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| Nursing and Midwifery Graduate Sign-on Bonus Guidelines 2025 |
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## 

## 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 has implemented a range of initiatives to support Victoria’s healthcare workforce, including a Nursing and Midwifery Graduate Sign-on Bonus (Sign-on Bonus) of $5,000 for nursing and midwifery students who completed an eligible higher education degree as outlined in the ‘Eligibility criteria’ between 2022 and 2024 and commenced their careers with a Victorian public health service.

The Sign-on Bonus has encouraged graduate registered nurses and midwives to take up careers in Victoria’s public health system.

The Sign-on Bonus is assisting health services to attract and retain graduate registered nurses and midwives, and contribute to building the strength, capability and resilience of Victoria’s registered nursing and midwifery workforces.

This initiative is in addition to the $270 million package to support university and specialist training for thousands of nurses and midwives.

## About the Sign-on Bonus

Nursing and midwifery students who graduated from an eligible higher education degree as outlined in the ‘Eligibility criteria’ in 2022, 2023 and 2024, commenced employment as a graduate registered nurse or midwife within a Victorian public health service and committed to this employment for two years are eligible for the Sign-on Bonus.

The Sign-on Bonus, valued at $5,000 will be paid in two instalments:

* the first payment of $2,500 will be paid following commencement of employment as a graduate registered nurse or midwife.
* the second payment of $2,500 will be paid after two years of continuous work within a Victorian public health service in an eligible registered nurse or midwifery role.

The Sign-on Bonus is funded through the Victorian Department of Health and is administered on behalf of the State of Victoria by the Department of Government Services (DGS) with the support of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR), to make payments directly to eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives.

Health services nominate eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives but will not be responsible for directly paying the Sign-on Bonus to these individuals.

**How the Sign-on Bonus works**

There will be two rounds of Sign-on Bonus payments each year:

* Health services must nominate at least one representative from their health service to manage the Sign-on Bonus process. These representatives will be the liaison between the Department of Health, DGS and the health service. To nominate, change or remove a representative, or for any portal questions, contact DGS via email: [nsb@grants.vic.gov.au](mailto:nsb@grants.vic.gov.au).
* Twice yearly, health service representatives will be requested to provide contact details of eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives who have **commenced** as a graduate at their service or completed 2 years of employments and are eligible for a Sign-on Bonus payment. It will be at the discretion of the health service to determine whether graduate registered nurses and midwives are eligible for the Sign-on Bonus as set out against the eligibility criteria.
* An online portal, developed by DGS, allows health services to log in and upload contact details of eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives. To nominate eligible graduates, health services must download, complete and re-upload a template available in the portal.
* If a health service does not have any eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives in any given nomination round, this must be recorded in the portal to avoid reminder communications about nominating graduate registered nurses and midwives.
* The first nomination period for the year will be March/April. The online portal will be open to receive nominations for approximately 2 weeks. A reminder email schedule will remind representatives to provide details.

Representatives will be contacted via email and requested to provide the details of:

* + eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives who have **commenced** their graduate registered nurse or midwife employment in the current year plus any late-year intakes who commenced in the preceding year after the most recent payment round
  + eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives who missed nomination in the previous payment round(s)
  + graduate registered nurses and midwives eligible for the second instalment of the Sign-on Bonus (completed after 2 years of continuous employment).
* The second nomination period for the year will occur in August/September. The online portal will be open to receive nominations for approximately 2 weeks. A reminder email schedule will remind representatives to provide details.

Representatives will be contacted via email and requested to provide the details of:

* + eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives who have **commenced** graduate registered nurse or midwife employment since the previous payment round, i.e., mid-year intake graduates
  + eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives who missed nomination in the previous round(s)
  + graduate registered nurses and midwives eligible for the second instalment of the Sign-on Bonus (completed after 2 years of continuous employment).
* After contact details have been received, DGS will email nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives with a link to the Sign-on Bonus claim form and a grant agreement for them to complete. The nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives will be required to verify their identity and provide personal details including bank account details for the Sign-on Bonus to be paid into. Nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives will have four weeks to submit their claim after receiving their invitational email. A reminder email schedule will remind graduate registered nurses and midwives to submit their claim.
* Once a nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife has submitted their claim for the Sign-on Bonus and entered into a grant agreement with the Victorian Government, the Sign-on Bonus will be paid directly into the nominated graduate’s bank account within four weeks of their claim submission. The provision of incorrect bank details means that payment may be delayed or not received. The department will be under no obligation to make any repayment.
* Nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives will be able to submit a claim for their first Sign-on Bonus in subsequent claim rounds up until Round 10 should they fail to submit their claim at their first opportunity, after Round 10, late claimants will not be considered for funding.
* From 2024, graduate registered nurses or midwives will begin to complete their two-year commitment. Those who have reached their two-year anniversary will need to be confirmed by health services (see ‘Process for second payments’ section for further information).
* Round 10 (in September 2027) will be the final round that health services can nominate an eligible graduate for their first instalment. Round 10 will also be the final round where any nominated graduate can claim their first bonus payment.
* Round 11 (in April 2028) will be the final round that health services can nominate an eligible graduate for their second instalment. Round 11 will also be the final round where any eligible graduate nominated can claim their second bonus payment.

DGS will not undertake a verification process to determine eligibility of a nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife. It is assumed that health services will provide a comprehensive list of eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives.

Nominations and claims may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives for the term of the program and for a period of up to three years following completion of the program.

The term graduate has been used throughout the guidelines to refer to individuals that have completed an eligible higher education degree as outlined in the ‘Eligibility criteria’ and are employed by an eligible Victorian public health service as a graduate registered nurse or midwife.

The term employee refers to graduate registered nurses and midwives who have completed their graduate year and have remained employed within the same health service or have gained employment at another eligible Victorian public health service.

## Health services that do not run a graduate program

Heath services that do not run a graduate program are still required to participate in the Sign-on Bonus program. All graduate registered nurses and midwives are eligible for the first payment regardless of if the individual participates in a graduate program.

## Eligibility criteria

Health Services are required to identifyand nominateeacheligiblegraduate registered nurse or midwife who fulfil all the following criteria for payment of the Sign-on Bonus:

* a registered nurse or midwife currently registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
* a graduate of an eligible Australian higher education nursing or midwifery degree (e.g., Bachelor of Nursing/Midwifery, Postgraduate Diploma in Midwifery, entry-to-practice Master of Nursing Practice) in 2022, 2023 or 2024.
  + ‘graduate’ means having successfully completed all academic and clinical requirements of their degree. It does not relate to the date of a graduation ceremony, completion certificate or issue of exam results.
* has obtained employment as a graduate registered nurse or midwife in a Victorian public health service.
* has commenced employment as a graduate registered nurse in the same calendar year as graduating or the calendar year immediately following graduating. Graduate registered nurses and midwives who graduate in 2024 must commence employment as a graduate registered nurse or midwife no later than 31 December 2025.
* are an Australian or New Zealand citizen or an Australian permanent resident during either nomination period within their graduate year (see section ‘Permanent residents’ for further information).

**Ineligible employees**

Employees will **not be eligible** to receive the Sign-on Bonus if they:

* are not a registered nurse or midwife (e.g., enrolled nurses, RUSONMs)
* receive the Health Service Component of the [Undergraduate (entry-to-practice) Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Program](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/nursing-and-midwifery/undergraduate-nursing-and-midwifery-scholarships) or equivalent
* receive the Health Service Component/bonus equivalent of an Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse transition scholarship
* are a temporary resident (see ‘Permanent residents’ section for further information)
* are a New Zealand permanent or temporary resident
* graduated from an eligible higher education degree as outlined in the ‘Eligibility criteria’ in a year other than 2022, 2023 or 2024
* have previously received a department Sign-on Bonus under this *Nursing and Midwifery Graduate Sign-on Bonus* initiative or equivalent program.

**Graduate registered nursing and midwifery graduate programs**

Graduate programs are those conducted by a public health service providing formal graduate transition for new registered nurse and midwifery graduates.

For full details of graduate program eligibility criteria visit the [Department of Health’s Training and Development Funding guidelines](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/education-and-training/training-and-development-funding) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/education-and-training/training-and-development-funding>

**Requirements to receive two payments**

To be eligible to receive the **first $2,500 payment** a nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife must:

* meet the eligibility criteria detailed above and not be ineligible due to one of the ineligibility reasons.

