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| Making it free to study Nursing and MidwiferyInformation brief – Scholarships to support Enrolled Nurse (EN) to Registered Nurse (RN) transition September 2022 **OFFICIAL** |

## Background

Victoria’s healthcare workforce faces long-standing pressures that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Amid increased demand for care, ongoing action is needed to address issues regarding the supply and distribution of the healthcare workforce. The Victorian Government is implementing a range of initiatives to support Victoria’s healthcare workforce, including free university and specialist training for thousands of nurses and midwives.

This initiative aims to boost the health system, with more than 17,000 nurses and midwives recruited and trained as part of a massive hiring and upskilling initiative – building an army of home-grown health workers to care for Victorians.

## Funding purpose

This funding will support eligible enrolled nurses currently employed in public health services to undertake relevant transition/conversion ‘diploma to degree’ courses to gain registration and employment as registered nurses. Enrolled nurses will be supported via scholarships to commence studies in 2023 or 2024.

## Funding principles

## This component will offer scholarships in 2023 and 2024 for enrolled nurses employed in Victorian public health services to undertake a transition/conversion ‘diploma to degree’ course (i.e. program of study leading to registration as a registered nurse) over two years.

The full scholarship of $11,000 will be provided to candidates over four years:

* $2,500 per annum for two years of study
* $3,000 per annum for two years of employment following completion of study while employed in a public health service.

## Scholarships will be offered in two tranches: 1,000 scholarships for nurses commencing studies in 2023, and 1,000 scholarships for nurses commencing studies in 2024.

Public health services will administer the funding to their employees.

## Eligibility criteria

**Service eligibility**

All Victorian public health services can apply for scholarships for their employed enrolled nursing staff to undertake a transition/conversion ‘diploma to degree’ course (i.e. Bachelor of Nursing degree or approved program of study leading to registration as a registered nurse).

**Candidate eligibility**

Eligible scholarship applicants must fulfill the following requirements:

* be an enrolled nurse, holding current registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
* be considered a ‘domestic’ student for university application purposes, that is:
	+ an Australian citizen;
	+ a New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand);
	+ an Australian permanent resident; or
	+ an Australian permanent humanitarian visa holder.
* be employed in an eligible Victorian public health service
* enrol Semester 1 2023 for the first tranche (or Semester 1 2024 for the second tranche) in a transition/conversion ‘diploma to bachelor’ program of study that leads to a tertiary qualification that enables registration as a registered nurse
* does not already qualify for registration as a registered nurse
* will only use the scholarship funds for the purpose of completing their nursing studies.

In addition, eligible applicants must agree to complete the course and then work as a registered nurse in a Victorian public health service for a period of two years at a minimum 0.6 EFT or pro rata equivalent, following completion of the course.

**Course requirements**

Enrolled nurses must be enrolled in a course that:

* is delivered by a university or an accredited higher education provider
* must be a Registered Nurse approved program of study for general registration (List available at: [Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia - Approved programs of study (nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au)](https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Approved-programs-of-study.aspx)
* leads to an award of a qualification that, subject to Ahpra approval, leads to registration as a registered nurse on successful completion
* includes clinical nursing practice related to area of study.

## How do I apply?

* Applications for this funding will be co-ordinated through health services directly.
* Health services will be provided the information required to access this funding in October/November 2022 and will seek expressions of interest from interested applicants after this time.

## Information for recipients of the EN to RN transition scholarships

Recipients are responsible for enrolling and completing the qualification by the due date and for any study costs incurred beyond the value of the scholarship.

If the recipient needs to defer or withdraw from their studies, they must notify the employer within one week of the change in study arrangements.

If the recipient plans to recommence study in the same year, they do not need to return the funds.

If the scholarship recipient does not return to study in the same year, the funds will be recalled and returned to the health service.

The department is not required to withhold tax (PAYG) from scholarships paid. Recipients should be aware that:

* they may be liable to pay tax on their scholarship. For more information recipients should consider the calculator on the Australian Taxation Office website <<https://www.ato.gov.au/Calculators-and-tools/Is-my-scholarship-taxable/>>.
* they may be entitled to claim a tax deduction for self-education expenses – for more information please recipients should refer to the to the Australian Taxation Office site at the following link <<https://www.ato.gov.au/individuals/income-and-deductions/deductions-you-can-claim/self-education-expenses>>.

The department strongly recommends that recipients seek independent tax advice in respect to their scholarship payment.