put towards the cost of upskilling, training or course fees and training-related expenses such as accommodation and travel, where appropriate. It is expected that incidental expenses will be covered by the applicant.

The Health Workforce Needs Assessment (HWNA) is used to prioritise the health and workforce needs of communities and inform the priorities and allocation of scholarships and bursaries within the Northern Territory.

Payments under the HWSP will be determined in response to identified local needs for health professionals who provide primary care services to remote and rural areas and justified against the perceived workforce benefit of the training.

All HWSP agreements must be entered into before 30 June 2029. Funding may be provided for courses that extend beyond 30 June 2029, but the study period must conclude by 30 June 2031.

UNDER REVIEW

2. Eligibility

2.1. Who is eligible?

Use the checklist below to determine whether you meet the eligibility requirements for the HWSP.

Are you:

1. A health professional who has obtained their primary professional qualification (minimum Bachelor unless otherwise noted below) and is providing primary care services in one of the following roles:

    - Allied health professional, including:

        - Audiologist
        - Counsellor
        - Diabetes Educator
        - Dietitian
        - Exercise Physiologist
        - Nutritionist
        - Occupational Therapist
        - Optometrist Or Orthoptist
        - Osteopath
        - Pharmacist
        - Physiotherapist
        - Podiatrist
        - Prosthetist
        - Psychologist
        - Radiographer
        - Social Worker
        - Speech Pathologist

    - An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health worker/practitioner (minimum Certificate 2 in Primary Health Care)
    - Dentist or dental hygienist
    - Medical Practitioner
    - Nurse or Midwife

2. Providing primary health care services on a full/part-time basis (minimum of 15 hours per week) in the NT.

3. Providing (or can demonstrate through a service or employment agreement that you are about to provide) primary care services in the NT, in:
    - a private, not-for-profit, non-government primary health sector in a MMM 3-7 location; or
    - an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) in a MMM 1-7 location.

    You can check your MMM location here.

4. Intending to continue providing primary care services in an eligible organisation and location as outlined above after completing your course (as you may be required to

UNDER REVIEW

complete a Return of Service Obligation (RoSO) of up to 12 months after your course is completed). See page 9 for further information on RoSO.

3. Who is NOT eligible?

3.1. Health professionals who are:

- Employed solely by the Northern Territory government (i.e., employed in the primary health care setting, public hospital, TAFE, or University).
- Employed on a short-term contract or do not have regular contact hours (e.g. casual or locum work).
- Solely working in a role that provides management, leadership, teaching, supervision, aged/palliative care, NDIS or similar, as this work is not considered providing primary health care to patients.
- Solely providing telehealth services.

3.2. Funding cannot be used for:

- Retrospective costs (this means courses that are held prior to the current round).
- Overseas face-to-face courses, which include travel, accommodation or courses held outside Australia (excludes online courses).
- Study funded by other sources (e.g. your employer, other grant/funding providers).
- Textbooks, equipment, software, subscriptions, and exam fees.
- Fellowship supervision and exam-related costs (HWSP can support fellowship exam preparation courses).
- Meal expenses or other expenses not deemed reasonable costs for your upskilling.
- General supervision, mentoring, membership, or similar costs to maintain your professional registration.
- Wages or income lost while attending a course or event.
- Activities for which commonwealth, state, territory, or local government bodies have primary responsibility. This includes training and postgraduate studies for health professionals working in a public or private acute care setting.
- Upskilling specifically undertaken to gain new employment, which is not advised on your application and is not related to your current role.

UNDER REVIEW

4. What funding is available?

The HWSP offers two types of funding:

4.1. Scholarship

Funding towards the cost of completing a postgraduate course leading to a postgraduate qualification. A scholarship payment of up to $10,000 per 12 month period for up to 24 months can be provided to support participants to undertake full or part-time studies (maximum of

$20,000 in total over two years) to attain the qualification of either a postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, Master's or PhD.

Scholarship values will be determined against the perceived workforce benefit of the training. Scholarships must be related to training and upskilling health professionals who are providing or planning to provide primary healthcare services to rural and remote areas.

