



Conditions for Universities Administering Bonded Medical Programs



1. Purpose

This document provides information to participating universities about their obligations under the Bonded Medical Program.

2. Background

The Bonded Medical Program is comprised of the following programs:

Statutory Bonded Medical Program (from 2020)

- 2.1. The Bonded Medical Program (Program) is a statutory scheme. Participants are bound by *Part VD of the [Health Insurance Act 1973](#)* (Act) and must abide by the [Health Insurance \(Bonded Medical Program\) Rule 2020](#) (Rule).

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 and areas of workforce shortage for 156 weeks (3 years) once they have completed their medical degree.

All applicants who receive a bonded CSP must agree to enter the Program through the Bonded Return of Service System (BRoSS).

Bonded Medical Legacy Schemes

Bonded Medical Places Scheme (2004–2015, 2016–2019 BMP 1 Year)

- 2.2. The Bonded Medical Places Scheme (BMP Scheme) was closed to new participants after the 2019 intake. Universities must continue to meet their obligations for existing BMP Scheme participants until they graduate.

Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship Scheme (2001–2015)

- 2.3. The Medical Rural Bonded Scholarships Scheme (MRBS Scheme) was closed to new participants after the 2015 intake. Universities must continue to meet their obligations for MRBS Scheme participants until they graduate.

3. Obligations for universities

Eligibility

- 3.1. Places in the statutory Bonded Medical Program are open to new medical students entering the first year of their graduate or undergraduate medical course. This includes students who have received Advanced Standing and are commencing a medical course for the first time.
- 3.2. As per section 124ZE(1) of the Act, only Australian citizens and holders of Permanent Resident visas (issued under the *Migration Act 1958*) are eligible for a place in the Program. All medical students, including those who hold New Zealand citizenship,

must be Australian citizens or Permanent Residents at the time they are offered and accept a place in the Program.

- 3.3. Medical students who are temporary residents at the time they enrol at a university who then subsequently become an Australian citizen or a Permanent Resident are subject to restrictions under section 19AB of the Act and are not eligible to participate in the Program.

Allocation of CSPs

- 3.4. As stipulated in the higher education providers' Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding agreements published on the Department of Education's website:
- i) Universities must allocate **28.5%** of all commencing Commonwealth supported places for higher education courses in medicine to Bonded Medical Program students each year. The number of Bonded Medical Program places may be averaged over a period of three consecutive calendar years to calculate 28.5%.
 - ii) The places provided under the statutory Bonded Medical Program **must be used for statutory Bonded Medical Program students only**.
 - iii) A bonded, or formerly bonded, student must not be transferred to a non-bonded place in a Medical Course.

Transferring medical students

- 3.5. Universities can only admit students who are or have been bonded to a non-bonded Medical Course place if an Exceptional Circumstances Determination has been made (under section 124ZEA of the Act) in favour of the former bonded participant.
- 3.6. Universities must obtain written confirmation from the department that an Exceptional Circumstances Determination has been made in favour of the former bonded participant prior to offering that student another Medical Course place.
- 3.7. Time spent as a bonded participant cannot be used for Advanced Standing unless the university has written confirmation from the department that an Exceptional Circumstances Determination was made in favour of the former bonded participant as per 3.6.
- 3.8. Program and BMP Scheme medical students may transfer to a medical course at a different university as a participant of the same Program/scheme, subject to agreement by the universities. The transfer of medical students between universities does not result in any adjustment of the funding provided by the Department of Education for the places under the Program/scheme(s) or number of bonded medical places allocated to each university in future years.

Selection of medical students

- 3.9. Each university is responsible for selecting medical students to fill their allocated places in the Program. The recruitment process for the Program must be equitable and transparent and conducted as part of the usual recruitment process for other university places.
- 3.10. Universities must enter details of students offered bonded places into BRoSS by 30 April in each cohort year. This will allow adequate time for prospective medical

students who want to participate in the Program to obtain legal advice before deciding whether to accept a place in the Program.

- 3.11. Universities must ensure that medical students offered a bonded place agree to the terms and conditions of the Program by 30 June in their first year of study.
- 3.12. If medical students wish to defer the first year of their medical course, it is at the discretion of the university whether a bonded place will be kept open for that medical student in a future year.
- 3.13. If a medical student withdraws from the Program while undertaking the Medical Course, then that student also forfeits their bonded place in the Medical Course.

Reporting

- 3.14. Universities must provide the following information by 30 September each year:
 - i) Annual confirmation of the enrolment status of all Bonded Medical Programs students.
 - ii) The university's total number of Medical Course CSPs.
- 3.15. Universities will notify the department **as soon as possible** after the event if any of the following occur:
 - i) A participant has opted to defer their course.
 - ii) A participant has failed any part of their course and is required to repeat a subject, semester or a year of their course.
 - iii) The participant has a discontinuance, failure of, exclusion, suspension or chooses to withdraw from their course.
- 3.16. Universities will provide information reasonably required to support the administration of the Program in a timely fashion when requested (e.g., progress on selection process, personal details such as name, DOB, contact details).