



Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Professional Scholarship (ARRHPS) Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions

2010



S·A·R·R·A·H
Services for Australian
Rural and Remote Allied Health

The ARRHPS Scheme is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

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1. What is the ARRHPS Scheme?

The Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Professional Scholarship Scheme provides financial assistance to enable health professionals who live and provide clinical services in rural, regional and remote Australia to access postgraduate and continuing professional development activities (CPD). The scheme includes Aboriginal Health Workers, with a Certificate III qualification. Members of the medical and nursing professions are not eligible. For the purpose of this scholarship scheme clinical services involve direct patient contact providing treatment, intervention or assistance, assessment, patient management and education across the health care system. The aim of the scholarship scheme is to assist in the retention of the rural health professional workforce by increasing access to continuing professional education. Access to ongoing education and training enables health professionals to upgrade their skills and maintain the currency of their knowledge.

2. Who is the Scholarship Administrator?

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Inc (SARRAH) is the national managing agency for the Scholarship Scheme. SARRAH is a peak body representing rural and remote allied health professionals at a national level.

3. Am I eligible to apply?

To apply you must:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent Australian Resident
- be a qualified health professional (not including those from the medical and nursing professions) who:
 - have a minimum of an entry level undergraduate or postgraduate health professional degree from a recognised university, or recognised Certificate III Aboriginal Health Worker qualification
 - meet the requirements to obtain State/Territory registration, accreditation or licence to practise, or can demonstrate eligibility to join their discipline specific professional association
- **Live and work** in rural or remote areas of Australia as defined by the Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) classification (see Q 7)

4. How do I prove my citizenship or permanent residency?

If you are awarded a scholarship you will be required to supply *Certified Copies* of documents to prove that you are an Australian citizen or have official Australian Government approval to live in Australia permanently. This proof may be a Birth Certificate or Australian Citizenship Papers. Applicants who do not meet this criterion are not eligible for the ARRHPS Scheme.

5. How New Zealand Citizens prove permanent residency status?

For New Zealand citizens the relevant pages from your New Zealand passport showing the stamped date of arrival in Australia.

6. What do you regard as clinical services?

For the purposes of this Scholarship Scheme clinical services involve direct patient contact providing treatment, intervention or assistance, assessment, patient management and education working across the health care system. However, also refer to FAQ 12 about health service management.

7. How will rurality be determined?

For the purposes of the scholarship selection process 'rural/remote' will be measured by the Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) classification structure. Health professionals residing in six RRMA categories will be eligible for the selection process:

1. **RRMA 2:** Non capital cities and other metropolitan areas with population > 100,000
2. **RRMA 3:** Large rural centres with population 25,000 – 99,000
3. **RRMA 4:** Small rural centres with population 10,000 to 24,999
4. **RRMA 5:** Other rural areas with population < 10,000
5. **RRMA 6:** Remote centres with population > 5,000
6. **RRMA 7:** Other remote areas with population < 5,000

In determining rurality for the ARRHPS Scheme, the Australian Government acknowledges that universities within Tasmania and the Northern Territory do not provide most allied health courses. For the purposes of this scholarship program, all of the Northern Territory and Tasmania will be considered eligible. The exception is social work and psychology practitioners, who live in Hobart as programs are offered at the University of Tasmania.

8. Where can I check the RRMA score for my locality?

To check your RRMA category visit the **Health Workforce Queensland** web site (http://www.healthworkforce.com.au/main_rrma.asp)

9. I live in a metropolitan area and provide outreach health services to rural and remote communities. Am I eligible to apply for a scholarship?

No – the scholarship is only for health professionals who live in a rural or remote location.

10. Why am I asked questions about my eligibility to belong to my professional association and my professional standing?

As the scholarship program is funded by the Australian Government, it is the Scholarship Administrator's responsibility to ensure that the funds are allocated to health professionals who demonstrate they are qualified for the position they hold. While membership to a professional association is not compulsory, applicants are asked relevant questions relating to their qualifications and professional standing. Applications will only be considered eligible if they can show eligibility to join their association as a full member and they have had no disciplinary or legal action against them in the past two years nor any such action pending against them.

If you are offered a scholarship, you will be asked to sign a statutory declaration stating that you are considered of good standing by your profession and peers.

11. I have an undergraduate degree in Sports Science and wish to undertake a Masters degree to qualify as (for example) a physiotherapist. Am I able to apply for one of these scholarships?

No – these scholarships are not intended for students undertaking postgraduate degrees that will qualify them at entry level as a health professional. You may be eligible to apply for a Rural Allied Health Undergraduate Scholarship (RAHUS) if the course you wish to undertake is one of the eligible allied health professions for this entry level scholarship scheme. The *RAHUS Scheme* is also managed by Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health. Further information regarding this scheme can be found on the SARRAH website: <http://www.sarrah.org.au>

12. I hold an eligible health professional qualification and wish to undertake qualifications in health service management. Am I eligible?

