

Victorian Postgraduate Mental Health Nurse Scholarships- \$3000

Semester 1, 2025 Application Guide

OFFICIAL



Department
of Health

OFFICIAL

To receive this document in another format, phone (03) 8633 3345, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email [Mental Health Workforce](mailto:MentalHealthWorkforce@health.vic.gov.au) <MentalHealthWorkforce@health.vic.gov.au>.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Health, September 2024.

ISBN 978-1-76131-653-1 (pdf/online/MS word)

Available at [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>

Contents

Scholarship program overview	4
Purpose and scope	4
How do I apply?.....	4
Key dates.....	4
Background	5
The Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System	5
Victoria’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy 2021-2024.....	5
Scholarship program details	6
Applicant eligibility	6
Course eligibility	6
How applications will be assessed.....	7
Weightings and prioritisation	7
Tips to support your scholarship application.....	8
Application process	9
Assessment Criteria	9
Scholarship awarding process	9
Unsuccessful applications	10
Assessment panel	10
Responsibilities, conditions and commitments for scholarship recipients	11
Scholarship agreement	11
Supporting documentation for successful applicants.....	11
Funding disbursement.....	12
Enrolment process	12
Taxation queries.....	12
Scholarship conditions	12
Fraudulent claims	13
Program surveys and evaluation.....	13
Privacy statement	14
Frequently asked questions	16
Appendices	18
Appendix 1: Example responses.....	18

Scholarship program overview

Scholarships are available for nurses working in Victorian public mental health services to support postgraduate study. This round of scholarships will be offered for semester 1, 2025. The department funds 117 postgraduate mental health nursing scholarships per year. Each scholarship is \$3,000. This document has been prepared to guide applicants through the application process.

Purpose and scope

Scholarships provide financial assistance to nurses employed (or commencing employment) within Victorian Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services and Statewide Mental Health Services. The objective of this initiative is to support continued learning and development pathways to help build workforces skills, knowledge, and capabilities to deliver high quality, evidence-based and consumer-centred care.

Scholarship funds contribute towards the cost of undertaking postgraduate studies including tuition fees, student contributions, study loans (including HECS-HELP and FEE-HELP), books and equipment, travel required to attend lectures and clinical placements, childcare, and other related study costs. The scholarships are paid directly to individual recipients.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTQIA+, 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. This is to assist in promoting a diverse workforce as recommended by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

How do I apply?

Applicants must read and understand this application guide before completing their application. The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) administer the scholarships for the Department of Health (the department). Applications should be submitted via the application form on the [ACN's website](https://www.acn.edu.au/scholarships/vic-postgrad-mental-health-nurse-scholarships-3000) <<https://www.acn.edu.au/scholarships/vic-postgrad-mental-health-nurse-scholarships-3000>> by 11.59pm AEST on Friday 6 December 2024.

For more information, please contact the ACN on 1800 061 660 or scholarships@acn.edu.au. Please note, the ACN does not evaluate scholarship applicants.

Key dates

Activities	Date for completion
Applications open	Monday 30 September 2024
Applications close	Friday 6 December 2024
Outcomes announced	From mid-March 2025

Background

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

The Victorian Government has committed to implementing all recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (the Royal Commission) and is doing so via the department's Mental Health and Wellbeing and Hospitals and Health Services Divisions.

The Royal Commission provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform the mental health system and improve access to services, service navigation and models of care.

The Royal Commission released an interim and final report which 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.

Victoria's Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy 2021-2024

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>>) was released in 2021 in response to Recommendation 57 from the Royal Commission's final report. The Strategy sets out the Victorian Government's vision and implementation plan for strengthening and growing the mental health and wellbeing workforce.

To support implementation of the Strategy, the department is delivering a suite of scholarships for Victorian mental health professionals, as part of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Scholarship Program. The Australian College of Nursing (the ACN) is administering the scholarships on behalf of the department.

For information about a full range of development opportunities for mental health nurses, mental health allied health professionals, alcohol and other drug (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 the [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.