To be eligible to receive the **second $2,500 payment** a nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife employee must:

* have been eligible for and received the first payment
* complete two full years of continuous employment within an eligible health service from the commencement date as a graduate registered nurse or midwife

(See ‘casual employees’ section below for further information)

## Process for second payments

Graduate registered nurses and midwives who received their first instalment of the Sign-on Bonus are eligible for the second instalment if they meet the eligibility criteria for second payments. The two-year commitment is considered completed upon the two-year anniversary of the commencement date of as a graduate registered nurse or midwife. Second payments are intended to be paid in the next available payment round following the completion of their two-year commitment.

After a graduate registered nurse or midwife receives their first payment instalment, their details remain in the online portal. If a graduate registered nurse or midwife moves between health services, they must log into the graduate portal to update their employment details. Health services then receive an email to confirm this change. If a graduate registered nurse or midwife does not update their details, then the portal will show that they are still employed at their first/previous employer.

Health services will be able to download from the portal a list of their potential employees who may be eligible for the second payment based on data previously entered in the portal. Health services must review this list to confirm who on their list is employed at their health service and due to reach their two-year anniversary date, and thus, will complete their two-year commitment. During a nomination round, health services will be able to nominate graduate registered nurses and midwives for their second bonus instalment providing the graduate has completed no less than 21 months of employment.

Graduate registered nurses and midwives who are confirmed as employed at the health service can then be nominated for their second payment. This might include graduate registered nurses and midwives who remained at the health service, or graduate registered nurses and midwives who moved and were employed at another eligible health service when they reached their two-year commitment.

If there are employees who moved to a different health service who are likely eligible for the second payment but were not on the downloaded list, those employees must log into the graduate portal to update their employment details. Once updated, health services can confirm and nominate them for their second payment.

Those potentially eligible for their second payment will be contacted via email prior to the nomination period and advised to update their employment details (if applicable).

If the employee updates their details too late to be included in the forthcoming nomination round, they can be nominated for their second payment at the next nomination round.

Graduate registered nurses and midwives who completed their two-year commitment but have since resigned

If a graduate registered nurse or midwife was employed at the health service on their two-year anniversary but has since left the health service, they are still eligible to be nominated as they completed their two-year commitment. Graduate registered nurses and midwives are responsible for ensuring their contact details are kept up to date in the portal. Where DGS has a secondary contact for these individuals, an invitational email and/or text message to claim their bonus will be sent to them.

**Ex employees**

Graduate registered nurses and midwives on the list (as they received the first payment) who will not reach their two-year anniversary must not be nominated. It is the responsibility of the graduate registered nurses and midwives to update their employment details in the portal. If they moved to another eligible Victorian public health service, the current health service will need to confirm employment changes (initiated by the employee in the portal) and nominate them. If they left or plan to leave the public health system prior to their two-year commitment, then they are ineligible to be nominated for and to claim the second payment.

## Payment schedule – 2025

The $5,000 Sign-on Bonus is split into two payments of $2,500 each.

The first $2,500 instalment of the Sign-on Bonus will be paid to an eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives after submission of a claim in the prescribed format. The nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife will receive the first payment in line with the process outlined in the section “How the Sign-on Bonus works”.

The second $2,500 instalment of the Sign-on Bonus will be paid to a nominated employee following submission of their claim after completing their two-year service commitment as detailed in the eligibility criteria (and subject to any deferral or interruption requirements being met).

## Payment timetable – First round 2025

Graduate registered nurses and midwives who have **commenced** their employment since the previous round or were inadvertently not nominated in the previous round should be included in this round.

Any graduate registered nurses and midwives eligible for their second Sign-on Bonus instalment should also be included[[1]](#footnote-2).

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| **Date** | **Process** |
| 24 March 2025 – 4 April 2025 | Health services are required to log into the online portal, and using the template available within the portal, confirm details of graduate registered nurses and midwives/employees eligible to receive either their first or second Sign-on Bonus instalment. |
| 14 April 2025 – 9 May 2025 | Nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives/employees receive their invitational email to claim their bonus and submit their completed claim form and grant agreement. |
| May – June 2025 | Nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives/employees who have submitted their claim form and entered into a grant agreement with the Victorian Government receive their Sign-on Bonus. |

**Payment timetable – Second round 2025**

Graduate registered nurses and midwives who **commenced** their employment since the previous round or were inadvertently not nominated in the previous round should be included in this round.

