

Allied Health & Alcohol and Other Drug Postgraduate Scholarships Program

Semester 1, 2024 Application Guide

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Contents

Scholarship program overview	4
Purpose and scope	4
How do I apply?.....	4
Key dates.....	4
Background	5
Introduction.....	5
The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.....	5
Scholarship administration	5
Scholarship program details	7
Applicant eligibility	7
Course eligibility	8
Value of the scholarship.....	9
Weightings and prioritisation	10
Application process	10
Successful applicants.....	10
Assessment criteria	11
Tips to support your scholarship application.....	12
Scholarship awarding process	13
Unsuccessful applications	13
Selection panel.....	13
Responsibilities, conditions, and commitments for scholarship recipients	14
Scholarship agreement	14
Supporting documentation for successful applicants.....	14
Funding disbursement.....	15
Enrolment process	15
Taxation queries.....	15
Scholarship conditions	15
Frequently asked questions	17
Appendix 1: Example responses	20

Scholarship program overview

The Victorian Department of Health (the department) is offering Allied Health and Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Postgraduate scholarships for semester 1, 2024. Scholarships of up to \$13,000 are available to contribute towards course fees for postgraduate studies.

Purpose and scope

Scholarships provide financial assistance to eligible allied health and AOD workers employed (or commencing employment) within Victorian public mental health or AOD services.

This initiative has the following primary objectives:

- To build workers' capabilities to deliver high quality interventions that are aligned with the reforming mental health and wellbeing system and AOD sector.
- To workers skills so that their mental health and AOD practice meets the needs and preferences of consumers, families, carers and supporters who use these services.
- To support and improve workforce retention by providing opportunities to upskill in a particular area of practice and increase their prospects for career development and progression.
- To support workers to deliver diverse and contemporary treatment/therapies and care and support.

Applicants can use the scholarship for any postgraduate qualification level (including Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Master, or Doctorate) and courses that support the development of their mental health or AOD practice.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, workers with disabilities and culturally diverse workers are strongly encouraged to apply. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants will be given additional weighting in the application process.

How do I apply?

Applicants must read and understand this application guide before applying. The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) administer the scholarships for the department. Applications should be submitted by completing the application form on the [ACN's website](https://www.acn.edu.au/scholarships/allied-health-aod-postgrad-scholarships) <<https://www.acn.edu.au/scholarships/allied-health-aod-postgrad-scholarships>> by the closing date. For more information, please contact the ACN on 1800 117 262 or scholarships@acn.edu.au.

Key dates

Activities	Key dates
Applications open	15 September 2023
Closing date for questions	6 October 2023
Information sessions	September- October 2023 (refer to the Department of Health's website < https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-workforce/mental-health-and-wellbeing-workforce-scholarship-program > for session dates and time)
Applications close	13 October 2023 at 11:59pm AEST

Background

Introduction

The Victorian Department of Health (the department) is delivering a scholarship program for:

- Allied health professionals employed in state-funded public mental health and wellbeing services (including those delivered by non-government organisations).
- AOD practitioners working in consumer facing roles in state-funded AOD services.

Fifty scholarships are available for allied health professionals and 20 for AOD practitioners. This ratio reflects the size disparities between the two workforces. Successful applicants will receive a scholarship of up to \$13,000.

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (the Royal Commission) provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform Victoria's mental health system and improve access to services, service navigation and models of care.

The Royal Commission's interim (November 2019) and final (February 2021) reports recommended a series of programs to build the foundations of a future reform agenda. These reforms aim to ensure Victoria's mental health and wellbeing workforce is well supplied, highly skilled and supported to thrive.

The Victorian Government has committed to implementing all recommendations from the Royal Commission. *Victoria's mental health and wellbeing workforce strategy 2021-2024* ([the Strategy <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/mental-health-workforce-strategy>](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/mental-health-workforce-strategy)) sets out the Victorian Government's vision and implementation plan for reform within the mental health and wellbeing workforce, including the importance of this program in supporting the workforce reform agenda.

Similarly to the issues identified in the Royal Commission, there are existing and predicted workforce supply challenges for the AOD sector. The department is responsible for supporting the AOD workforce and sector in attraction and retention of staff, which the department is doing with the scholarship scheme as well as other initiatives such as the AOD Traineeship program.

Strategy implementation is being led by the Mental Health and AOD Workforce Strategy and Planning unit within the Commissioning and System Improvement Division of the department. To support implementation of the Strategy, the department is delivering the Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Scholarship program for mental health professionals and AOD practitioners in Victoria.