Applicant eligibility

The following eligibility criteria applies, applicants should assess their eligibility to all of the below criteria prior to applying.

Applicant Eligibility	
1	Applicants must be a registered nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia < https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au > or be registered by course enrolment.
2	Applicants must be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or New Zealand citizen.
3	Applicants must be employed (or commencing employment) in a Victorian public mental health service at or above 0.5 FTE, and remain working in the public mental health system during study and for at least one year after completing your studies (note: moving between roles/service etc within public mental health is acceptable)
4	Applicants must be enrolled (or intending to enrol) in an eligible course for semester 1, 2025* (see 'Course eligibility' below).
5	Applicants must have their application reviewed and endorsed by their Director of Mental Health Nursing (or Senior Mental Health Nurse) as part of their application.

Please note:

*Evidence of enrolment in semester 1, 2025 will need to be provided before scholarship funding is paid.

Course eligibility

The following course eligibility applies, applicants should assess their eligibility to all the below criteria prior to applying.

Course Eligibility	
1	The course must classify as level 8 or higher under the Australian Qualifications Framework < https://www.aqf.edu.au/ >
2	The course must be delivered by an accredited university or higher education provider < https://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register >
3	Eligible courses are those that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead to a tertiary qualification in mental health nursing or one that advances the applicant's knowledge, skills and capacity to provide effective mental health care • build the capabilities required to deliver high quality, evidence-based consumer-centred care in the public mental health and wellbeing sector and/or • build the capacity of the Victorian mental health and wellbeing sector by improving the skills and knowledge of other mental health nurses within the sector.

Please note, individuals undertaking studies to become a nurse practitioner are now eligible for this scholarship program.

For information about other postgraduate nurse scholarships in a range of practice areas please refer to the [Postgraduate nursing and midwifery scholarships page](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/nursing-and-midwifery/working-as-a-nurse-or-midwife) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/nursing-and-midwifery/working-as-a-nurse-or-midwife>>.

Ineligible applicants

The following applicants are ineligible to apply for this scholarship:

- Applicants who are receiving scholarships through any other Victorian Government funded scholarship program for course enrolment in 2025. This includes but is not limited to scholarships provided by the Hamilton Centre, Turning Point and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF).

As part of this process, any information provided by an applicant may be shared and subject to verification by eligible education providers and Victorian Government departments including DFFH, DGS, and DJSIR.

You may be requested to provide further information to assist in the assessment of your application or a claim for payment if your application is successful. The Victorian Government reserves the right to refuse an application or claim for payment where eligibility criteria are not met, or where the applicant does not or cannot provide sufficient information in the required timeframe to assess whether eligibility criteria have been met, or where a claim for payment of the scholarship cannot be supported.

How applications will be assessed

All applications are screened by the ACN for eligibility based on the information and evidence you provide, and a department-led assessment panel will undertake a merit evaluation of the assessment criteria to award scholarships through a competitive process. Only deidentified application data is available to the department. Scholarships are limited and eligible applicants are not guaranteed a scholarship.

As part of this process, any information provided by an applicant may be shared and subject to verification by eligible education providers and the Victorian Government departments including Department of Health.

You may be requested to provide further information to assist in the assessment of your application or a claim for payment if your application is successful. The Victorian Government reserves the right to refuse an application or claim for payment where eligibility criteria are not met, or where the applicant does not or cannot provide sufficient information in the required timeframe to assess whether eligibility criteria have been met, or where a claim for payment of the scholarship cannot be supported.

Weightings and prioritisation

Prioritisation will be provided for the following eligible applicants by way of a weighting:

- applicants who haven't previously received a Postgraduate Mental Health Nurse scholarship (\$3000 or Full Course Fee)
- applicants who aren't receiving funding support from other sources (eg. scholarships, professional bodies or university etc.)
- applicants who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- eligible applicants employed by a health service in regional or rural Victoria.

