

# Victorian Psychiatric State Enrolled Nursing Grants

Application Guide 2024/25

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Department  
of Health

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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>

# Scholarship program overview

This grant is a commitment of the Victorian Government to provide financial support for Psychiatric State Enrolled Nurses' (PSEN's) backfill during clinical placements. There are 10 scholarships available each financial year.

## Purpose and scope

These scholarships are available to public mental health and wellbeing services to help meet the cost of PSEN's undertaking clinical placement whilst completing a Bachelor of Nursing course.

The grants are worth \$2,717 towards the cost of backfill arrangements and are paid directly to the applying service and not the PSEN.

Applying services who employ PSENs undertaking Bachelor of Nursing study who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, workers with disabilities and culturally diverse PSENs are encouraged to apply. This is to assist in promoting a diverse workforce which was recommended by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

Public mental health and wellbeing services can apply for as many grants as they choose, however, no more than two PSEN scholarships will be awarded per service. The two will be determined through a merit-based assessment process. This is to ensure financial support is distributed to public mental health and wellbeing services statewide.

Please note that services applying for a grant for PSENs who have not previously received a PSEN grant, those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and those from regional and rural services will be prioritised and given additional weighting in the application process.

## How do I apply?

Applying services must read and understand this application guide before completing their application. The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) administer the grants 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-psychiatric-state-enrolled-nursing-grants) <<https://www.acn.edu.au/scholarships/vic-psychiatric-state-enrolled-nursing-grants>> by 11.59 pm AEST on 21 October 2024.

For more information, please contact the ACN on 1800 061 660 or [scholarships@acn.edu.au](mailto:scholarships@acn.edu.au).

## Key dates

Activities	Key dates
Applications open	23 September 2024
Applications close	21 October 2024
Grant recipients advised of outcome and agreement of terms and conditions signed	December 2024

# Background

## Introduction

The Victorian Psychiatric Services Enterprise Bargaining Agreement provides for two weeks of clinical placement study leave for Psychiatric State Enrolled Nurses (PSEN's) undertaking a Bachelor of Nursing course.

The Victorian Department of Health (the department) has committed to fund ten scholarships per year at \$2,717 per placement. The funding is available to public mental health and wellbeing services and is considered a contribution towards the cost of backfill arrangements for PSENs undertaking clinical placements. The grants are paid directly to the applying service and not the PSEN.

## 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).

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 the mental health and wellbeing workforce.

To support the implementation of the Strategy, the department is delivering a scholarship program for mental health professionals in Victoria, as part of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Scholarship Program.

For information about a full range of development opportunities for mental health nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, 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 administration

The ACN administer the grants on behalf of the department. Please note, the ACN does not evaluate applications; a department-led assessment panel reviews eligible candidates for merit against the Assessment Criteria listed below.

## Scholarship program details

All eligible services are encouraged to apply for a PSEN grant. Public mental health and wellbeing services can apply for as many grants as they choose, however no more than two PSEN grants will be awarded per service. The two will be determined through a merit-based assessment process. This is to ensure financial support is distributed to public mental health and wellbeing services statewide.

All applications will be screened by the ACN for eligibility, and a department-led assessment panel will undertake a merit assessment to award grants through a competitive process.

### Eligibility criteria

The following eligibility criteria applies, applying services should assess the eligibility for nominated enrolled nurses prior to applying.

To be eligible to apply for a grant, applying services (**Victorian public mental health services**) must apply on behalf of an enrolled nurse who meets the below eligibility criteria.

Enrolled Nurse Eligibility	
1	The enrolled nurse must be registered with the <a href="https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au">Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia</a> < <a href="https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au">https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au</a> >
2	The enrolled nurse must be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or New Zealand citizen
3	The enrolled nurse must be employed (or commencing employment) in the 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	The enrolled nurse must be enrolled in a Bachelor of Nursing course, with an accredited Australian tertiary institution from 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

### How applications will be assessed

All applications are screened by the ACN for eligibility based on the information and evidence provided, and a department-led assessment panel will undertake a merit evaluation of the assessment criteria to award grants through a competitive process. Grants are limited and eligible applying services are not guaranteed a grant for all nominated enrolled nurses.

As part of this process, any information provided by an applying service 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 applying service 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 grant cannot be supported.

## Weightings and prioritisation

Prioritisation will be provided for the following by way of an additional weighting:

- eligible services who are applying on behalf of a nominated PSEN who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- eligible services from regional and rural areas
- eligible services who are applying on behalf of a nominated PSEN who **has not** previously received a PSEN grant before.

## Value of the grant

The grants are worth \$2,717 and are considered a contribution towards the cost of backfill arrangements for PSENs undertaking clinical placements. The grants are paid directly to the applying service and not the PSEN.

## Application process

### STEP 1- Confirm Eligibility

- check your eligibility against the eligibility criteria in these guidelines
- check that you can meet the grant conditions.