Scholarship administration

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) are administering the scholarships on behalf of the department. Please note that the ACN does not assess or determine the successful scholarship recipients.

For information about a full range of development opportunities for mental health nurses, allied health professionals, AOD practitioners and lived and living experience workers (LLEWs), please

refer to the [Department of Health's website](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-workforce/mental-health-and-wellbeing-workforce-scholarship-program) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-workforce/mental-health-and-wellbeing-workforce-scholarship-program> or [ACN's website](https://www.acn.edu.au/scholarships) <https://www.acn.edu.au/scholarships>.

Scholarship program details

All eligible applicants are encouraged to apply for a scholarship. All applications will be screened by the ACN for eligibility, and a department-led selection panel will assess for merit and decide on successful applicants.

Applicant eligibility

The following eligibility criteria applies, applicants should assess their eligibility prior to submitting an application.

Applicant Eligibility	
1a	<p>Mental health allied health professionals</p> <p>The applicant must be working in a state-funded mental health service (including those delivered by non-government organisations). Applicants must be qualified in one of the following disciplines*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth worker • social worker • occupational therapist • psychologist • counsellor • other allied health professional (including but not limited to clinical pharmacist, speech pathologist, exercise physiologist, physiotherapist, dietitian, art therapist or music therapist). <p>Please note: individuals qualified in an allied health discipline but working in generic, psychosocial, case management or leadership roles can apply.</p>
1b	<p>AOD practitioners</p> <p>The applicant must be working in a consumer facing role in a state-funded AOD service (including those delivered by non-government organisations)</p>
2	Applicants must have at least two years' cumulative experience working in their discipline* in their current sector
3	Applicants must be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or New Zealand citizen
4	Applicants must be eligible to enrol in the relevant postgraduate qualification
5	<p>Applicants must be able to provide a recommendation of support from their line-manager and/or discipline senior confirming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their relationship to applicant. • length of employment in the sector and if they work at 0.5 FTE or more • that they support the applicant's learning (e.g., through study leave, flexible workload, etc.) • confirmation that they have read the application and endorse what has been said. <p>Applicants will be prompted to upload this in their application during the ACN's application process and a template letter is available within the application form on the ACN website.</p>

Course eligibility

The following course eligibility applies, applicants should ensure that they have reviewed this content to determine eligibility before submitting an application.

Course Eligibility	
1	The course must classify as level 8 or higher under the Australian Qualifications Framework <https://www.aqf.edu.au/>. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Certificates • Graduate Diplomas • Master Degrees • Doctorates.
2	The course must be delivered by a university or accredited higher education provider <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register> as outlined by the Australian Government's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). You can search universities using their register.
3	The course must lead to a postgraduate qualification that advances the applicant's knowledge, skills and capacity to provide effective mental health or AOD treatment care or support.
4	The postgraduate qualification should either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on direct clinical practical skills OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build the necessary capability to confidently progress your career across your sector and to influence positive change.

Priority courses and directions

Scholarships will prioritise courses which support consumer-facing service delivery through an additional weighting in the assessment process.

Examples of courses which support consumer-facing service delivery include but are not limited to:

- Graduate Diploma in Psychology (Advanced)
- Graduate Diploma of Mental Health
- Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Master of Addictive Behaviours
- Master of Clinical Psychology
- Graduate Certificate of Family Therapy
- Graduate Certificate in Child and Adolescent Mental Health
- Graduate Certificate in Mental Health Science
- Master of Therapeutic Arts Practice
- Graduate Certificate or Master of Counselling (Alcohol & Drug studies)
- Graduate Certificate or Master of Science in Addiction Studies
- Graduate Diploma of Forensic Behavioural Science
- Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science
- Master of Mental Health Science - Child Psychotherapy
- Graduate Certificate - Addiction Studies
- Master of Child Play Therapy

Practice-based research degrees

Scholarships may be awarded for practice-based research degrees. If applying for a practice-based research degree, the degree must be focused on direct clinical skills. Theoretical research or other research that does not focus on clinical skills will not be considered as eligible.

Psychologists seeking practice endorsement

For applicants who have completed an undergraduate psychology qualification or already have general registration as a psychologist, these scholarships can contribute to completion of a postgraduate qualification approved for endorsement (for example, a Master of Clinical Psychology). This will enable them to achieve general registration (if not already held) and approval to commence a registrar program needed to be endorsed in an area of practice such as clinical psychology, clinical neuropsychology and forensic psychology.