Tips to support your scholarship application

1. **Know the key dates.** The scholarship applications will close at 11:59pm AEST on **Friday 6 December 2024**. Late applications will not be considered.
2. **Review the assessment criteria a few times.** Applicants should familiarise themselves with the assessment criteria and spend some time thinking about how they satisfy it.
3. **Refer to Appendix 1 to aid your responses to the assessment criteria.** Examples have been provided which are strong versus weak to assist you to submit a competitive application.
4. **Answer the 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, when providing your 'commitment to the mental health sector', provide clear detail so that it is clear why you are working in a mental health, and any personal/professional experiences that have led you to this career.
5. **Personalise your responses.** Reliance on artificial intelligence (AI) generated responses is discouraged by the department. If AI is used, responses should be personalised to show unique attributes of the applicant and a true understanding of the applicant's motivation to work in the public mental health system. Responses where AI is picked up and which have not been personalised may be subject to lower rankings and/or negative scoring at the discretion of the assessment panel during the ranking process.
6. **Use past experiences as examples.** Applicants are encouraged to share their experiences which have motivated them, including self-directed and voluntary initiatives such as additional courses completed, leadership positions or other specific examples which have led them to their career in mental health (not limited to paid roles in the mental health).
7. **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>>.
8. **Spend some time refining written responses.** Keep responses as concise as possible noting the word limit of 300 words. Remember to use examples to demonstrate strengths, and passion and commitment to the mental health sector.
9. **Ensure your application has been reviewed and endorsed by the Director of Mental Health Nursing (or Senior Mental Health Nurse) at your place of employment.** Applicants must get their application reviewed and endorsed for both the quality of their application and organisational support of their postgraduate studies. This includes that the language used in their application is respectful, professional, and contemporary and that the application is clear in answering the posed questions. A template of the required endorsement letter is provided on the application form on ACN's website.

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 if your employer will support you to undertake postgraduate studies and have them **review and endorse** 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 **Friday 6 December 2024**.

STEP 4- Applicants notified of outcome

- applicants are notified of their outcome by **mid-March 2025**.
- successful applicants can expect payments to be made by the ACN in April 2025, **after** the first semester census date (31 March 2025).

Please note: Late applications will not be accepted.

Assessment Criteria

Applicants will be asked to provide a 200-300-word statement addressing the assessment criteria.

Assessment Criteria

Commitment to mental health nursing and the public mental health sector

Provide a 200-300-word statement describing your commitment to mental health nursing in the public mental health sector.

It should consider how your proposed studies will support you to provide person-centred, recovery-oriented care. This should include:

- why you chose a career in mental health nursing
- a rationale for undertaking your selected course of study and how it enhances your commitment to mental health nursing
- how this course enhances your professional practice
- how this course improves the outcomes of consumers and their family, carers and supporters.

Strong applications utilise clear examples of translating study into practice, and working with consumers, families and carers.

Examples of competitive and non-competitive responses can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Responses

Reliance on AI generated responses is discouraged by the department. If AI is used, responses should be personalised to show unique attributes of the applicant and a true understanding of the

applicant’s motivation to work in the public mental health system. Responses where AI is picked up and which have not been personalised may be subject to lower rankings and/or negative scoring at the discretion of the assessment panel during the ranking process.

Scholarship awarding process

An overview of the scholarship process is laid out below.

1	<p>Eligibility check</p> <p>Applicants screened to ensure eligibility requirements are met.</p>
2	<p>Applications assessed</p> <p>Applications are assessed against the assessment criteria.</p>
3	<p>Weightings applied</p> <p>Weightings are added to qualifying applicants.</p>
4	<p>Scholarship assessment</p> <p>Scholarships grants decided at discretion of an assessment panel through a competitive process.</p>
5	<p>Applicants notified</p> <p>Applicants are notified of their outcome by mid-March 2025.</p>
6	<p>Scholarship payments scheduled</p> <p>Payments are expected to be made by the ACN after the first semester university census date.</p>

Unsuccessful applications

An unsuccessful application is either unsuccessful because they were ineligible, or they were not recommended by the assessment panel due to the competitive, merit-based nature of the assessment process.