### STEP 2- Complete application form

- ensure each application is individualised for the PSEN that the grant is being applied on behalf of
- ensure all required supporting documentation is attached
- proofread your application.

### STEP 3- Submit application

- applications close at 11.59pm AEST on 21 October 2024.

### STEP 4- Applying services notified of outcome

- applying services are notified of their outcome by mid-December 2024.
- successful applying services can expect payments to be made by the ACN at the time of the PSEN's placement.

# Assessment Criteria

A panel will be convened to assess all eligible applications.

These are competitive grants and will be awarded on the recommendation of the independent assessment panel. The panel's assessment will be based on how the **supervising Clinical Nurse Educator, Line Manager or another suitably knowledge staff member** addresses the assessment criteria below.

Assessment Criteria	
1.	Provide a 200-300-word statement that provides evidence of the <b>individual</b> PSEN's commitment to continue working in the mental health sector. <i>Please note:</i> responses need to be individually tailored to the PSEN who is undertaking clinical placement. Where services have substantively replicated responses for multiple nominated PSEN's within their service, the applications will be marked down.
2.	Provide a 200-300-word statement that provides evidence of the mental health service's support for the nominated PSEN. Examples could include assistance with fees, additional study leave, supervision etc.

## Tips to support your scholarship application

1. **Know the key dates.** The scholarship applications will close at 11:59pm AEST on 21 October 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. **Answer the posed question.** Ensure that in providing a written response, the assessment panel has a clear understanding of **individual** PSEN's commitment to continue working in the mental health sector.

# Scholarship awarding process

An overview of the scholarship process is laid out below.

1	<p><b>Eligibility check</b></p> <p>Applying service screened to ensure eligibility requirements are met.</p>
2	<p><b>Applications assessed</b></p> <p>Applying services are assessed against the assessment criteria.</p>
3	<p><b>Weightings applied</b></p> <p>Weightings are added to qualifying applying services.</p>
4	<p><b>Grant assessment</b></p> <p>Grants are allocated at the discretion of an assessment panel through a competitive process.</p>
5	<p><b>Applying service notified</b></p> <p>Applying services are notified of their outcome by mid December 2024.</p>
6	<p><b>Scholarship payments made</b></p> <p>Payments are expected to be made by the ACN at the time of the PSEN's placement.</p>

## Unsuccessful applications

An unsuccessful application is either unsuccessful because the service or nominated PSEN was ineligible, or they were not recommended by the assessment panel.

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

## Assessment panel

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



# Responsibilities, conditions and commitments for scholarship recipients

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

## Grant agreement

An acceptance pack detailing the required paperwork to be submitted as well as a copy of the grant's terms and conditions will be provided by the ACN upon successful notification of receiving this grant. Successful services will be required to sign a grant acceptance form prior to receiving the grant.

## Supporting documentation for successful applicants

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

Required supporting documentation	
1	Evidence of the enrolled nurse's Australian citizenship, permanent residency or New Zealand citizenship (New Zealand Citizens must submit a copy of their current passport).
2	Copy of the enrolled nurse's current <b>Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia registration</b> – front and back showing name, registration number, endorsements and if there are conditions or restrictions on registration.
3	Evidence of the nominated enrolled nurse's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• course enrolment showing the placement subject</li> <li>• clinical placement details, such as location, commencement and completion date.</li> </ul>
4	The banking details of the public mental health and wellbeing service that has applied for the PSEN grant.

## Funding disbursement

Once the required evidence has been provided to the ACN, successful services will receive funds via a direct electronic transfer to their account. It is important to note that funds will only be deposited at the time of the PSEN's clinical placement.

## Grant conditions

### Consent to share applying service and nominated PSEN information

Applying service and nominated PSEN information may be shared with the department for evaluation and promotional purposes, where the applying service has expressed their consent.

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

Applications and claims for grant 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 grant to determine whether the application and information provided during the term of the grant 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 grant agreement if, in the department's opinion, you may bring the department, a Minister or the Victorian Government into disrepute.

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](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](mailto:privacy@health.vic.gov.au) <privacy@health.vic.gov.au>.

## 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 grant 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 grant, 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 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>>.

## 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 applying services 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](mailto:scholarships@acn.edu.au).

## Frequently asked questions

### Are late applications accepted?

No. All applications must be submitted by Friday 21 October 2024 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](mailto:scholarships@acn.edu.au).

### When will I be notified if I am successful?

You will be advised of the outcome of your application by December 2024.

### Who can apply?

Victorian public mental health services must apply on behalf of the psychiatric state enrolled nurse (PSEN). Before applying, the service must confirm that the PSEN is:

- registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
- an Australian Citizen, New Zealand Citizen, or permanent resident
- employed or commencing employment at the 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)
- enrolled in a Bachelor of Nursing for the relevant semester.

## How will the money be paid to grant recipients?

Victorian public mental health services attaining a grant will receive \$2,717 in full as a one-off payment, paid directly to the employer (rather than the PSEN).