Any employees eligible for their second Sign-on Bonus instalment should also be included.

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| **Date** | **Process** |
| 18 August 2025 – 29 August 2025 | Health services are required to log into the online portal, and using the template available within the portal, confirm details of graduate registered nurses and midwives/employees eligible to receive either their first or second Sign-on Bonus instalment. |
| 8 September 2025 – 3 October 2025 | Nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives/employees receive their invitational email to claim their bonus and submit their completed claim form and grant agreement. |
| October – November 2025 | Nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives/employees who have submitted their claim form and entered into a grant agreement with the Victorian Government receive their first or second Sign-on Bonus. |

## Special circumstances

#### Changing employer

Where an eligible graduate registered nurse or midwife changes their employment arrangement to another employer during the two-year eligibility period, the individual will remain eligible for the second $2,500 payment provided all the following requirements are met:

* graduate registered nurses and midwives must update their details in the graduate portal which are then confirmed by the health service
* the graduate registered nurses and midwives maintains two years of continuous employment within an eligible health service
* each employer is an eligible public health service as defined in the [Training and Development Funding guidelines](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/education-and-training/training-and-development-funding) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/education-and-training/training-and-development-funding>
* on each occasion of changing employer, the nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife is able to provide evidence from their previous employer(s) that they remained eligible for the Sign-on Bonus payment and that they have maintained continuous employment.

(See ‘Employment gaps’ section below for further information)

If an employment history is not provided to the new employer, eligibility for the second payment cannot be verified. This may result in the nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife’s forfeiture of the second payment.

#### Deferral of graduate program commencement

There may be special circumstances where a nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife needs to defer commencement of their graduate program. Nominated registered nurses and midwives who defer commencement may still be eligible to receive the Sign-on Bonus if their deferral was due to one or more of the following circumstances:

* illness (requiring long-term treatment, care or recovery)
* injury (requiring long-term treatment, care or recovery)
* pregnancy/parental leave
* other special circumstances (such as caring for a family member with ongoing needs)
* the deferral does not exceed a period of one year.

The health service will need to determine special circumstances in line with relevant organisational policies.

Due to limitations of the Sign-on Bonus program, graduate registered nurses and midwives must have commenced employment as a registered nurse or midwife by 31 December 2025 to be eligible to receive their first payment. Graduate registered nurses and midwives who defer the commencement of their graduate employment after this date will not be eligible for the Sign-on Bonus program.

#### Interruptions to two-year commitment

A nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife may remain eligible for the second Sign-on Bonus payment where special circumstances arise and interrupt their ability to continuously serve the two-year period of employment as committed. The health service will need to determine whether the nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife’s circumstances represent a valid reason to interrupt the two-year commitment with a break in employment.

An interruption to the nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife employment occurs when an extended period of unpaid leave (not exceeding one year) is taken with the intention of returning to the position on cessation of the circumstances giving rise to the interruption, and the nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife returns (within one year) to fulfill the two-year commitment.

Paid leave, WorkCover and both paid and unpaid parental leave are not considered to be an interruption to the commitment and will not affect the employee’s ability to claim the second payment.

Nominated graduate registered nurses or midwives on unpaid leave must remain an employee of the health service for the duration of their unpaid leave to achieve two years of continuous employment. A nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife who takes extended unpaid leave must return to paid work and complete two years of employment before receiving the second Sign-on Bonus payment.

(See ‘casual employees’ section below for further information)

#### Employment gaps

Where, during the two-year commitment period, a break in the employment of not more than 28 days between eligible employers occurs for a nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife when moving from one health service and starting at the next, the nominated graduate registered nurse of midwife will remain eligible for the second payment. The current employer will need to determine whether, in the circumstances, there has been reasonable grounds for a break in the employment of greater than 28 days in the two-year employment commitment.

A break in employment is where a graduate registered nurse or midwife is not employed by a Victorian public health service.

#### Casual employees

Casual employment does not exclude a graduate registered nurses and midwives from the Sign-on Bonus.

For graduate registered nurses and midwives who transition into casual employment in their second year, they will remain eligible for the second instalment of the Sign-on Bonus if they meet the following criteria:

* maintain direct employment in an eligible health service until their two-year commitment has been reached (for example a casual contract, employed in the casual pool)
* work regularly in an eligible health service in line with organisational policies regarding casuals.