The Victorian 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](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/victorian-mh-and-wellbeing-workforce-capability-framework-pdf.pdf) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/victorian-mh-and-wellbeing-workforce-capability-framework-pdf.pdf>>) 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 should include (but are not limited to) postgraduate qualifications in:

- Advanced Mental health clinical practice
- AOD, substance use and addiction
- Trauma-informed practice
- Disability
- Infant, child and youth mental health
- Family therapy
- Practice-based research focused on clinical skills
- Psychology specialisations (for example, a Masters in Neuropsychology)
- Health service management

Value of the scholarship

Scholarships of up to \$13,000 will be available to contribute to the course fees of any eligible postgraduate course, provided this amount does not exceed 90 per cent of the total course fees. Successful applicants will be required to contribute a minimum of 10 per cent of total course fees. Please indicate the full course costs associated with your chosen qualification when applying.

Weightings and prioritisation

Prioritisation will be provided for the following:

- eligible applicants who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- eligible applicants employed in regional or rural Victoria
- courses which enhance consumer-facing clinical skills.

Application process

STEP 1- Confirm Eligibility

- check your eligibility against the eligibility criteria in these guidelines
- check that you can meet the grant conditions
- confirm your line-manger and/or discipline senior will support you to undertake postgraduate studies and have them review your application.

STEP 2- Complete application form

- ensure all required supporting documentation is attached
- proofread your application.

STEP 3- Submit application

- applications close at 11.59pm AEST on 13 October 2023.

STEP 4- Applicants notified of outcome

- applicants are notified of their outcome mid-December 2023
- successful applicants can expect payments to be made by the ACN in April 2024, **after** the first semester census date (31 March 2024).

Please note: Late applications will not be accepted.

Successful applicants

Scholarship offers can be accepted prior to course enrolment however, proof of enrolment in a postgraduate course must be provided prior to receiving any scholarship funds.

Assessment criteria

A panel will be convened to assess all eligible applications based on their application.

Applicants will be asked to provide a 100-200-word statement addressing each of the assessment criteria.

Assessment Criteria
<p>1. Commitment to the mental health or AOD sector and career aspirations</p>
<p>Describe your commitment to practice in the mental health or AOD sector and your career goals over the next five years (max 200 words).</p> <p>Your response should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a rationale for undertaking the course of study and how your proposed studies will support your career goals.
<p>2. Alignment with the <i>Victorian Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Capability Framework</i> (the Capability Framework)</p>
<p>Describe how the proposed qualification you are planning to undertake will support the development of your mental health or AOD practice (max 200 words).</p> <p>Your response should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how your proposed qualification aligns with the priorities set out in the Capability Framework • how this course improves the experience and/or outcomes of consumers and their family, carers and supporters at your service.
<p>3. Commitment to Victoria's workforce reform agenda</p>
<p>Describe your commitment to the values of your sector and those needed to deliver cohesive multidisciplinary care.</p> <p>Your response should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how your proposed qualification will support you to provide person-centred, recovery-oriented care • what it means to work collaboratively as part of multidisciplinary teams, including lived and living experience workers.
<p>4. Area of strategic need and prioritisation</p>
<p>Weighting and prioritisation will be provided for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eligible applicants who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander • eligible applicants employed in regional or rural Victoria • courses which enhance consumer-facing clinical skills.

Tips to support your scholarship application

1. **Know the key dates.** The scholarship applications will close at 11:59pm AEST on 13 October 2023. Late applications will not be considered.
2. **Review the selection criteria** Applicants should familiarise themselves with the selection criterion and spend some time thinking about how they satisfy each.
3. **Refer to Appendix 1 for example responses to the assessment criteria.** Examples have been provided which are strong, average or weak to assist you with providing a competitive application.
4. **Answer the posed question.** Ensure that in providing a written response, the assessment panel has a clear understanding of your experience and motivation in relation to the posed question. For example, for question 1 'Commitment to the mental health or AOD sector and career aspirations', provide detail so that it is clear why you are working in a mental health or AOD service, what you enjoy about your role, why you have chosen to pursue this career, and what your goals are. This is important to assess whether the chosen course of study will appropriately contribute to your pursuit of these goals.
5. **Use past experiences as examples.** Applicants are encouraged to share their experiences which have motivated them, including any self-directed voluntary initiatives such as additional courses completed, leadership positions or service improvement projects you have undertaken in your current role or other specific examples which have led them to this career in mental health or AOD (not limited to paid roles).
6. **Ensure the use of language is professional and contemporary.** For more information regarding the correct use of language and terminology, refer to the 'Language and definition' section of the [Mental health lived experience engagement framework](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/mental-health-lived-experience-engagement-framework) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/mental-health-lived-experience-engagement-framework>>.
7. **Spend some time refining written responses.** Keep responses as concise as possible noting the word limit of 200 words per question. Remember to use examples to demonstrate strengths, and passion and commitment to working in the mental health and AOD sector. Consider having a peer review your responses to ensure that they make sense and are well-structured.
8. **Ensure your application has been read by and endorsed by your line-manger and/or discipline senior.** Applicants must get their application reviewed and endorsed to ensure that their manager and/or discipline senior endorses the quality of their application and will support their participation in and completion of their postgraduate studies. A template is provided on the application form on ACN's website.

