

# Rural and Remote Placement (Internship) Allowance Scheme

Rural Pharmacy Workforce Program

## Background

The Rural & Remote Pharmacy Placement (Internship) Allowance Scheme (the “Placement Allowance Scheme”) is an initiative of the Rural Pharmacy Workforce Program (RPWP). The RPWP was established in 1999 in recognition of the key role pharmacists play in maintaining the health of all Australians, particularly in rural and remote Australia. The aim of RPWP is to implement strategies to strengthen and support the rural and remote pharmacy workforce in Australia.

The Placement Allowance Scheme is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) under the RPWP and is managed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (the Guild) under an agreement between the Guild and DoHA.

As part of the Regional Health Strategy: More Doctors Better Services, the 2000/01 Commonwealth Budget provided an additional \$11.47 million to expand the RPWP by funding a range of new initiatives which included the Placement Allowance Scheme.

The Placement Allowance Scheme provides financial support to encourage and enable undergraduate pharmacy degree programs and graduate entry courses (leading to a registerable qualification as a pharmacist) at Australian Universities to deliver student placements in rural and remote communities. The Scheme aims to facilitate positive placement

experiences for pharmacy students in rural and remote communities, encouraging students to return to rural or remote practice on graduation.

## Funding allocation

Funding will be allocated to each eligible University at the beginning of each calendar year. The funding will be calculated based on the total number of student placement hours from each University from the previous calendar year. Each University will be required to submit to the Guild a report providing the total number of student placement hours during the previous calendar year and this will be used to determine the allocations for the current calendar year.

## Allocation of allowances

The allowances may be awarded to students undertaking rural internship placements as part of their studies in an Undergraduate pharmacy degree or as part of a graduate entry course (leading to a registerable qualification as a pharmacist) at any Australian University. Students may undertake one placement to their ‘home’ town (that is their address used on admission to the course) during their degree. Placements must be in areas classified as PhARIA 1 – 6 as defined by the Pharmacy Accessibility Remoteness Index of Australia (PhARIA), provided the placement is not in the same locality as the student’s “University” town. Placements in the following PhARIA 1 areas will not be paid an allowance; QLD: Brisbane & suburbs, Cairns, Townsville, Gold Coast & Toowoomba; NSW: Sydney & suburbs, Newcastle & Wollongong; VIC: Melbourne & suburbs and Geelong; TAS: Hobart & suburbs; SA: Adelaide &

suburbs; WA: Perth & suburbs; ACT: Canberra & suburbs.

Payment of an allowance is conditional upon the applicant satisfying the administrative requirements of the University for accessing an allowance.

## Application and selection process

Allowances are awarded on the basis of individual student application, supplied on a standard application form available at the applicant’s University. Applications will be assessed by the applicant’s University.

Interviewing of applicants and the need for referees’ reports will be at the discretion of the University.

The application will be assessed against specific selection criteria, as outlined in these Guidelines.

## Selection criteria

The following criteria are mandatory in the selection process.

Students must:

- be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or have permanent resident status;
- be enrolled as a full time student in an undergraduate pharmacy degree or as part of a graduate entry course (leading to a registerable qualification as a pharmacist) at any Australian University;
- agree to provide a brief report at the completion of their internship placement.

Allowance holders are not disqualified from receiving other awards that support rural and remote pharmacy practice but must declare receipt of any other award to the Guild, by advising the University in the first instance.

Holders of RPWP Undergraduate Scholarships and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships are eligible to apply for a Placement Allowance.

## Placement Allowance uses and values

Each Placement Allowance is to assist with travel and accommodation costs associated with undertaking a placement in a rural or remote area. A definition of rural and remote is outlined under 'Allocation of Allowances'.

Students are permitted to apply for more than one Placement Allowance in a given academic year provided they are undertaking more than one placement in a rural or remote location.

Each placement allowance has a maximum value of \$3000 per student and will be paid via the University.

Forfeited Placement Allowances are not transferrable to another student.

## Placement Allowance terms

Each student shall be provided with a copy of the allowance guidelines at the time of application.

Students awarded a Placement Allowance will be required to sign an agreement provided to them by the University to undertake placements in a rural or remote community.

Allowance holders may be asked to participate in longitudinal studies on the recruitment of rural pharmacists to rural practice.

Allowance recipients are encouraged to seek employment in rural or remote areas following graduation.

## Administration – role of universities, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and students

### **Universities are responsible for:**

- publicising and promoting the Placement Allowance scheme where appropriate;
- providing application forms;
- developing an agreement with students;
- allocating Placement Allowances;

- acknowledging assistance provided by the Placement Allowance scheme in any public statements in relation to the performance of a Allowance holder; and
- providing biannual reports to the Guild in relation to the distribution of the Placement Allowance and activities undertaken by the Placement Allowance holders.

### **The Pharmacy Guild of Australia is responsible for:**

- entering into an agreement with each participating University;
- publicising and promoting the scholarship scheme where appropriate;
- developing reporting pro formas for Universities; and
- reporting to the DoHA.

### **Students are responsible for:**

- providing a written report following each funded placement; and
- participating in longitudinal studies of the recruitment of pharmacists to rural practice.

## Appeals process

Any disputes arising from the Placement Allowance scheme will be dealt with through the Guild in conjunction with the appeals procedures of the University concerned.

## Student reporting requirements

On completion of the placement, each student is required to submit a brief written report to the University outlining activities undertaken during the internship placement.

Without limiting its rights at law or otherwise, the Guild reserves the right in its absolute discretion at any time to suspend, amend or vary the Guidelines for the Rural and Remote Placement (Internship) Allowance scheme

## University reporting requirements

To assist with the monitoring of the Program, each University is required to submit the following reports to the Guild on a biannual basis (30 June and 31 December). Copies will be provided to the DoHA.

1. A completed pro forma outlining the placement location, type of placement, duration of placement, the actual cost of placement, the allocation made to the student, and other statistical data.
2. A report outlining rural curricula delivered / experienced by students during placements. Rural curricula should include:
  - Aboriginal health
  - Rural Health Centre models in remote areas
  - Veterinary Pharmacy
  - Services to non pharmacy towns (eg depots)
  - Emergency services (eg Flying Doctor Services)
  - Diversity of rural practice and health services
  - Health promotion in rural areas

## Project review process

The project will be reviewed on completion of the academic year by a committee of representatives from the RPWP Advisory Group.

The review will consist of:

- A review of student activities undertaken during their placements;
- General feedback from students on the Placement Allowance Scheme; and
- Ways in which the Placement Allowance alleviated hardships in accessing internship opportunities in rural and remote communities.

The review will be submitted to the RPWP Advisory Group during Semester One of each academic year.

The Rural Pharmacy Workforce Program is managed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and funded by the Australian Government.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health and Ageing**



**The PHARMACY GUILD of AUSTRALIA**