#### Casual graduate registered nurses and midwives will need to demonstrate their commitment to their employer by maintaining regular work throughout the duration of their casual employment. It is understood that casual employment can be inconsistent and there may be variation between weeks.

Casual graduate registered nurses and midwives are permitted to take periods of ‘leave’ for personal/recreational reasons without impacting their ability to claim the second payment.

**Agency employees are not eligible for the Sign-on bonus.**

**Permanent residents**

To be eligible for the Sign-on Bonus, graduate registered nurses and midwives must be a permanent resident by the end of their graduate year.

For example:

* If a temporary resident starts their graduate registered nurse or midwife employment in January and achieves permanent residency in March (same year), they are eligible for nomination in the March/April nomination round.
* If a temporary resident starts their graduate registered nurse or midwife employment in February and receives their permanent residency in May after the first nomination period has closed, they will be eligible to be nominated in the next/second nomination round in their graduate year.
* If a temporary resident starts their graduate registered nurse or midwife employment in February and receives their permanent residency in November (after the second available nomination round during their graduate year) then will be eligible to be nominated in the next nomination round.

#### Multiple concurrent employers

Nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives eligible for an instalment of the Sign-on Bonus can only claim the Sign-on Bonus via one employer. Sign-on Bonuses are not available per employer. Where an error has occurred and multiple Sign-on Bonuses have been paid to an individual, the individual will be required to refund any additional payments to the State.

## Pro-rata payments

Following changes to the FTE eligibility requirements to undertake a graduate program, pro rata payments will not be implemented. All nominated eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives will receive the full Sign-on Bonus regardless of their FTE.

## Program management obligations

## Eligibility obligations

Health services must:

* identify eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives and share these details with DGS through the applicable nomination process and by the due date and time
* for the second payment, confirm continued eligibility and share these details with DGS through the applicable nomination process and by the due date and time
* ensure that nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives are aware that it is their responsibility to make a claim for each bonus instalment and to keep their personal details up to date in the portal and that failure to do so may result in the individual not receiving the bonus
* manage eligibility processes for special circumstances through checking of evidence, as required, in a timely manner and on the appropriate forms.

## Tax and superannuation

Instalments of the $5,000 Sign-on Bonus may be subject to tax or have an impact on any other benefits obtained by the nominated graduate registered nurse or midwife in the relevant period. Individuals are strongly encouraged to seek professional financial advice regarding any tax or benefit eligibility implications of the Sign-on Bonus.

Superannuation is not required to be paid on the Sign-on Bonus payments.

## Record management

Health services will be required to maintain records of graduate registered nurses and midwives who are eligible for an instalment of the Sign-on Bonus. Accurate records will enable health services to report the contact details to DGS of those graduate registered nurses and midwives eligible to receive the second Sign-on Bonus instalment.

**Graduate registered nurses and midwives who change health services**

Graduate registered nurses and midwiveswho move between health services must update their details in the online portal. Health services Sign-on Bonus representatives then receive an email requesting confirmation of the employment change.

Recipients of the first payment will receive an email reminding them to update their employment details should they change.

Graduate registered nurses and midwives who received the first payment and move health services will need to advise their new health service employer of their eligibility to receive the second instalment of their Sign-on Bonus. They will also need to provide evidence to their new health service employer that they will be eligible to receive the second payment and the date on which they will become eligible for the second instalment.

## Health services privacy obligations

The information a health service provides for this program, including personal information, will be collected and used by the Victorian Government.

Health services must ensure nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives are aware of and consent to the sharing of their personal information with DGS for the purposes of administering the Sign-on Bonus.

## Health service Sign-on Bonus representatives

Nominated representatives will have their details provided by their organisation to DGS who are administering this program on behalf of the Department of Health.

Once nominated health service representative details are received, DGS will send an account activation email to access the Health Service Provider Portal developed for this program. Representatives will need to upload the data of eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives as assessed by organisations into this portal in accordance with due dates.

Please note that health service representatives will need to activate their account regardless of whether the organisation has graduate registered nurses/midwives, or a graduate registered nurse or midwife program. Activating the account is necessary as it will enable organisations to participate in future rounds and support the payment of the second instalment to any eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives who later join your organisation.

