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| Making it free to study Nursing and MidwiferyInformation brief – Undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery ScholarshipsSeptember 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

The Undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery Scholarships are designed to remove financial disincentives for nursing and midwifery students who complete their undergraduate qualification in nursing and midwifery at a Victorian education provider (located in Victoria).

Scholarships include up to $9,000 ($3,000 per annum over three years) towards their course costs and a further $7,500 if they are subsequently employed in a Victorian public health service for a minimum of two years (minimum 0.8 EFT or equivalent pro rata). The total value for each scholarship is up to $16,500 for a Bachelor of Nursing or Midwifery (or equivalent).

## Funding principles

Broadly, the following funding principles will apply to the scholarship program:

* Students must meet the requirements specified in the ‘Eligibility’ section below.
* Students enrolled in double degrees or honours degrees will be eligible but will not receive additional funding. Students enrolled in accelerated professional entry courses will be eligible but will only receive funding for the 24 months of their accelerated nursing program.
* Scholarships will be administered annually and approximately 10,000 scholarships will be available to new domestic nursing and midwifery students enrolling in 2023 and 2024.
* Scholarships are available for **new enrolments** only. Students who have commenced their nursing and midwifery degrees prior to 2023 are not eligible. Students who have enrolled in 2022 and were due to commence in 2022 and deferred their commencement after August 2022 are also not eligible.
* Students who enrol into an undergraduate nursing and midwifery bachelor's degree or professional entry accelerated program after March 2024 are not eligible.
* Students are required to undertake their full three-year undergraduate or two-year postgraduate entry level qualification in Victoria including student clinical placements at approved facilities located in Victoria.
* Students must be residing in Victoria during their three-year undergraduate or two-year postgraduate program.
* Nursing and midwifery graduates will receive a further $7,500 if they gain employment in Victorian public health services (minimum 0.8 EFT or pro rata equivalent) and remain for a minimum period of two years (24 months).

## Funding allocations

Funding will be provided to scholarship recipients in two tranches:

1. Students will receive up to $9,000 while they study ($3,000 per annum over the 3-year degree program or $3,000 per annum over the 24-month accelerated program).
2. Graduates who complete two years (24 months) of employment at a Victorian public health service will be eligible for an additional $7,500. A minimum 0.8 EFT or equivalent is required for the length of service.

## Eligibility

The Undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery Scholarships component of the ‘Making it free to study Nursing and Midwifery’ initiative is available to all new Victorian domestic students enrolling in a professional-entry nursing or midwifery course in 2023 and 2024.

A student will be considered a 'domestic' student for university application purposes if they are:

* 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.

For the purposes of this initiative, a student will be considered a Victorian domestic student if they meet the aforementioned criteria, reside in Victoria or a border community and attend a university or TAFE with a campus located in Victoria or a border community e.g. Albury/Wodonga.

## How do I apply?

Additional details regarding the allocation process will be provided to eligible students and health services prior to the commencement of the 2023 academic year.

## Information for recipients of the undergraduate nursing and midwifery scholarships

1. 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.
2. Students who do not complete the full year (withdraw from the program within the calendar year or do not meet the study requirements) will not receive funding.
3. If the scholarship recipient does not return to study the following year, they will not be eligible for any further funding.
4. Scholarships are available for **new enrolments** only. Students who have commenced their nursing and midwifery degrees prior to 2023 are not eligible.
5. Students who have enrolled in 2022 and were due to commence in 2022 and deferred their commencement after August 2022 are also not eligible.
6. Retention payments of up to $7,500 will be paid upon successful completion of 1 year of employment at a Victorian public health service and commitment to work an additional 12 months. The public health service will confirm completion of the employment requirement prior to payment being processed.
7. Scholarship recipients that leave the public health service prior to the 24-month period will be required to pay back the additional $7,500 scholarship awarded.
8. The department is not required to withhold tax (PAYG) from scholarships paid. Recipients should be aware that:
	1. they may be liable to pay tax on their scholarship. For more information refer recipients to the calculator on the Australian Taxation Office website <https://www.ato.gov.au/Calculators-and-tools/Is-my-scholarship-taxable/>>.
	2. they may be entitled to claim a tax deduction for self-education expenses – for more information please refer recipients 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.