



Australian Government
Department of Health

BONDED MEDICAL PROGRAM



Student Information Booklet

JANUARY 2020



This Student Booklet provides an overview of the Bonded Medical Program new arrangement commencing 1 January 2020.

The Australian Government is committed to improving health outcomes for all Australians. It aims to build a sustainable high quality health workforce that is distributed across the country according to community need.

There are shortages of trained doctors in regional, rural and remote areas. The Government is delivering programs to support doctors to live, train and build careers in regional, rural and remote communities.

The Bonded Medical Program allows more medical practitioners to live and work in areas where they are needed most.

This booklet includes information on the Bonded Medical Program:

- How to apply or opt in
- Accepting a bonded medical place
- Obligations after you graduate
- Choice of locations for your return of service
- Where to go for support and further information

More information is also available on the Department of Health (Health) website:

health.gov.au/new-arrangements-bonded-medical-program

For more information about the legislation which supports the Bonded Medical Program please refer to the following resources available online:

- Part VD of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019A00070>
- *Health Insurance (Bonded Medical Program) Rule 2020*
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019L01513>
- Information about your privacy can be found at:
Privacy Act 1988 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019C00241>

Information correct at publication on December 2019

Information in this booklet is published as a guide only.

Please refer to the Act and the Rule (web links above) for further details.

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The Bonded Medical Program

The Bonded Medical Program (the Program) provides students a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) at an Australian university in return for a commitment to work in eligible regional, rural and remote areas for a specified period once they have completed their medical degree.

The Bonded Medical Program from 1 January 2020:

New students entering the Program have access to more choice, more locations, better support and streamlined conditions.

Existing students and doctors may have the choice to opt in to the new arrangement.

Program participants will have access to Health's online web portal, the Bonded Return of Service System (BRoSS), to manage their Return of Service Obligation (RoSO), find locations and access flexible arrangements.



3 Year RoSO



Self-manage my
RoSO



Access to
flexible
arrangements



RoSO in more
locations



Streamlined
conditions

Participants of the Bonded Medical Places (BMP) scheme 2016–2019 who have a 12 month RoSO will keep this under the new arrangement.

Work out if this booklet is for you

The diagram below provides a timeline of the phases in the Program. Cohort years are provided as an indicative guide, based on the usual time taken for a participant to move from one phase to another.

If you are an applicant in the 2020 cohort or a student participant in the 2014–2019 cohort, this booklet is for you.

Otherwise, you should read the Participant Information Booklet for information that is relevant to you.

PHASE	COHORT YEARS	SCHEME	REFERENCE
APPLICANT			
✓ Applicant	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonded Medical Program (the Program) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Information Booklet (this booklet)
PARTICIPANT			
✓ Student	2014–2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old BMP Old 1 Year BMP Old Medical Rural Bonded Scholarships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Information Booklet (this booklet)
✓ Intern	<2013, 2014, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old BMP Old 1 Year BMP Old Medical Rural Bonded Scholarships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant Information Booklet
✓ Pre-Vocational	2011–2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old BMP 	
✓ Vocational	2007–2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old Medical Rural Bonded Scholarships 	
✓ Fellow/ Non Fellow	After 2011		

How to Apply

New students

You need to apply for a bonded medical place through an Australian university.

Entrance requirements are the same for all students applying for a medical place as specified by the university.

The Program is available to eligible students who have been accepted into a medical course by an Australian university.

Do I have to come from a rural or remote area to be eligible for the Bonded Medical Program?

No. The Program is open to all first year medical students who are eligible for a Commonwealth Supported Place.



After you submit your application to study medicine, the selection process for a bonded Commonwealth Supported Place is determined by the participating university.

If you require further information on the application processes used by the universities, contact the relevant university directly.

Will I have to pay the HECS-HELP?