Health services will need to nominate health service representatives to liaise with the Department of Health and DGS regarding the Sign-on Bonus program. Once nominated health service representatives must:

1. Activate your account for your Health Service Provider Portal
2. Upload and submit data of eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives during nomination periods by the specified due date and time
3. Monitor for communication regarding the Sign-on Bonus, including requests to confirm changes of employer from graduate registered nurses and midwives
4. Ensure that the contact details of the Sign-on bonus representative for their organisation is kept up to date, including during periods of leave and acting arrangements
5. Respond in a timely manner to requests for information made by the Department of Health and DGS.

**Outgoing nominated representatives**

You will need to advise DGS via [nsb@grants.vic.gov.au](mailto:nsb@grants.vic.gov.au) if you are no longer the ­nominated representative and provide another contact who will be the new representative.

## Delayed claims and unclaimed bonuses

Where an eligible graduate registered nurse or midwife has been nominated for a bonus instalment by an eligible health service it is the responsibility of that individual to claim a bonus instalment in a timely manner.

To receive the Sign-on Bonus all nominated graduate registered nurses and midwives must claim their bonus instalments by the end of the final claim period outlined below:

* claim their first bonus instalment before the end of the Round 10 (in September 2027) claim period regardless of their circumstances or when they were nominated for the first bonus instalment. No further first bonus instalments can be claimed after the Round 10 claim period
* claim their second bonus instalment before the end of the Round 11 (in April 2028) claim period regardless of their circumstances or when they were nominated for the second bonus instalment. No further second bonus instalments can be claimed after the Round 11 claim period.

Any nominated graduate nurse or midwife that does not claim the applicable instalment in accordance with the above will be ineligible to receive the bonus.

To view the dates for each nomination and claim period visit <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/nursing-and-midwifery/nursing-and-midwifery-graduate-sign-on-bonus>.

## Victorian Government privacy statement

DJSIR is a program administrator and collects personal information in consultation with DGS for the purpose of administering claims and payments for the Nursing and Midwifery Sign-on Bonus.

The Victorian Government may collect demographic information for economic reporting purposes. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated data.

Any personal information about individuals claiming the Sign-on Bonus or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred and stored in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.

For concerns regarding the privacy of personal information contact [privacy@dgs.vic.gov.au](mailto:privacy@dgs.vic.gov.au). To view the Department’s privacy policy visit the [Department of Government Services privacy policy](http://www.vic.gov.au/privacy-policy-department-government-services) <www.vic.gov.au/privacy-policy-department-government-services>

## Contact

Any eligibility queries can be directed to the Department of Health via [nmw@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:nmw@health.vic.gov.au)

To confirm if you have been nominated to claim a bonus instalment you should contact the graduate coordinator at the public health service where you are/were employed.

Technical assistance with the online Sign-on Bonus portal or nomination process can be directed to DGS via [nsb@grants.vic.gov.au](mailto:nsb@grants.vic.gov.au)

To receive this document in another format, [email](mailto:nmw@health.vic.gov.au) <[Nursing and Midwifery Policy Team](mailto:nmw@health.vic.gov.au)> <[nmw@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:nmw@health.vic.gov.au)>.

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In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Koori/Koorie’ is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.



# Appendix 1 - Nursing & Midwifery Graduate Sign-on Bonus FAQs

March 2025

**How do I claim my Sign-on Bonus?**

* You will receive an email from ‘Nursing Sign-on Bonus Program’ which has a ‘@grants.vic.gov.au’ domain. This is an email address of the Department of Government Services (DGS), a program administrator for the Sign-on Bonus, supporting the Department of Health (the department). The email will invite you to login to a Sign-on Bonus Program portal. In the portal, you will be asked to confirm your details and sign a grant agreement to claim your payment.
* There will be a four-week window to sign a grant agreement and submit your claim during the claim acceptance period.
* If you do not submit a claim after receiving an invitation to claim, you will receive another invitation in the following claim acceptance period.
* You will receive the first instalment of the Bonus after you commence your graduate program. There are two rounds of payments each year – May/June and October/November.
* For the second instalment, after a minimum two years of consecutive employment at a Victorian public health service, you will be sent another email that will direct you to the Program portal.