Scholarship payments are made upon receipt of evidence of course/subject costs and confirmation of enrolment. A separate application is required for each study period (i.e. semester, trimester, term etc), with the value of the annual scholarship not exceeding $10,000.

4.2. Bursary

Funding towards the completion of a short course, workshop or attendance at a conference. Bursary payments of up to $10,000 within a 12 month period can be provided to put towards the cost of upskilling, training or course fees and training-related expenses such as accommodation and travel, where appropriate.

Bursaries can be used for courses such as:

- Online or face-to-face: short courses, workshops, conferences and seminars (excluding bundled courses/modules).
- Vocational Education and Training courses.
- Fellowship exam preparation courses.
- Provisional Psychology supervision costs (must be completing either a 4+2 or 5+1 internship program).

The type of funding, whether a scholarship or a bursary, will be determined by the RWA NT during the application review process.

Travel related reimbursement limits are as follows:

- accommodation up to $300 per night (reasonable dates considered); and
- flight costs must be considered reasonable (i.e. economy); or
- fuel (tax invoices) or private car mileage calculated according to the Australian Tax Office rates up to $1,000 per application.

Applicants will need to provide a tax invoice and receipt to be reimbursed for their approved expenses (up to the approved limits only). If the grant round is oversubscribed, priority will be given to course costs and therefore, travel-related expenses may not be funded.

4.3. Multiple Applications

Eligible applicants can apply for up to $10,000 in 12 months (between Bursary and Scholarship applications), and your funding year begins on the date of your first approved course/conference.

Where an applicant has been approved for one initial bursary, the panel will not approve subsequent bursary applications until the prior activity is completed, and the reimbursement

UNDER REVIEW

process has been finalised. The panel will approve subsequent bursary applications on a case-by-case basis.

5. Application process

Application opening and closing dates are available on the NT PHN incorporating RWA NT website, found here. To be considered in a round, a completed application, including all required documents, must be submitted by **11.59 pm** the day before the activity commences. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

5.1. How to apply

You must apply online through the NT PHN incorporating RWA NT website during the round dates. The online application form can be found here. Click on the **Apply Now** button to complete the form.

The grant panel will review all completed applications equitably before making an offer of funding. Meeting eligibility criteria and applying does not guarantee you will receive funding.

Applications will be assessed based on:

- The location/s of your employment and service/s provided
- Applicant eligibility
- Proposed professional development activity
- Planned increase in skill, capacity and/or scope of clinical practice
- Meeting one or more identified primary health and/or workforce needs
- Demonstration of primary healthcare service provision to a rural or remote community
- Funding granted in previous applications within the 12 months.
- Prioritisation of applications is based on several criteria, including but not limited to: working hours, rurality, priority locations, professions (as outlined in our HWNA), and employment within ACCHOs.

Applicants are not able to submit multiple applications per grant round. Multiple courses on one application will not be assessed.

Please note that submitting an application does not mean you will be offered a scholarship or bursary.

5.2. Application requirements

To complete the online application, the following information is required:

Course details

Course name, provider, cost, learning outcomes, website link, and start and finish dates.

UNDER REVIEW

For university courses, you will need to provide a study plan outlining the schedule for completing all units, plus individual unit costs.

Travel and accommodation

Budget for anticipated travel and accommodation, noting the travel-related reimbursement limits as outlined on page five. If sharing accommodation, all names must be on the tax invoice/receipt.

Supporting documents

You will receive an email upon submitting the online HWSP application form. This email will request that you provide supporting documents to confirm your employment. Your resume should summarise your professional and academic qualifications, skills, and experiences.

Supporting documents required:

- Résumé outlining your current employment and work history (no more than four pages).
- Evidence of employment or practice for each employer.

Proof of employment for an employee

Provide either an employment contract or a letter from your employer. These documents must:

- Be on official employer letterhead.
- Be signed and dated by your HR manager or immediate manager, as well as the employee.
- Include your full name, job title, employment status (full-time/part-time), start and end dates (if applicable), and the location of services provided.