Yes. You will be responsible for your HECS-HELP debt. Further advice on your individual income and HELP repayments can be obtained from the Department of Education HELP enquiry line on free call 1800 020 108 or www.studyassist.gov.au.





Will I receive a scholarship with my place under the Bonded Medical Program?

No. There is no scholarship associated with the Bonded Medical Program. However, you may apply for scholarships.

Accepting a place in the Bonded Medical Program

New medical students who accept a bonded Commonwealth Supported Place in a medical course must agree to participate in the Program.

The conditions and requirements of the Program are legally binding. More information about the details and obligations of accepting a bonded medical place can be found in Part VD of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (Act) and the *Health Insurance (Bonded Medical Program) Rule 2020* (Rule).

30 June 2020 – your deadline for agreeing to participate in the Program through BRoSS at www.BRoSS.gov.au

Existing bonded students

If you are currently part of either the Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS) scheme or the Bonded Medical Places (BMP) scheme, you can choose to opt in to the Program.

Participants in the MRBS scheme who have completed their medical course and all participants in the BMP scheme can email BRoSS@health.gov.au on or from 1 January 2020 to apply to opt in.

You are encouraged to ensure that you are up-to-date and compliant with all obligations under your existing scheme. This will assist Health in determining your eligibility to opt in, ensuring a smooth and easy transition.

Once you have been approved by Health to opt in, you will receive an email from Health advising you to agree to the conditions of the Program in BRoSS.

Acceptance checklist

- ✓ Upon receiving your firm offer from your university or your approval to opt in, check your email for the temporary password and log in to BRoSS
- ✓ Log in to BRoSS and check that your personal details are correct (update if required)
- ✓ Read the *Learn and Plan* section and any additional information provided to make sure you understand what it means to participate in the Program
- ✓ Read Part VD of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019A00070>
- ✓ Read the *Health Insurance (Bonded Medical Program) Rule 2020*
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019L01513>
- ✓ Agree to participate in the Program in the *Sign up* section
- ✓ Receive a confirmation email from BRoSS
- ✓ Download and save a copy of your agreement at any time

Bonded Return of Service System (BROSS)

Participants in the Program will have access to a new Bonded Return of Service System (BROSS) to self-manage their Return of Service Obligation (RoSO), find locations and access flexible arrangements.

- **Applicants** – can access information about the Program and accept the place offered by your university
- **Participants** – can self-manage personal details, planning, tracking and management of RoSO online
- **Universities** – can manage their Bonded Medical Program applicant firm offer lists
- **Rural Workforce Agencies (RWAs)** – can access participant contact details to offer support
- **Health administration** – can perform administrative tasks including Program management, Program evaluation and reporting

Functions of BROSS will be released throughout 2020.

Health uses the information you enter into your BROSS Record to send you email notifications and reminders to assist you to manage your Program obligations. It is important to keep the information in your BROSS Record up-to-date.



Do I have to log in to BROSS to update my personal information?

Yes. You are required to log in to BROSS at least every 6 months to keep your personal information up-to-date.

Your personal information in BRoSS is safe. BRoSS complies with the *Privacy Act 1988*. It is designed with the latest and most effective security and personal information authentication.

After 1 January 2020, if the university offers you a bonded Commonwealth Supported Place, you will automatically receive an email from Health providing applicant log in details to BRoSS.

Starting as an Applicant, becoming a Participant

Before accepting your place in the Program, you are considered an **Applicant**.

By agreeing to participate in the Program through BRoSS, you will automatically enter the Program and become a Bonded Medical Program **Participant**.

You become a participant on and from the day you agree to participate in the Program via BRoSS or, if opting in, on and after the day the Secretary of the Department of Health agrees, in writing, to your participation in the Program.

You will remain a participant until the day you complete your RoSO.

Do I have to sign a contract?

No, there are no contracts. You only have to accept your offered place at university and agree to participate in the Program via BRoSS.



Participant obligations

As a participant, you have obligations under the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (Act) and these may vary depending on whether you are a new applicant or an existing participant.