Scholarship awarding process

An overview of the scholarship process is laid out below.

1	Eligibility check Applicants screened to ensure eligibility requirements are met.
2	Applications assessed Applications are assessed against the assessment criteria.
3	Weightings applied Weightings are added to qualifying applicants.
4	Scholarship assessment Scholarships are granted at the discretion of an assessment panel through a competitive process.
5	Applicants notified Applicants are notified of their outcome by mid December 2023.
6	Scholarship payments made Payments are expected to be made by the ACN in April 2024, after the first semester census date (31 March 2024).

Unsuccessful applications

An applicant is either unsuccessful because they were ineligible, or they were not recommended by the selection panel through the competitive process.

Upon request, ineligible applicants will be advised on the specific eligibility criteria they did not meet and applicants who have not been recommended by the selection panel can request further feedback where appropriate.

Selection panel

The selection panel will comprise of at least three members appointed by the department. Selection panel members hold appropriate expertise including lived and living experience and an allied health representative from the Clinical Advisory hub of the department.

Responsibilities, conditions, and commitments for scholarship recipients

Scholarship recipients are required to meet a number of conditions to maintain eligibility for the scholarship, as summarised below.

Scholarship agreement

An acceptance pack detailing the required paperwork to be submitted as well as a copy of the scholarship's terms and conditions, will be provided by the ACN upon successful notification of receiving this scholarship.

Successful applicants will be required to sign a scholarship acceptance form prior to the commencement of the scholarship.

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.

Supporting documentation for successful applicants

To begin receiving funds, scholarship recipients must provide the ACN with evidence in the form of supporting documentation.

Required supporting documentation	
Upon commencement of course	
1	Evidence of Australian citizenship, permanent residency or New Zealand citizenship (New Zealand Citizens must submit a copy of their current passport).
2	<p>Evidence of enrolment in a postgraduate course at an accredited tertiary institution in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an official university letter confirming enrolment OR an official Student Tax Invoice or Statement of Account for Semester 1, 2024. <p>Evidence of enrolment should also include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the names of enrolled units, subjects, or courses for Semester 1, 2024 the enrolment status – part time / full time study load the type of place / student status – eg. Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP), Higher Education Loan Program (HECS-HELP) or Direct Payment to Academic Institution.
3	Evidence of previous tertiary qualifications, eg. Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS) or certificate of completion.
For subsequent semesters (to enable payment for additional units)	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence of enrolment in each subsequent semester (per point 3 above) evidence of completion of prior funded units.

Funding disbursement

Once the required evidence has been provided to the ACN, scholarship recipients will receive funds for their semester 1, 2024 units via a direct electronic transfer to their account. It is important to note that funds will only be provided **after the census date** (31 March 2024).

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

Enrolment process

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 during 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/) <https://www.studyassist.gov.au/>.

Taxation queries

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 tax agent or visit [Australian Taxation Office website](https://www.ato.gov.au/calculators-and-tools/is-my-scholarship-taxable/) <https://www.ato.gov.au/calculators-and-tools/is-my-scholarship-taxable/>.

Scholarship conditions

Continued employment

It is expected that recipients intend to remain in a Victorian public mental health service for a period of one year full-time following the completion of the postgraduate course for which a scholarship has been awarded.

Students unable to fulfil this condition may be required to refund all or part of the scholarship funds to the department. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Deferral from course

If a student is required to defer their studies for any reason, they must notify the ACN within 14 business days of the change in study arrangements. All or part of the scholarship funds may be required to be returned.

Withdrawal from course

Scholarship recipients withdrawing from the course are required to notify the ACN within 14 business days of withdrawal. All or part of scholarship funding may be required to be returned. 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.

Consent to share student information

Applicant information may be shared with the department for evaluation purposes, where the applicant has expressed their consent.