**I did not receive my email invitation to claim my Sign-on Bonus. What do I do now?**

* You will only receive an email invitation to claim via Program portal if you were nominated by a Victorian public health service.
* Check your spam/junk inbox.
* Visit the Sign-on Bonus website <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/nursing-and-midwifery/nursing-and-midwifery-graduate-sign-on-bonus> for further information including eligibility criteria.
* Contact your employer to confirm your eligibility. Your employer is responsible for nominating eligible graduate registered nurses and midwives to DGS during each nomination period.

**Why did I not receive the Sign-on Bonus payment in my first pay?**

* To receive a Sign-on Bonus payment you must:
  + have been nominated by an eligible Victorian public health service and
  + have claimed the bonus instalment using the instructions from your email invitation.
* The Sign-on Bonus is paid separately from your salary. You will be paid via a claims process in May/June or October/November.
* The timing of your payment depends on when you commence your graduate program, when your employer nominated you for the bonus and when you made your bonus claim.

**What if I no longer have access to the email address my first claim invitation was sent to?**

* If you have previously activated your graduate portal account, you will need to log into the Program portal, submit a ‘Change of employer’ amendment request and include the start and end dates with your new and previous employers. It is then the responsibility of your new employer to nominate you if you meet the eligibility criteria.
* If you have **not** previously activated your graduate portal account and have changed employers and remain in the Victorian public health service, you should speak with your current employer regarding your eligibility and potential nomination for the program if they participate in the program.
* If you are no longer employed in in the Victorian public health service, please email nsb@grants.vic.gov.au.

**Are nurses commencing their career in a mental health nursing graduate program eligible for the Sign-on Bonus?**

* Yes, if you meet the other eligibility criteria then you are eligible for the Sign-on Bonus.

**Are postgraduate midwifery graduates eligible for the Sign-on Bonus?**

* Yes. You are eligible if you participate in a graduate program and meet other eligibility criteria.

**Can I have a ‘gap-year’ after I complete my nursing and/or midwifery course?**

* You must commence your graduate program in the same calendar year or the calendar year immediately following your course completion to be eligible for the Sign-on Bonus.

**When is the last time I can be nominated for the bonus or make a claim for a bonus payment?**

* Round 10 (in September 2027) will be the final round that health services can nominate an eligible graduate for their first instalment. Round 10 will also be the final round where any nominated graduate, regardless of their circumstances or when they were nominated for the first bonus instalment, can claim their first bonus payment.
* Round 11 (in April 2028) will be the final round that health services can nominate an eligible graduate for their second instalment. Round 11 will also be the final round where any eligible graduate, regardless of their circumstances or when they were nominated for the second bonus instalment, can claim their second bonus payment.

**I am on parental (maternity/paternity) leave. Will this affect my ability to claim the second payment?**

* No. Paid and unpaid parental leave is not considered an interruption to your two-year commitment and will not affect your ability to claim the second payment. However, you must return to work before receiving the second Sign-on Bonus payment.

**I am on WorkCover leave. Will this affect my ability to claim the second payment?**

* No. WorkCover leave is not considered an interruption to your two-year commitment, however, you must return to work before receiving the second payment.

**I have needed to take an extended period of time off work. Will this affect my ability to claim the second Sign-on Bonus payment?**

* There may be special circumstances that interrupt your ability to continuously serve your two-year commitment. If you need to take extended unpaid leave, you need to discuss your circumstances with your employer who will determine whether the circumstances represent a valid reason to interrupt the two-year commitment. You must take leave with the intention of returning to work and remain employed with your health service during the period of leave to remain eligible for the second payment.

**What happens to the second payment if I move out of Victoria’s public health system after my graduate year?**

* To be eligible for the second $2,500 payment you must be employed within Victoria’s public health system in an eligible nursing or midwifery role at the time you reach your two-year commitment. You can change employers across the two-year period; however, all employers must be within Victoria’s public health system.

**I have changed public health services, what do I need to do to receive the second payment?**

* You will need to log into the Program portal and submit a ‘Change of employer’ amendment request and include the start and end dates with your new and previous employers.
* The gap(s) between finishing at one Victorian public health service and commencing at another Victorian public health service must not exceed 28 days in total across the two-year commitment. Approved leave (as above) does not count as a gap in employment.

**I could not complete my graduate year program, but I have remained working as a nurse/midwife in Victoria’s public health system, am I eligible for the second payment?**

* Yes, if you meet the eligibility criteria.