The Agreement

Participants are bounded by Part VD of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (Act) and must abide by the *Health Insurance (Bonded Medical Program) Rule 2020* (Rule).

You become a Bonded Medical Program participant if:

- a) you reside in Australia;
- b) you:
 - i. are an Australian citizen; or
 - ii. hold a permanent visa;
- c) you have been offered a place in a course of study in medicine at an Australian university;
- d) the offer is subject to you participating in the Bonded Medical Program;
- e) you have accepted that offer and you are enrolled in the course of study in medicine at that Australian university; and
- f) you have agreed to participate in the Bonded Medical Program using a web portal maintained by the Department.

For former Bonded Medical Places Scheme participant, if:

- a) you were a party to a deed of agreement with the Commonwealth (as represented by the Department) for funding of a place in the Bonded Medical Places Scheme, including a deed of agreement as varied;
- b) you advise the Department that you wish to opt in to the Bonded Medical Program under section 124ZU; and
- c) the Secretary agrees, in writing, to your participation in the Bonded Medical Program;

you are a bonded participant in the Bonded Medical Program on and after the day the Secretary agrees, in writing, to your participation in the Program. You will remain a participant until the day you complete your RoSO.

For former Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship participant, if:

- a) you were a party to a contract with the Commonwealth (as represented by the Department) for a Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship, including a contract as varied; and
- b) you advise the Department that you wish to opt in to the Bonded Medical Program under section 124ZU; and
- c) the Secretary agrees, in writing, to your participation in the Bonded Medical Program;

you are a bonded participant in the Bonded Medical Program on and after the day the Secretary agrees, in writing, to your participation in the Program. You will remain a participant until the day you complete your RoSO.

For your information links to the Act and Rule are provided below:

- Part VD of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019A00070>
- *Health Insurance (Bonded Medical Program) Rule 2020*
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019L01513>

Information about your privacy can be found at:

Privacy Act 1988 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019C00241>

Completion of medical course

As a participant you agree to complete your medical course within the timeframe requirements of your university.

You are able to access options offered to you by your university in regard to any changes you require, or request, to the period of time you need to complete your course of study.

If you defer and do not complete your medical course within the required timeframe for whatever reason, you are still bound by all obligations under this Program.

If I receive an offer of a bonded CSP from one university, will it be valid at another Australian university?

No. The bonded CSP is allocated and linked to the university making the offer of a Bonded Medical Program place at medical school. This means that if you are successful in receiving an offer of a Bonded Medical Program place from a university, it is only valid for that specific university.



Can I defer the start of my medical degree?

Yes, providing your university agrees. Universities may allow you to defer starting your study after you have been offered a bonded CSP. It remains at the university's discretion as to whether a bonded CSP would be offered to you when you commence your study in the following year.



Return of Service Obligation (RoSO)

If you accept an offer in the Program, you receive a CSP in return for your commitment to work in eligible regional, rural or remote areas for a period of three (3) years after you have completed your medical course. This is referred to as your Return of Service Obligation (RoSO).

How long do I have to complete my RoSO?

You are required to complete your RoSO within 18 years from the day you complete your medical course.

RoSO can be non-continuous, full-time or part-time work and fly-in/fly-out work in eligible locations.



You have a wide range of options as to when, where and how you choose to complete your RoSO within the Program's required timeframe and requirements.

Program requirements about when and how you work your RoSO are designed to be flexible, responsive and easy for you to self-manage as your circumstances change and your medical career develops.

RoSO Time Commitments



You have a
3 YEAR
RoSO

which must be completed **within 18 YEARS** from the day you complete your medical course

You **must** register a preliminary RoSO Plan in BRoSS **no later than** the day you complete your medical course.

You can start your RoSO as soon as you complete your medical course and commence your medical internship.

You may complete up to **18 months** (50%) of the 3 year RoSO **prior to attaining Fellowship** and complete your remaining RoSO after attaining Fellowship.