Yes - The Scholarship Administrators recognise that the delivery of quality health services and the recruitment and retention of qualified staff is depends on how a service is managed. It is also recognised

that many health professionals in rural and remote communities have a mix of both management and clinical requirements in their practice. The Administrator acknowledges that enhancing the management skills of the allied health clinical professional workforce in rural and remote communities is desirable. Applications from suitably qualified health professionals wishing to undertake study in a management field will be considered eligible if the study is directly related to the particular practice of the applicant. If the applicant's position is that of manager, he or she is required to relate the study to improvements in the services being provided by that department in meeting the needs of the local community.

13. What does the scholarship funding cover?

Funding will be considered for relevant short courses, individual clinical placements, postgraduate qualifications and conferences – either as a presenter or as a delegate. The Scholarship Scheme is designed to contribute towards the costs incurred, not necessarily cover all costs. Funding can be provided for:

- Course /registration fees
- Travel to attend the activity by car, bus, train or air
- Accommodation (capped at \$150 per night)
- Text books and other reference material
- Additional Internet access to enable study
- Additional childcare costs resulting from attending the funded activity
- Additional carer costs (for frail, aged, disabled) resulting from attending the funded activity

14. What if I drive my own car?

The current Australian Tax Office rates for mileage apply. However, if the return airfare is less than the mileage the total reimbursement will not exceed the cost of an economy return air fare. For instance, if you live in Dubbo and undertake an activity at the Centre for Remote Health in Alice Springs and decide to drive, you will be reimbursed up to the value of a return airfare from Dubbo to Alice Springs.

15. Is there a maximum amount of funding that can be received?

Yes – funding is capped for formal postgraduate education courses. The capped amounts are:

- Postgraduate certificate \$6,000 with allocated funding provided to the scholar over a maximum of 2 years
- Postgraduate diploma \$10,000 with allocated funding provided to the scholar over a maximum of 2 years
- Masters \$16,000 with allocated funding provided to the scholar over a maximum of 4 years
- Professional Doctorate \$24,000 with allocated funding provided to the scholar over a maximum of 6 years

Please Note: Funds for completion of courses will be paid on a pro rata basis.

16. What doesn't the scholarship funding cover?

Funding does not cover

- **Student contributions to Commonwealth Supported university places**
- **HECS-HELP**
- Student, service, examination or amenity fees
- Equipment (e.g. computers, otoscopes, massage tables, video cameras) or clothing
- Meals
- Supervisors' fees when supervision is provided by a State or Territory Government employee.
- Taxi, bus, ferry, car rental or train fares between your accommodation and the funded activity venue

- Postgraduate and CPD activities that have already been completed or components of courses already completed or commenced

17. Am I able to apply for more than one scholarship in the same year?

No – you are only able to apply for one activity in each round of funding.

18. How many funding rounds are there per year?

There is one funding round per year.

19. The tertiary degree I want to do is longer than one year. Can I apply for funding for more than twelve months?

Yes – scholarship funding will be paid in instalments for activities of more than one year's duration. This funding is subject to the Program Officer receiving official documentary evidence of successful completion of modules and continuing enrolment in the nominated activity. Please note the answer to Question 13 with regards to the capping of funding for tertiary degrees.

There is no retrospective funding for courses or modules of courses already commenced or completed unless the course commenced early in the year following the end of the funding round, and notification of the success of the application was received after this time (eg: in January 2009 for applications in the 2008 round).

20. Where do I get the Application Form and Guidelines?

Follow the links on the SARRAH Home page (www.sarrah.org.au) to the **online application and Guidelines**. If you have limited internet access contact the Program Officer by email: arrhps@sarrah.org.au; by post: ARRHPSScheme: Post Grad and CPD, PO Box 74, Deakin West, ACT 2600; or by phone: 1800 338061 to receive a hard copy of the Application and Guidelines.

All applicants are encouraged to apply on line.

21. How often can I apply for a scholarship?

If you are awarded a scholarship you are not eligible to reapply while you are completing the activity or in the year following completion of the activity. For example, if the activity is completed in 2008, you are ineligible to apply for a further scholarship until the funding round for activities commencing in 2010.

22. What is the process for allocating scholarships?

The timeframe to complete allocations and notify scholarship applicants of the results takes approximately 6 weeks from the time applications close.

- Applications are checked against the eligibility criteria (Section B & C of the Application Form)
- Ineligible and or incomplete are applications rejected
- An independent assessment panel assess the eligible applications against the selection criteria (Section H of the Application Form)
- The scores for each of the selection criterion from each of the assessors are entered into a scholarship database. A total augmented score out of 100 is calculated for each of the applications. This score generates an Order of Merit for the scholarship application funding round
- Allocation of funds occurs according to budget guidelines given on the Application Form and in the Scholarship Guidelines
- Allocation continues until all the funds available for distribution have been utilised
- The Order of Merit includes a reserve list for cases where an offer is declined

- The Department of Health and Ageing is notified in writing when the process has been completed with details of the statistical breakdown of the scholarship allocations. This information does not identify individual scholars
- Successful applicants are notified in the second week of December

It is the applicants responsibility to ensure that the application form is complete, if information is missing SARRAH will not contact about this and your application will be ineligible.