Scholarship recipient information, including contact information, will be shared with the department for application assessment, evaluation and administration purposes. The department may also contact you via the ACN at any time after receipt of a scholarship.

A link to the ACN's privacy collection notice can be found on the [ACN's website](https://members.acn.edu.au/Public/Join/Privacy_Collection_Notice.aspx) <https://members.acn.edu.au/Public/Join/Privacy_Collection_Notice.aspx>.

The Victorian Government values and is committed to protecting your privacy. We handle your personal information in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) (PDP Act), Public Records Act 1973 (Vic), Health Records Act 2001 (Vic) and other applicable legislation.

Please visit our [privacy policy](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/department-of-health-privacy-policy) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/department-of-health-privacy-policy>> for more information. It contains information about how you can access and correct the personal information you may give us, how you can lodge a complaint regarding the handling of your personal information and how any complaint will be handled by the department.

For questions regarding privacy, email us at privacy@health.vic.gov.au.

Frequently asked questions

What degrees are considered eligible?

Relevant degrees are those that:

- build the capabilities required to deliver high quality, evidence-based, consumer-centred care in the mental health and wellbeing or AOD sector.

Relevant degrees may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Doctor of Social Work (Professional Doctorate)
- Master of Clinical Education
- Master of Culture, Health and Medicine
- Masters of Systemic and Family Therapy
- Master of Clinical Family Therapy
- Master of Suicidology
- Masters of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Graduate Certificate in Health Professional Education
- Masters of Youth Mental Health
- Graduate Certificate in Developmental Trauma
- Graduate Diploma in Forensic Psychology
- Graduate Certificate in Youth Mental Health
- Master of Mental Health
- PhD - Doctor of Social Work - Practice Based Research
- Graduate Certificate in Mental Health
- Doctor of Social Work
- Master of Forensic Mental Health
- Graduate Diploma of Forensic Behavioural Science
- Graduate Certificate of Counselling (Alcohol & Drug Studies)
- Graduate Diploma in Psychology (Advanced)
- Graduate Diploma of Mental Health
- Graduate Certificate of Addictive Behaviours
- Master of Clinical Psychology
- Graduate Certificate of Family Therapy
- Graduate Certificate in Child and Adolescent Mental Health
- Graduate Certificate in Mental Health Science
- Masters in Therapeutic Arts Practice
- Graduate Certificate of Counselling
- Graduate Diploma of Forensic Behavioural Science
- Masters of Addictive Behaviours
- Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science
- Master of Mental Health Science - Child Psychotherapy
- Graduate Certificate - Addiction Studies
- Master of Child Play Therapy
- Professional Doctorate Allied Health
- Graduate Diploma of Psychology

Who can apply?

For allied health scholarships, social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, youth workers, counsellors and other allied health professionals (including but not limited to clinical pharmacist, speech pathologist, exercise physiologist, physiotherapist, dietitian, art therapist or music) working in state-funded mental health services (including those delivered by non-government organisations) are eligible to apply. Eligible allied health disciplines can be found [here](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/health-workforce/allied-health-workforce).
<<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/health-workforce/allied-health-workforce>>.

For AOD scholarships, AOD practitioners working in consumer facing roles in state funded AOD services are welcome to apply.

All applicants must have at least two years' experience working in their discipline and sector.

Are practice-based research degrees eligible?

Qualifications must be focused on **direct clinical practical skills**. If an applicant's research is solely theoretical and not clinical skills-based, the course will be considered ineligible.

Can this scholarship contribute to practice endorsement qualifications?

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

Can applicants who hold generic roles (i.e., not discipline specific) apply?

Yes, individuals who are qualified in social work, occupational therapy, psychology or other allied health disciplines and are working in generic, psychosocial or case management roles can apply.

Can applicants from youth services apply?

Yes. Allied health professionals as outlined above (social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, youth workers, counsellors and other allied health professionals) are eligible for funding provided their service is a state funded mental health service.

Can the scholarship be paid before the census date?

No. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that they pay any fees for their courses by the agreed due date with the education provider or with the Australian Taxation Office. Scholarships are only paid **after the census date** and after all appropriate paperwork has been submitted.

Can the scholarship be paid directly to my university or to the ATO?

No. Scholarships are provided directly to the applicant via direct deposit. Applicants are responsible for paying any fees/student loans.

Are late applications accepted?

No. All applications must be submitted by **Friday 13 October 2023 at 11:59pm AEST**, after this time the application portal will no longer be available.