Alternatively, you may complete **all** of your 3 year RoSO **after you have attained fellowship**.



If you **do not** attain Fellowship **within 12 years** after completing your medical course, you will be required to complete all outstanding RoSO within the next and **final 6 years** of the required 18 year RoSO period timeframe.



You can work your RoSO in employment which is:

FULL-TIME
minimum **35** HOURS
PER WEEK

PART-TIME
minimum **20** HOURS
PER WEEK
and is less than 35 hours per week

or on a *minimum*
PER DAY OR
DAILY BASIS **7.5** HOURS
PER DAY
and is less than 20 hours per week



MM 4-7 6 MONTH RoSO
DISCOUNT

If you work full-time for the **first 24 months** of your RoSO in locations classified as **Modified Monash Model (MMM) category 4-7** (MM 4-7); you will receive a scaling benefit under the scaling rule. This means you could get a **6 month RoSO discount** if you continue to work full-time in locations classified as MM 4-7.

What counts as ‘eligible work’ under a RoSO

Work which you would like to count towards your RoSO must be categorised as ‘eligible work’.

‘Eligible work’ must meet certain requirements such as the type of professional service, the length of time you work in a location, and location eligibility.

There are no restrictions on the work that you undertake which you do not wish to count towards your RoSO during the 18 year period.

Will contribute to your ROSO	Will not contribute to your RoSO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Salaried professional service positions ✓ Medicare billed service positions ✓ After hours and deputising services ✓ On call positions ✓ Outreach positions delivering fly-in/fly-out services ✓ Aeromedical services which provide aeromedical evacuation/ retrieval services to patients in eligible locations ✓ Services delivered in an eligible location that are billed to a Medical Provider Number linked to a “Health Office” in either an eligible or non-eligible location ✓ Telehealth services from an eligible location and delivered to an eligible location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Clinical research positions ✗ Academic teaching positions ✗ Medical, hospital or organisational administrative positions ✗ Paramedicine

Work locations for RoSO

The Program applies one or more of the following geographic and workforce classifications to determine locations which are eligible for you to complete your RoSO:



- Modified Monash Model (MMM)
- Distribution Priority Areas (DPA) for General Practitioners
- Districts of Workforce Shortage (DWS) for Specialists other than General Practitioners

As a participant, you can use your BRoSS RoSO mapping tool to find which locations are classified as eligible for you to work your RoSO or you can use the Health Workforce Locator on Doctor Connect www.doctorconnect.gov.au.

More choice, more locations

Locations that are eligible to you will depend upon the year you enter the Program and where you are up to in your medical career.

Additional locations will become available when you commence vocational training in a medical speciality or have become a Fellow.

From internship to completion of your 3 year RoSO

You will be able to work your RoSO in locations which:

- were classified as MM 2–7 when you entered the Program. These are called your ‘point of entry locations’ and are classified under the 2019 MMM. Your ‘point of entry locations’ will be recorded in your BRoSS Record.

OR

- are reclassified as MM 2–7 after you have entered the Program due to periodic classification updates. If a location is classified as MM 2–7 within 6 months before you commence work at that location, your work can contribute to your RoSO.

General Practitioner

You can choose from MM 2–7 locations plus you will be able to work your RoSO in locations classified as a distribution priority area (excluding inner metropolitan areas*).

Specialist other than a General Practitioner

You can choose from MM 2–7 locations plus you will be able to work your RoSO in locations classified as a district of workforce shortage (excluding inner metropolitan areas*).

*Locations in outer metropolitan or non-metropolitan areas which are classified as a DPA or a DWS (as relevant to your speciality) within 6 months of you commencing work at that location are eligible RoSO locations.

