



# Workforce Incentives Program (WIP)- Doctor Stream Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This document is written for health professionals looking for answers to common questions about the WIP – Doctor Stream. It outlines program objectives, eligibility, payment arrangements and how the incentive supports access to quality medical services and workforce retention in regional, rural and remote locations.

While precautions have been taken to ensure accuracy, in the event of any inconsistency between this document and the WIP – Doctor Stream Guidelines, the guidelines take precedence.

For full guidelines and program details, please refer to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing’s website at <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/workforce-incentive-program/doctor-stream?language=en>.

This FAQ document will be updated regularly.

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## 1. Overview

### 1.1 What is the WIP-Doctor Stream and who does it support?

The WIP – Doctor Stream offers up to \$60,000 per year from the Australian Government to support medical practitioners delivering eligible primary care services in Modified Monash (MM) 3–7 locations.

The program supports:

- improved access to primary healthcare in rural and remote communities.
- medical practitioners to remain working in regional, rural and remote areas.
- career pathways in rural medicine.

### 1.2 How does the program support rural and remote communities?

The program supports rural and remote communities by incentivising medical practitioners to provide primary care services in regional, rural and remote areas. This improves continuity of care and access to essential primary healthcare services in these communities.

### 1.3 How much funding is available under the WIP–Doctor Stream?

Annual incentive payments range from \$3,600 to \$60,000, depending on:

- the medical practitioners Modified Monash Model (MM) classification
- the number of active quarters achieved within the relevant reference period
- eligible activity levels
- vocational registration status or participation in an approved training pathway; and
- any periods of leave or inactivity.

From 1 January 2024, medical practitioners who are not vocationally registered and not undertaking approved training receive 80% of the standard payment amount.

Payments increase over time as medical practitioners progress through to higher year levels.

### 1.4 Can locum medical practitioners and specialists receive WIP-Doctor Stream payments?

Yes. Both locum medical practitioners and non-GP specialists may be eligible for WIP–Doctor Stream payments if they provide eligible primary care services in MM 3–7 locations. Eligibility is based on the services delivered and the location in which they are provided, not on employment arrangements or specialty type.

## 2. Eligibility

### 2.1 Who is eligible to participate under the WIP-Doctor Stream?

To be eligible for the WIP – Doctor Stream, you must:

- provide a minimum amount of eligible primary care services in eligible locations; and/or undertake eligible Rural Generalist/General Practitioner (GP) training under an approved training pathway
- meet the required number of active quarters for payment
- have an eligible, current Medicare provider number; and
- provide your current bank account details to Services Australia specifically for the purposes of the WIP – Doctor Stream within 60 calendar days of receiving a request for those details.

## 2.2 What primary care services are eligible?

Eligible primary care services are listed as clinical services from the following sections of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS):

- **Category 1** – Professional attendances
- **Category 2** – Diagnostics
- **Category 3** – Therapeutic procedures
- **Category 7** – Cleft lip/palate services

## 2.3 What services are ineligible under the WIP-Doctor Stream?

Ineligible primary care services include the following categories:

- Optometry
- Dentistry
- Diagnostic imaging and pathology
- Bulk Billing Incentive items
- All directly funded Commonwealth Government positions in:
  - Detention Centres
  - Defence Facilities
  - Antarctica.
- Any hospital-based training that does not include:
  - Advanced Specialised Training through Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) or
  - Additional Rural Skills Training through The Royal Australian College of General Practice (RACGP)
- State salaried medical practitioners (including locums) providing primary care services in MM 1-5 locations are not eligible for Flexible Payment System (FPS) payments; and
- Patient retrieval by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

## 2.4 What locations are eligible?

Eligible locations are those classified as MM 3-7 under the MMM (2019). You can check the MM classification of a location using the Health Workforce Locator at

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/health-workforce-locator/app>.

## 2.5 What happens if I move to a different MM location mid-year?

Where you deliver eligible activities across multiple MM 3-7 locations, payments are calculated on the services provided from the most rural location through to the least. Proportional payments will be made if the highest MM location is not eligible for the maximum payment.

If you practice from an MM 3-7 location and move to an MM 1-2 location, the primary care services provided from the MM 1-2 location will only count towards eligibility if you are an Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) GP Registrar on the rural pathway completing either ACRRM Advanced Specialised Training or RACGP Additional Rural Skills placements.

## 2.6 What approved training is eligible?

Eligible approved training pathways include:

- Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Program (ACRRM or RACGP)
- Fellowship Support Program (RACGP)
- Independent Pathway (ACRRM)
- Practice Experience Program (RACGP)
- Remote Vocational Training Scheme (ACRRM or RACGP)
- Rural Generalist Training Scheme (ACRRM).

## 2.7 Are telehealth and after hour services eligible?

Yes. Telehealth and after-hours services may be counted toward WIP–Doctor Stream activity, provided they meet the definition of eligible primary care services in accordance with the guidelines. Eligibility for telehealth services is based on the medical practitioner’s physical practice location, not the patient location.