Am I able to make any changes once I have submitted my application?

No, you cannot make any changes once an application is submitted.

If your contact details change prior to notification, please email the new details to the scholarships team at scholarships@acn.edu.au.

When will I be notified if I am successful?

You will be advised the outcome of your application by **Early December 2023**.

Appendix 1: Example responses

Please note: the below examples are illustrative only, and a response aligned to the below competitive example is not a guarantee of a scholarship, it is merely intended to demonstrate a robust response that would be considered competitive within the assessment process.

Submissions which copy and paste (exactly or substantively) the competitive example below, will not be awarded scholarships. Applicants should consider the example below in drafting their response and their own circumstances.

Question	Weak example	Competitive example
<p>1. Describe your commitment to practice in the mental health or AOD sector and your career goals over the next five years (max 200 words).</p> <p>Your response should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a rationale for undertaking the course of study and how your proposed studies will support your career goals 	<p>I am committed to work as a social worker in mental health. I have worked in different roles with different patients for a long time and I think that it would be good for me if I could do this course.</p>	<p>I have worked as a mental health clinician for the past 15 years. I have worked across most adult mental health programs including as a manager in community programs and for the past three years as a Forensic Clinical Specialist covering adolescent, adult and aged mental health services.</p> <p>I am passionate about the role and provision of holistic care, particularly when providing direct care and meeting with consumers and their families. My experience over the years has equipped me with skills to provide holistic treatment, care and support to consumers and their families and I wish to build on these skills by undertaking this course. This course will teach me skills in providing better and more responsive integrated care for consumer with co-occurring mental health and substance use or addiction issues. This is a priority in my workplace which is committed to implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission.</p> <p>Over the next five years I am invested in assisting both colleagues and the organisation in developing service delivery models that meet the consumer needs and responds to service gaps.</p>

Question	Weak example	Competitive example
<p>2. Describe your commitment to the values of your sector and those needed to deliver cohesive multidisciplinary care.</p> <p>Your response should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how your proposed qualification will support you to provide person-centred, recovery-oriented care • what it means to work collaboratively as part of multidisciplinary teams, including lived and living experience workers. 	<p>Working with the lived experience workforce is embedded into the service I work at. I work with those with lived AOD experience daily and see the benefits this has on patients.</p>	<p>I approach my practice through a lens of lived and living experience, both as a carer of someone with schizophrenia and as a person who is living with mental illness. A core function of my role is to build capacity within the mental health service to provide timely evidence-based care to people in touch with the justice system as well as provide expert forensic consultation and assessment to improve clinical outcomes for consumers. I seek to always adopt a trauma informed approach when applying forensic assessments as most people in touch with the justice system have experienced trauma in their developmental years or as a direct result of being in custodial settings. This ensures person centred, recovery-oriented care is upheld placing the consumer at the centre of the care provided.</p> <p>This course is further developing my understanding of how mental illness and AOD use impacts on offending and how appropriate mental health, AOD and other interventions reduce offending behaviours and improve outcomes for consumers. I will be able to bring these skills into discussions with the multidisciplinary team I work with, which includes a peer consultant, mental health nurses and social workers.</p>

Question	Weak example	Competitive example
<p>3. Describe how the proposed qualification you are planning to undertake will support the development of your mental health or AOD practice (max 200 words).</p> <p>Your response should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how your proposed qualification aligns with the priorities set out in the Capability Framework • how this course improves the experience and/or outcomes of consumers and their family, carers and supporters at your service. 	<p>This qualification will continue to develop my practice and treat my patients. I believe that as a mental health occupational therapist along with my significant experience in the field will benefit my patients. If AOD and mental health work more effectively together, it can only benefit the patients attending the service.</p>	<p>This course is recommended for all Forensic Clinical Specialists working in the statewide Forensic Clinical Specialist program and aligns to the Capability Framework for providing ‘compassionate care, support and treatment’ as well as ‘understanding and responding to substance use and addiction’. This course is further developing my understanding of how mental illness and AOD use impacts on offending and how appropriate mental health, AOD and other interventions reduce offending behaviours.</p> <p>Completing this course will have several benefits, I will be able to share this knowledge with colleagues via the educative and capacity building part of my role, so they too can improve their practice with the target consumer group and their families. Additionally, I will also be able to improve my own practice working directly with consumers, their families and other supporters and care team members.</p> <p>Lastly, when consumers have improved engagement in their own treatment and recovery, this can strengthen their relationships with pro-social community supports which can reduce their contact with the criminal justice sector.</p>