How eligible locations are determined

Modified Monash Model (MMM)

Health uses the MMM classifications to better distribute the health workforce in rural and remote areas. Link – <https://www.health.gov.au/health-workforce/health-workforce-classifications/modified-monash-model>

The Modified Monash Model (MMM) is a geographical classification that categorises different areas in Australia into seven remoteness categories. It was developed to better target health workforce programs to attract health professionals to more remote and smaller communities. The MMM classifies metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas according to geographical remoteness, as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and town size. MM 1 is a major city and MM 7 is very remote.

Distribution Priority Areas (DPA) for GPs

The new DPA system uses the best available data to identify those communities most in need of GP services.

- Inner metropolitan areas are automatically deemed non-DPA because these communities have the choice of multiple health service providers such as GPs, hospitals, nursing and allied health professionals. These major cities account for 70% of Australia's population.
- Areas classified MM 5–7 are automatically deemed DPA. This includes small rural towns, remote communities and very remote communities.
- Northern Territory is automatically deemed DPA due to the unique challenges the Territory faces in recruiting and retaining health professionals.

Link – <https://www.health.gov.au/health-workforce/health-workforce-classifications/distribution-priority-area>

Districts of Workforce Shortage for Specialists (DWS)

A District of Workforce Shortage (DWS) is an area where people have poor access to specialist medical practitioners.

Link – <https://www.health.gov.au/health-workforce/health-workforce-classifications/district-of-workforce-shortage>

An area is classified as DWS if its ratio of specialists to population is worse than the national average. Under the Program, inner metropolitan locations are not eligible for you to complete your RoSO.

Changes to location eligibility

Updates to MMM, DPA or DWS will be automatically available in your BRoSS Record. Locations which are no longer eligible will be removed.

You can continue to work your RoSO in a location even if the location becomes ineligible due to a reclassification of the MMM, DPA or DWS during the time you work there.

What are some faster ways I can complete my RoSO?

If you work 24 months, full time in MM 4–7 locations and have become a Fellow, and you continue to do so, you will attract the scaling benefit. This provides credits towards your RoSO which can result in your 3 year RoSO being reduced to 2.5 years.



Once you have worked RoSO in a location, you can always return to that location to complete further RoSO. These locations are called 'quarantined locations'.

Participant responsibilities

As a participant, you are responsible for ensuring your BRoSS Record is up-to-date.

Information you provide in your BRoSS Record will be used to count how much RoSO you have worked.

You are required to:

Stay in touch You are required to log in to BRoSS at least **every 6 months** to check, update and confirm your information while participating in the Program.

Penalties may apply if you do not keep your information up-to-date.

Keep up-to-date Update personal contact details within 6 months of any changes to those details.

Document your activities Report when you reach key milestones such as completion of your medical degree, commence internship, completion of vocational training or attain Fellowship and information about your medical specialisation.

Update your RoSO Plan every three months as a minimum with Program milestones and RoSO events you wish to count towards meeting your obligations.

Enter eligible work into your registered RoSO Plan.

Provide evidence Submit the required evidence in support of your claim including documents such as a certificate of attainment or letter from the relevant organisation. Where these are not available, a Statutory Declaration, including the required information signed by you must be provided.

Register a RoSO Plan You must register an initial RoSO Plan by the completion date of your medical course.

Manage your RoSO As a participant you will be able to update or change any proposed plans you have made in your registered RoSO Plan at any stage. The plans you make are totally flexible.

Withdrawal from the Program or breach of obligations

Program withdrawal

If you decide to withdraw you are required to confirm your withdrawal via your BRoSS Record.

- If you withdraw prior to the census date of your second year of study of your medical course, you are not required to repay the cost of your Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) in your medical course.
- If you withdraw after the census date of your second year of study of your medical course, you will be required to repay the cost of the study you have completed of your CSP.
- If you withdraw from the Program after you have completed your medical course and after you have worked some of your RoSO, your repayment will be reduced by the proportional amount of RoSO you have completed at the time you withdraw.