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

Assessment panel

The assessment panel will comprise of at least three members appointed by the department. Assessment panel members hold appropriate expertise including lived and living experience and representation from the Office of the Chief Mental Health Nurse.

Responsibilities, conditions and commitments for scholarship recipients

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

Scholarship agreement

If your application is successful, you will be notified via email. 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. You will be required to respond to this email **within a specified time frame**, indicating your acceptance of the scholarship offer. If you do not respond with your acceptance of the scholarship offer, the offer will be withdrawn after the specified time frame and after appropriate attempts have been made to confirm your acceptance.

Successful applicants will be required to sign a scholarship acceptance form prior to the commencement of the scholarship. Your response will form an agreement between you and the Victorian Government on the terms contained in your application form and these guidelines.

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	Copy of current Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia registration – front and back showing name, registration number, endorsements and if there are conditions or restrictions on registration.
3	<p>Evidence of enrolment in semester 1, 2025, in an eligible 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, 2025 <p>This must include the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the names of enrolled units, subjects, or courses for semester 1, 2025 • 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.

Funding disbursement

Once the required evidence has been provided to the ACN, scholarship recipients will receive funds via a direct electronic transfer to their account. It is important to note that funds will only be provided **after the university census** date in the semester you are commencing your course.

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 employed 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. These types of circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are at the absolute discretion of the department.

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

By submitting your completed application, you consent to the ACN sharing information provided by you with the Victorian Department of Health and between the Victorian Government and external

parties for application assessment, evaluation and administration purposes as well as for validating enrolment and other eligibility requirements, including:

- your education provider
- Victorian Government departments including but not limited to the Department of Health, the Department of Government Services (DGS), the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).

By accepting a scholarship, you are also consenting to your application information being utilised in monitoring and evaluation of the program.

Applications and claims for scholarship payments may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives for a period of up to three years following the completion of the scholarship to determine whether the application and information provided during the term of the scholarship was accurate and complete, consistent with these program guidelines.

The department may, at any time, remove your application from the assessment process or terminate a scholarship agreement if, in the department's opinion, you may bring the department, a Minister or the Victorian Government into disrepute.

You are responsible for informing the ACN via email of any changes to your circumstances, including:

- changes to contact details, such as address, mobile number, email and bank account details
- significant changes to your enrolment, such as withdrawal or deferral from your placement or course.

Fraudulent claims

By submitting your application form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true, accurate and not misleading about a material fact.

If any information in the application or claims for payment are found to be false, misleading or fraudulent the amount of scholarship funding paid to you under the scholarship program will be repayable on demand. The Victorian Government reserves the right to take further action, including referring the scholarship recipient to the relevant law enforcement agency. Providing inaccurate, untrue, or misleading information may be an offence and serious penalties may apply.

Program surveys and evaluation

By accepting a scholarship, you are consenting to your application information being utilised for monitoring and evaluation of the program. You are also agreeing to receive requests to participate in additional evaluation activities, such as to complete survey questions or participate in interviews or focus groups. These requests may be made for a period of up to three years after applying for a scholarship. All information utilised in monitoring and evaluation will be deidentified and treated in accordance with the privacy statement detailed below.

Privacy statement

In applying for a scholarship, you will be providing personal and sensitive information which will be collected and used by ACN as the program administrators. Your personal and sensitive information is collected for the purpose of assessing eligibility, administering claims and payments and other functions necessary for the effective delivery of the program, including monitoring and evaluation.

By applying for a scholarship, you consent to the sharing of information as outlined in the Terms and Conditions section above and in the application form. The ACN, as program administrators may contact you to clarify your submitted information, and for program review, reporting, monitoring, audit and evaluation purposes.

ACN and the department will complete a range of eligibility assessments that may include data matching to clarify the accuracy and quality of information supplied by you. The data matching may occur on enrolment information and personal and sensitive information provided in your application, your supporting evidence and any claim or payment forms.

As part of application verification and to enable payment of scholarships, the department and/or ACN will share your personal and sensitive information with other Victorian and Commonwealth Government agencies. As part of the verification process, the department and/or ACN may contact your education provider to confirm your enrolment, commencement and other course related milestones.