**Can I claim the Sign-on Bonus at multiple employers?**

* No. You can only claim the Sign-on Bonus once. If you change employers after the first payment, you can still claim the second half of the payment if you meet eligibility criteria. You cannot claim multiple Sign-on Bonuses from multiple employers.

**I transitioned to casual employment after receiving my first Sign-on Bonus payment. Am I still eligible to receive the second payment?**

* Yes, if you are employed by a Victorian public health service so long as you meet the eligibility criteria for the second payment. Agency staff, not directly employed by the Victorian public health service are not eligible for the Sign-on bonus.

**I am working below 0.8 FTE. Will I receive the full payment?**

* Yes. All eligible employees will receive the full payment. The FTE requirement has been removed from the eligibility criteria to provide the full benefit to nurses and midwives who have committed to working in Victoria’s public health system.

**Are the payments taxed?**

* Tax is not deducted from the payments. The department recommends that recipients seek independent tax advice regarding your Sign-on Bonus payment/s.

**I studied and completed my nursing/midwifery course in Victoria, however, I am an Australian Temporary resident. Am I eligible for the Sign-on Bonus?**

* No. Temporary residents are not eligible for the Sign-on Bonus. We recommend that you choose the ‘opt out’ pathway if you were nominated in error.

**I am a permanent resident of Australia. Am I eligible for the Sign-on Bonus?**

* If you are an Australian permanent resident or received Australian permanent residency during your graduate year you can be nominated by your health service during your graduate year. If you receive Australian permanent residency after your graduate year, then you have missed the eligibility cut-off.

**I am a New Zealand citizen/permanent resident and completed my nursing training outside of Australia. Am I eligible for the Sign-on Bonus?**

* No. You must have graduated from an eligible Australian qualification in 2022, 2023 or 2024. We recommend that you choose the ‘opt out’ pathway for the Sign-on Bonus if you have been nominated in error.

**I completed a Diploma of Nursing through TAFE, and I am a graduate enrolled nurse, am I eligible for the Sign-on Bonus.**

* No. The Sign-on Bonus is only available to graduate registered nurses and midwives who have completed a higher education degree in nursing or midwifery (e.g., a Bachelor of Nursing or Postgraduate Diploma in Midwifery degree).

**I have received payment for the** **University component of the Undergraduate (Entry-To-Practice) Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Program or the Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse transition Scholarship and have been nominated for the Sign-on Bonus. Am I eligible for both?**

* Yes, if you meet the eligibility criteria for both programs, you can receive payments for the University component of the Undergraduate (Entry-To-Practice) Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Program or the Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse transition Scholarship and the Sign-on Bonus.

**Can I apply for both the Sign-on Bonus and the Health Service Component of the Undergraduate (Entry-To-Practice) Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Program or Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse Transition Scholarships?**

* No, you cannot receive multiple scholarships/bonuses from the department under different schemes where the purpose is the same. You can either receive the:
  + Sign-on Bonus or
  + the Health Service Component of the Undergraduate (Entry-To-Practice) Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship or
  + the Health Service Component/bonus portion of the Enrolled nurse to registered nurse transition scholarship.

**I am ineligible but was nominated in error. I received an invitational email and submitted a claim. Do I need to return the Sign-on Bonus?**

* Yes. You must confirm that you meet the eligibility criteria during the claims process. If you are ineligible for the Sign-on Bonus but proceeded to submit a claim, you will be required to return the funding to the State of Victoria.

**Who can I contact regarding the Sign-on Bonus?**

* Visit the Nursing and Midwifery Graduate Sign-on Bonus website: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/nursing-and-midwifery/nursing-and-midwifery-graduate-sign-on-bonus>
* For eligibility queries you can contact the Department of Health via [nmw@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:nmw@health.vic.gov.au).
* For nomination queries, i.e., to confirm your health service has or will nominate you to claim a bonus instalment you should contact the graduate coordinator at the public health service where you are/were employed.
* For technical assistance, you can contact DGS via [nsb@grants.vic.gov.au](mailto:nsb@grants.vic.gov.au)

1. From 2024, employees begin to be eligible for second payments. There will be some employees who completed their study in early 2022 and commenced a graduate program soon after who may have completed their two years of service in time for the 1st payment round for 2024. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)