Proof of service delivery - Business owner / Self-employed:

- Document on company letterhead.
- Provide a copy of your ABN (Australian Business Number) registration
- Evidence that you are providing at least 15 hours per week of face-to-face clinical services within MM3-7 locations in the NT. You can check your MM location here.

5.3. Community benefit and health needs

A 100-word statement addressing the following questions:

1. What is the health need/skill shortage/workforce need that has been identified in your community?

2. How will the community benefit from your completion of the course/activity?

UNDER REVIEW

5.4. Application review process

Upon receipt of your online application and accompanying supporting documents, you will receive an email confirming the submission of your application, along with information regarding the date on which the panel will review your application.

After the panel meeting, applicants will receive an email notification regarding the status of their application as per the grant rounds dates listed under the ***timelines for upcoming rounds*** on the HWSP page on the website.

Successful candidates will be advised:

- whether the grant is for a bursary or scholarship
- if any additional information is required to support the grant
- details of whether the grant requires a Return of Service Obligation (RoSO).

If the course/activity you have applied for is due to start during the review process and you choose not to undertake the course/activity as outlined in your application, RWA NT reserves the right to withdraw any offer of funding.

5.5. Offer of funds

Successful applicants will be sent an email outlining the offer of either a scholarship or a bursary, along with a grant agreement outlining:

- the amount offered (this is not necessarily the amount requested);
- the course/activity supported by the funding; and
- RoSO (if applicable).

The HWSP grant agreements must be signed and returned by the nominated date in the grant offer email. RWA NT reserves the right to withdraw an offer of funding if the signed agreement is not returned by the nominated date.

If you are unable to complete the course/activity as outlined in your grant agreement, RWA NT reserves the right to withdraw its offer of funding.

5.6. Payment process

Funding through the HWSP is paid to the grantee via reimbursement. The grantees are required to pay for the course and travel costs upfront. RWA NT will reimburse costs from the date both parties signed the grant agreement until three months following the educational activity completion date specified in the agreement.

In situations where the grantee is experiencing financial hardship, alternative funding arrangements can be discussed with the Health Workforce Coordinator – Education.

UNDER REVIEW

For a Scholarship grantee to make a claim, you must complete the Reimbursement Form, provide official confirmation of enrolment, a valid tax invoice for university fees on official university documentation for the Australian postgraduate course, and proof of payment to support your expenditure.

For a Bursary grantee to make a claim, you must complete the Reimbursement Form and provide a valid tax invoice for course fees, travel, and accommodations costs (if applicable) and proof of payment receipts to support your expenditure.

Please note, reimbursements cannot be provided to the health professional's employing organisation, and reimbursements can only be issued to the individual grant recipient.

Claims not made within 90 days of the end date outlined in your grant agreement will be forfeited.

6. What is a Return of Service Obligation?

A Return of Service Obligation (RoSO) will be applied to applications over $5,000 or for courses/study longer than 6 months. Any application under $5,000 may carry a RoSO at the panel's discretion.

The RoSO requires the grantee to continue providing primary health care services in rural and remote NT. The RoSO begins after the completion of the professional development activity funded by the scholarship or bursary. The HWSP agreement will allow a timeframe of up to 12 months for the grantee to complete RoSO.

When undertaking the RoSO, the requirements are as follows:

- the grantee undertakes RoSO in the primary healthcare sector in the NT, in an area classified as:
    - a private or non-government primary health sector in a MMM 3-7 location; or
    - an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) in a MMM 1-7 location.
- RoSO is undertaken in an eligible health service (i.e., private practice, non-government, or ACCHO).
- RoSO is completed at a minimum of 15 hours per week for a total of up to 12 months period set out in the HWSP agreement.

Failure to complete RoSO may result in action being taken to recover the total or a portion of the HWSP grant monies.

All scholarship and bursary recipients are required to complete the course of study for which they are awarded funds and provide proof of completion. Failure to complete the studies or training may result in action being taken to recover the total or a portion of the HWSP grant.