Personal and sensitive information, including demographic information, that is collected as part of the application process will be utilised to assess your eligibility. The department will only have access to deidentified application data. Deidentified demographic information may also be used for evaluation and reporting purposes on behalf of the Victorian Government. No identifying information is used in reporting; all reports will be presented with aggregated data.

Other than as set out in these guidelines, your personal and sensitive information will not be shared with any other external parties, without your consent, unless otherwise authorised or required by law. In the circumstances your information is shared with external parties apart from those listed above, the department and/or ACN will use best endeavours to inform you of the nature and purpose of sharing that information prior to doing so.

If there is an intention to include personal and sensitive information about a third party in the application, you must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.

Any personal and sensitive information that you provide about yourself, 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), the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic), the Public Records Act 1973 (Vic) and other applicable legislation.

If you do not provide all the information requested of you, your application may be unable to proceed.

You have the right to request access to your personal and sensitive information that is collected at any time. If you identify information that is incorrect, you may request for it to be corrected.

For enquiries about access to, or correction of, your personal information you can email the ACN at scholarships@acn.edu.au. If you have concerns regarding your privacy and/or how your personal and sensitive information has been used, please [email the Department of Health at <privacy@health.vic.gov.au>](mailto:privacy@health.vic.gov.au).

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>.

Please visit the department's [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.

Other information

The department reserves the right to amend these guidelines at any time as it deems appropriate (subject to appropriate notice being given either by publication on the ACN website, the Department's scholarships website or by email to applicants and recipients).

Contact

Please review the frequently asked questions and program guideline appendices if you have questions or require further detail. Please contact the ACN on 1800 061 660 or scholarships@acn.edu.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 specialist mental health sector; and/or
- build the capacity of the Victorian mental health sector by improving the skills and knowledge of other mental health nurses within the sector.

Relevant degrees may include:

- Master of Nursing (majoring in mental health)
- Master of Mental Health Nursing
- Graduate Diploma/Certificate in Mental Health Nursing
- Master of Forensic Mental Health
- Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma in Nursing Practice
- Master of Advanced Nursing Practice
- Graduate Certificate in Alcohol and Other Drug Studies
- Master of Addictive Behaviours
- Master of Professional Education and Training
- Master of Advanced Nursing Practice

Who can apply?

Registered nurses who are Australian citizens, permanent residents or New Zealand citizens working in a Victorian Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Service or Statewide Mental Health Service can apply.

Can I apply if I have already received the full course fee scholarship?

Yes, you can apply for this scholarship if you have already received the Full Course Fee Postgraduate Mental Health Nurse Scholarship in previous rounds.

Can I apply if I have already received this scholarship?

Yes, you can apply for this scholarship if you have already received the \$3000 Postgraduate Mental Health Nurse Scholarship previously.

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.

What can these scholarships be used for?

The scholarships are worth up to \$3,000 and considered a contribution towards the cost of undertaking postgraduate studies, including tuition fees, student contributions, study loans (HECS-HELP and FEE-HELP), books and equipment, travel required to attend lectures and clinical placements, childcare and other related study costs.

Do scholarship recipients need to provide a budget?

No, recipients do not need to prove how they will spend the money or provide the department or ACN with a proposed budget for the \$3,000.

How will the money be paid to scholarship recipients?

Successful applicants will receive \$3,000 in full as a one-off payment into their personal bank account.

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 the closing date, 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?

Applicants are notified of their outcome by **mid-March 2025**.

Appendices

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: Provide a 200-300-word statement describing your commitment to mental health nursing. It should consider how your proposed studies will support you to provide person-centred, recovery-oriented care. This should include:

- why you chose a career in the mental health nursing
- a rationale for undertaking your selected course of study and how it enhances your commitment to mental health nursing?
- how this course enhances your professional practice
- how this course improves the outcomes of consumers and their family, carers and supporters

Strong applications utilise clear examples of translating study into practice, and working with consumers, families and carers. Examples of competitive and non-competitive responses can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Weak Example	Why is this a weak response?
<p>I am completing this course in order to equip myself with the skills to become a senior nurse and have a strong passion for mental health. This course will give me the skills to become a good mental health nurse.</p>	<p>The response did not answer the posed question as it did not explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why they became a mental health nurse. • What the rationale was for choosing the course and how it will enhance their commitment to mental health nursing. • In what way their professional practice will be enhanced through this particular course- what skills will the course provide. • Why/how completion of the course will improve outcomes for consumers and their family, carers and supporters.