23 Who will assess my application?

A 5 member assessment panel with representatives from Allied Health Professionals Rural and Remote, health professional education sector, Indigenous health, government and consumer groups. None of the groups include members of the nursing or medical professionals.

The decision of the Scholarship Administrator is final.

23. When will I know the outcome of my application for scholarship funding?

Every effort will be made to notify scholarship applicants the outcome of their application by mid-December 2009, notification by this date cannot be guaranteed. Due to the timeframe required to complete the selection process, applicants are advised that the payment of any scholarship monies prior to the end of January 2010 cannot be guaranteed and that this should be taken into consideration when applying for a particular activity which may commence in January 2010. Should the application be successful, the applicant will receive retrospective funding from 1 January 2010 for payments he/she may have been required to make prior to the receipt of scholarship funding.

24. If successful, what is expected of me?

You will be expected to submit a report on completion of the funded activity. For multi-semester postgraduate activities, scholars provide a brief progress report, a financial statement and proof of ongoing enrolment at the end of each semester.

As part of the scholarship evaluation process scholarship recipients will be encouraged to maintain contact with SARRAH for a period of up to five years after receiving their scholarship to enable some tracking of their professional career.

You will be expected to complete an annual survey for a minimum period of five (5) years following the completion of your activity to assist in the evaluation process of the scholarship scheme. It is also anticipated that the support scholars receive to further their education and training will encourage them to remain in their rural or remote workplace and to be more effective in meeting local needs.

25. If successful, when can I expect to receive the funding?

If you are offered a scholarship you must formally accept the offer within a specific timeframe. You will receive a scholarship offer package, failure to follow the instructions detailed in the package may jeopardise your scholarship. Once you provide all the information requested in the package and the Program Officer receives official confirmation of enrolment in the activity, the funds or instalment will be transferred by direct credit into your bank account.

26. To whom will the scholarship funds be paid?

Scholarship funding will only be paid into the personal bank account of the successful scholar and not to any business, institution or organisation.

27. Are the scholarship funds taxable?

Yes - scholarship monies received under the scheme must be included as part of the scholar's taxable income if he or she is a part-time student. The scholar is able to claim expenses relating to his or her ongoing professional development against the income received from the scholarship program. Successful scholars are advised to keep copies of all receipts associated with undertaking the

scholarship. It is the scholars responsibility to consult the ATO or Centrelink in regard to personal tax liability.

28. Why am I asked to provide details about any request to other sources for financial assistance to attend the activity?

The *ARRHPS Scheme supplements* funds available for activities from other sources including employing bodies (particularly State Departments of Health). It is **not meant to replace** other programs.

This question enables data on other funding to be collected.

You must indicate if you have sought and are in receipt of any other financial support to undertake the proposed activity – for example; support from your employer; local community; or other postgraduate scholarships.

Your response to this question does not influence the allocation of the scholarship funds.

29. How should my response to question 31 in Section H of the Application Form reflect selection criterion 1?

Barriers to accessing professional development

The question asks you to select from a range of barriers identified as impacting on the ability for rural and remote health professionals to access professional development. These include factors relating to distance/remoteness, travel costs, family responsibilities, professional practice issues, cost of courses and resources.

There is a weighting placed in this criterion for degree of remoteness with a score allocated to each of the RRMA Classification categories: 0 for RRMA 2, 3 for RRMA 3, 6 for RRMA 4, 10 for RRMA 5, 15 for RRMA 6 and 20 for RRMA 7. The remaining points are allocated to the barriers you identify in relation to your particular circumstances.

30. How should my response to question 32 in Section H of the Application Form reflect selection criterion 2?

Proposed Activity – benefit to community

Selection criterion 2 focuses on how the proposed activity will benefit the community where you practise. In answering this question make sure to demonstrate an understanding of the health needs of your local community and how attendance at this particular activity will enhance your skills to address these needs.

Meeting the needs of the community where you practise is an integral component of the scholarship scheme. Your response needs to demonstrate how the proposed activity is directed at meeting the needs of your community and is not purely a professional career stepping stone.

31. How should my response to question 33 in Section H of the Application Form reflect selection criterion 3?

Past activities – commitment to ongoing education

Selection criterion 3 focuses on why you should undertake ongoing education and training. It also asks you about your past commitment to continuing professional development.

If you are a new graduate or barriers have significantly prevented your access to professional development, it is understood that your ability to demonstrate your past commitment to professional development will be difficult. You are asked to discuss why it is necessary for health professionals to undertake professional development.

Describe how the skills and knowledge you have acquired or could acquire through professional development has enhanced your clinical practice. This may include the ability to provide new or updated methods of practice, including a wider range of services, or any other improvements that you can describe.

Your professional development history gives the assessors an indication of your commitment to ongoing continuing education. Your professional development history **does not** contribute towards your score for this criterion. This is in recognition that new graduates, and those whose access to professional development has been limited by the barriers identified under criterion one would be put at a disadvantage.

The assessors will also consider your personal contribution to undertaking the activity. Your response could be seen as a measure of your personal commitment to continuing professional education.