UNDER REVIEW

Grantees who are unable to meet the RoSO due to exceptional circumstances may be eligible to negotiate alternative RoSO pathways with the Health Workforce Coordinator – Education. Exceptional circumstances mean any circumstances beyond the control of the grantee, which were not foreseeable by the grantee at the time they entered into the Grant Agreement, and which prevent the grantee from meeting the 12-month employment period RoSO.

The Health Workforce Coordinator – Education will seek to find alternatives to allow the grantee to complete their RoSO before a waiver is considered. RWA NT reserves the final right to hold the grantee to their RoSO and can recover the grant monies paid where a mutually agreeable outcome cannot be found.

7. Case management

Successful applicants will be case-managed by the Health Workforce Coordinator – Education throughout their scholarship/bursary activity. Ensure that all payments, obligations and other terms outlined in the Grant Agreement are met.

7.1. Changes to HWSP activities

Written approval from RWA NT is required to change the course/activity outlined in your agreement. In considering a response to a change request, RWA NT will consider identified geographical and priority areas, the relevance of the new activity to the applicant's original application, and any other matters considered relevant to the HWSP.

Changes to a proposed course/activity are at the discretion of RWA NT and are usually only permitted where the training provider cancels the training or under exceptional circumstances.

Deferment is at the discretion of RWA NT and is usually only permitted where the training provider cancels the activity or training program or under exceptional circumstances.

7.2. Termination of grant agreement

RWA NT may terminate a grant agreement if it reasonably believes the grantee has:

- Transferred to a different activity without consent from RWA NT.
- Breached the grant agreement.
- Provided false or misleading information in their application.
- Failed to complete the activity as outlined in the grant agreement.
- Failed to complete the RoSO.

7.3. Debt recovery

Where a participant does not fulfil their grant agreement, RWA NT will seek to recover the relevant monies. The debt recovery process will be as follows:

UNDER REVIEW

Each grantee will be asked to sign the grant agreement, confirming that they have understood the terms and conditions of the agreement, including the process for debt recovery should the grantee be unable to meet their obligations.

Each grant agreement will clearly state the grantee's requirements, including the:

- funded course/activity;
- amount of funding available;
- RoSO (if applicable); and
- process for debt recovery if the above is not met.

The Health Workforce Coordinator - Education will support the participant during the grant agreement period to address issues as/before they arise. This will minimise the need for debt recovery in most cases. Where this fails and the grantee is unable to meet their obligations, the case manager will contact the grantee to inform them that the debt recovery process will begin.

8. Appeals and RoSO waivers

8.1. Appeals

Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal the outcome of their application should initially explain their situation to the Health Workforce Coordinator - Education to determine if there are other avenues to access funding and/or support to meet their professional development needs.

Please email grants@ntphn.org.au with your appeal request.

If your application is unsuccessful and you believe the decision requires review, follow these steps:

1. Initial Discussion:
   Contact the Health Workforce Coordinator – Education to explain your situation. The coordinator will help determine whether alternative funding or support options may be available to meet your professional development needs.
2. Formal Appeal:
   If the issue remains unresolved, you may submit a formal appeal to the Capacity Building Manager.
   - The Manager will review your appeal, including all relevant evidence and documentation provided.
   - The Manager will act as the final arbiter, and their decision will be binding.
3. Notification of Outcome:
   Once the panel has reviewed your appeal and a decision has been reached, you will be formally notified of the outcome.

UNDER REVIEW

8.2. RoSo waivers

Grantees who are unable to meet their RoSO due to exceptional circumstances can negotiate alternatives with their case manager. Exceptional circumstances mean circumstances beyond the control of the grantee, which were not reasonably foreseeable at the time they entered into the agreement, and which prevent the grantee from meeting their RoSO.

The Health Workforce Coordinator - Education will, however, seek alternatives to allow the grantee to meet their RoSO before a waiver will be considered. RWA NT reserves the final right to hold the grantee to their RoSO; however, RWA NT can recover the debt where a mutual outcome cannot be found.