Weak Example	Why is this a weak response?
<p>My experience has exposed me to the vulnerability of patients with mental health. To achieve optimal patient recovery goals, one needs to understand a person’s mental health.</p> <p>Doing this course will improve my knowledge of mental health. In addition, the importance of mental health nursing is to advocate and promote, patients with mental health are not in the state of mind to ask questions or make their own decisions due to overwhelming symptoms, it is the nurse’s duty to be their voice, advocate for them and provide available resources to support their recovery journey.</p>	<p>The response did not answer the posed question as it did not explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why they chose to enrol in this specific course. • How their experience motivated them to pursue a career in mental health nursing. • How the course will improve their knowledge/skills. • How will completion of this course improve the outcomes for consumers and their family carers and supporters? <p>The response also included concerning language which is not contemporary and aligned to the mental health reform agenda (e.g. reference to ‘patients’, ‘vulnerability’ and being a consumer’s voice)</p>
Competitive Example	Why is this a strong response?
<p>Growing up in rural Victoria as a family member of someone who lived with undiagnosed bipolar disorder for many years and after diagnosis, having to travel large distances for the treatment required I developed a passion to support others in similar situations. I have acquired valuable skills and knowledge working as a graduate mental health nurse but feel that building my expertise further will enable me to provide the best possible care to consumers, families, carers and supporters.</p> <p>I am passionate about holistic care that considers psychosocial needs rather than only pharmacological intervention, and advocate for these approaches in my work with consumers. I try to work with consumers, families, carers and supporters by developing rapport through empathy, to help with recovery.</p> <p>This study will help me in my career by providing me with advanced skills in mental health nursing and improving my understanding of the challenges faced by consumers, carers, families and supporters, and my ability to respond to those challenges. This education will help me provide better treatment, care and support. It will also assist me to have more of a leadership position and reduce stigma as I will be better able to educate others about mental health, improving empathy for those experiencing mental ill health and distress.</p>	<p>The response answered the posed question and was clear in explaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason/motivation for pursuing mental health nursing as a career. • Rationale for pursuing the course is provided- to advance their skills in mental health nursing and improve their understanding of the challenges face by consumers, carers, families and supporters and the ability to respond to such. • Professional practice enhancement achieved through the course. • How this further education will improve outcomes for consumers, carers, families and supporters.

Competitive Example	Why is this a strong response?
<p>I chose a career in the mental health sector due to my passion for supporting individuals facing mental health challenges. I was drawn to contribute to this field and offer assistance in navigating these difficulties after witnessing my sister living with schizophrenia and the impact it had on those closest to her.</p> <p>I have chosen this course to enhance my understanding and skills in mental health care. By acquiring advanced knowledge and skills, I aim to strengthen my ability to provide effective support and interventions to consumers and their families, carers and supporters, thereby making a meaningful difference in their lives.</p> <p>This course equips me with the latest theories, research findings, and practical techniques in the mental health field.</p> <p>My clinical judgment, communication skills, and therapeutic approaches will be refined upon completion of this course. Additionally, opportunities for networking and collaboration with peers and professionals will further enrich my professional development.</p> <p>By undertaking this course, I will be better equipped to offer evidence-based interventions and tailored support to consumers and their families, carers, and supporters. I will also be able to facilitate more effective therapeutic relationships, promote holistic wellness, and empower individuals to achieve their recovery goals.</p>	<p>This response was well-structured, covered all aspects of the assessment criteria, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason for becoming a mental health nurse is clear. • Language used is respectful and contemporary.