Breach of obligations

If you do not complete your three (3) year RoSO within the required timeframe of 18 years, you will be in breach of Program conditions and will be bound by all obligations under this Program. You will be required to repay the cost of your bonded CSP in the medical course less a proportional amount for any RoSO you have completed.

Repayment amounts

The repayment amounts for each year of the medical course are available on the Department of Education and Training website at www.education.gov.au/funding-clusters-and-indexed-rates (refer to the Commonwealth contribution amount for the funding cluster that includes medicine).

You will no longer be a participant, if you:

- Do not complete your medical course within the timeframe required by your university. If this occurs, you will be in breach of Program conditions
- Do not complete your RoSO within 18 years of completing your medical course. If this occurs, you will be in breach of Program conditions
- Breach conditions of the Program
- Withdraw from the Program

Request review of a decision

As a participant you are able to apply to the Department of Health for review of an original decision made by Health. Your application must be in writing and set out the reasons for your application and be made within 14 days of the original decision being made. You may withdraw your application at any time prior to the review being completed.

On completion of the review, you will receive written notice of the decision and advice on any right to have the decision reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Where to go for information and advice

There are many areas of support available to you while you are participating in the Program.

Rural Workforce Agencies

Rural Workforce Agencies (RWAs) are funded by the department to identify the rural health workforce needs in their State or the Northern Territory.

Participants can contact an RWA for advice and guidance, such as:

- providing participants options and recruitment support for placement into rural roles that meet their RoSO
- information about professional development and support to enable participants to be part of a broader rural medical professional network
- information about accessing rural medical experiences during undergraduate and early career years and access to grants

Contact your local RWA to find out more:

New South Wales	NSW Rural Doctors Network Website: https://www.nswrdn.com.au/ Email: students@nswrdn.com.au Phone: 02 4924 8000
Victoria	Rural Workforce Agency Victoria Website: https://www.rwav.com.au/ Email: rwav@rwav.com.au Phone: 03 93497800
Queensland	Health Workforce Queensland Website: https://www.healthworkforce.com.au/ Email: Futureworkforce@healthworkforce.com.au Phone: 07 3105 7800
Western Australia	Rural Health West Website: http://www.ruralhealthwest.com.au/ Email: info@ruralhealthwest.com.au Phone: 08 6389 4500
South Australia	Rural Doctors Workforce Agency Website: https://www.ruraldoc.com.au/ Email: recruitment@ruraldoc.com.au Phone: 08 8234 8277
Tasmania	HR Plus Website: https://www.hrplustas.com.au/ Email: recruitment@hrplustas.com.au Phone: 03 6332 8600
Northern Territory	Northern Territory PHN Website: https://www.ntphn.org.au/health-professionals Email: ntphn@ntphn.org.au Phone: 08 8981 5899

Resources and contacts

Contact your university or university admissions centre for information and advice regarding your medical course.

Department of Health website and Fact Sheets at:

health.gov.au/new-arrangements-bonded-medical-program

Legislation supporting the Bonded Medical Program

- Part VD of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019A00070>
- *Health Insurance (Bonded Medical Program) Rule 2020*
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019L01513>
- *Privacy Act 1988*
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019C00241>

Modified Monash Model <https://www.health.gov.au/health-workforce/health-workforce-classifications/modified-monash-model>

Distribution Priority Area <https://www.health.gov.au/health-workforce/health-workforce-classifications/distribution-priority-area>

District of Workforce Shortages for Specialists

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-workforce/health-workforce-classifications/district-of-workforce-shortage>

Contact the Department of Health:

- Telephone: 1800 987 104
(available Monday–Friday, 8:30am–5:00pm AEST)
- Email: BRoSS@health.gov.au

Further information

Contact the Department of Health if you would like to learn more about the Program and your obligations.

Telephone: 1800 987 104

(available Monday–Friday, 8:30am–5:00pm AEST)

Email: BRoSS@health.gov.au