Should the above matter not be resolved, the unsuccessful applicant/ RoSO grantee can appeal to the Capacity Building Manager to consider their case. The Capacity Building Manager will review and consider the appeal and will be the final arbiter for any appeal on the HWSP. You will be formally advised of the outcome of the appeal once the panel has come to a decision and has been provided with enough evidence and documentation to review the appeal.

9. Complaints Feedback

If you have general feedback or concerns about your experience, NT PHN incorporating RWA NT also offers a Compliments and Complaints process. This process is available for feedback on all NT PHN incorporating RWA NT programs and services. For more information, visit the Compliments and Complaints page.

10. Further information

For additional details regarding the HWSP, please contact the Health Workforce Coordinator - Education.

e grants@ntphn.org.au
t (08) 8982 1000
w Health Workforce Scholarship Program

UNDER REVIEW

11. Further Information

Definitions	**Bursary:** a grant of up to $10,000 within a 12 month period for development and upskilling to contribute towards the cost of training or course fees and training related expenses such as accommodation and transport, where appropriate. **Case management**: The process of establishing a mutual agreement between RWA NT and the grantee to ensure that the appropriate level of support and shared responsibility is in place. This collaboration aims to help the grantee meet their grant obligations. Each step in the process— including the application, funding agreement, claims, post-study survey, Return of Service Obligations, and, if necessary, debt recovery should be clear and consistently understood by both RWA and the participant. The type and scope of support provided will be tailored to the participant's circumstances and the amount of funding, ensuring a successful outcome for both the program and the participant. **Exceptional circumstances:** any circumstances beyond the control of the grantee, which were not foreseeable by the grantee at the time they entered into the Grant Agreement, and which prevent that grantee from meeting the 12 month employment period. **Grant Agreement:** an agreement between RWA NT and the approved grantee, which sets forth the terms and conditions of the HWSP. **Health Workforce Needs Assessment (HWNA):** aggregates evidence themed around primary health care workforce access, quality, and sustainability, and identifies issues and trends for these priority areas. **Health professional:** refers to applicants who are recognised as registered health professionals by their appropriate registration board and able to provide services to the consumer as identified by the jurisdictional Health Workforce Needs Assessment. **Health Workforce Locator:** An online tool to determine MMM classifications for specific locations in Australia. **Medicine, nursing, and allied health (including Aboriginal Health Workers):** refers to the clinical context and scope of practice of professionals providing services in these disciplines outside of a jurisdictionally funded service.

UNDER REVIEW

	Modified Monash Model (MMM): A classification system categorising areas in Australia by remoteness and population size to better allocate health workforce resources. **Overseas expenses:** No costs associated with an activity physically held outside of Australia will be considered. Where an expense is incurred overseas but accessed locally (such as an online course), then that expense can be considered. **Postgraduate:** a level of qualification offered by education providers. Postgraduate qualifications are open to people who already hold undergraduate (Bachelor) degrees and/or, in many cases, people who can demonstrate equivalent experience in the workplace. You do not always need qualifications to be eligible for postgraduate studies. Many universities and training providers will recognise an applicant's career to date as prior learning and admit to postgraduate study on that basis. **Primary health care:** health professionals working in the primary health care sector, providing health related and/or clinical services as the first point of contact within a rural or remote community for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of ill-health and for ongoing management of chronic disease. **Reimbursement:** The process by which grant recipients claim eligible expenses. The grantee will need to supply tax invoices, proof of payment, and complete the bank verification process. The grantee must return their signed HWSP agreement before any reimbursement claim can be processed. **Retrospective costs:** No funding will be provided where the applicant has completed the activity prior to applying. Where an applicant has commenced a course of study but has not completed the activity, then any costs incurred after lodging an application can be considered. **Return of Service Obligation (ROSO):** refers to the commitment a participant makes to the Australian Government when accepting public money to build their capacity to provide services. ROSO will only be associated with all scholarships and bursary support over $5,000 and or/training lengths of six months or more. The ROSO will not exceed 12 months and must be completed in an equivalent or higher MMM location.

UNDER REVIEW