# 3. Active Quarters

## 3.1 What are “active quarters” and how many are required to receive a payment?

An active quarter is a payment quarter in which a medical practitioner meets the minimum activity requirements in MM 3–7 locations. A payment is not made until the required number of active quarters have been completed within the relevant reference period.

A quarter is considered active when one of the following thresholds is met:

### 1. Central Payment System (CPS):

- At least \$6,000 in eligible MBS-billed services during the quarter.

### 2. Flexible Payment System (FPS):

- A minimum of at least 21 eligible sessions or at least \$6,000 in eligible MBS-billed services paid by Services Australia during the quarter
- Each session must be a minimum of 3 hours
- A maximum of 104 sessions may be claimed per quarter.

**IMPORTANT:** The timely submission of MBS billings for the purposes of the WIP - Doctor Stream is the responsibility of participants.

**Payment eligibility depends on location and participation status:**

- New participants in MM 3–5 must complete up to eight active quarters within a 16-quarter reference period
- Participants in MM 6–7 or continuing participants must complete four active quarters within an eight-quarter reference period.

Each payment increases with the medical practitioner’s year level, reflecting continued service in eligible rural and remote locations.

### 3.2 What is a session under the Flexible Payment System?

Under the FPS, a session is defined as a minimum of 3 hours of:

- primary care service that are equivalent to the listed in [2.2 What primary care services are eligible?](#), or
- eligible non-MBS approved training.

You may claim a maximum of two sessions per day.

## 4. Payments and Payment Systems

### 4.1 What payment systems are used under the WIP-Doctor Stream?

The WIP–Doctor Stream uses two payment systems to assess and deliver payments, depending on how eligible activity is recorded:

1. CPS applies where a medical practitioner’s eligible activity is captured through MBS billing data. Under CPS:
  - payments are assessed and processed automatically
  - eligible services are identified through MBS claims
  - no application is required from the medical practitioner.
2. FPS applies where primary care services or training equivalent to the MBS categories listed above are not captured in MBS data. This includes:
  - eligible non-MBS primary care services, and/or
  - Rural Generalist/GP training undertaken through an approved training pathway.

Medical practitioners seeking payment through the FPS must apply, with supporting evidence, to the Rural Workforce Agency (RWA) in the state or territory where they delivered most of their services.

**NOTE:** Some medical practitioners may have eligible activity assessed under both CPS and FPS, depending on the services or training undertaken.

## 4.2 How do I receive a WIP-Doctor Stream payment?

WIP-Doctor Stream payments are made once you have:

- completed the required number of active quarters within the relevant reference period, and
- met all eligibility and payment requirements under the program.

Payments are made after eligibility has been confirmed.

Payments increase over time as you progress through to higher year levels.

**NOTE:** From 1 January 2024, medical practitioners who are not vocationally registered and not undertaking approved training receive 80% of the standard payment amount.

## 4.3 What can cause payments to lapse or be delayed?

When you become eligible for your first payment, Services Australia will issue a request for bank account details. If the required details are not provided to Services Australia within 60 calendar days, the payment will lapse.

Bank account details can be updated online through HPOS (please see [6.2 How do I update my bank details?](#) and [8.2 I'm having trouble accessing HPOS. Who should I contact?](#)).

Medical practitioners who fail to provide accurate banking details for four consecutive payment quarters will be withdrawn from the program.

## 4.4 Why did I receive a partial WIP-DS payment even though I was on an approved training pathway for the entire reference period?

If you are on an approved training pathway, eligibility commences from whichever of the following dates is later:

- the recognised 3GA placement start date; or
- the date the 3GA placement application is received by Services Australia.

Start dates cannot be backdated.

A quarter will only be counted as being on an approved training pathway if a 3GA placement is recorded for at least one day during that quarter.

If there is no Vocationally Registered (VR) or approved training pathway (3GA placement) code recorded for a quarter, you will be classified as Non-Vocationally Registered (NVR) for that period, and a partial payment calculation will apply.

## 4.5 What if I provide a mix of eligible MBS billed and non-MBS billed services?

If you provide a mix of eligible MBS-billed and non-MBS-billed primary care services in MM 3-7 locations, all eligible activity can be counted towards a WIP-Doctor Stream

payment. Eligible MBS-billed services are assessed through the CPS, while non-MBS-billed services can be assessed through the FPS.

If you have already received a CPS payment you may apply for a ‘top-up’ payment through the FPS for the same reference period if you fit into one of the Alternative Employment or Special Top-Up Provisions for delivering eligible non-MBS services.

If you apply for a top-up payment, you have 6 months to submit an FPS application form. The 6 months commences from the date on the CPS payment advice sent by Services Australia.

**IMPORTANT:** Beyond 6 months, you are longer able to apply for an FPS payment related to that CPS payment reference period.

## 5. Inactivity and Leave

### 5.1 What happens if I take leave?

You can remain inactive in the program for up to five years without losing your accrued year level; however, no payments are made for inactive quarters, including periods of leave where minimum activity requirements are not met.

You will recommence as a new participant in the program if you do not become eligible for a payment within 24 quarters (six years) from the end date of your last payment’s reference period.

### 5.2 What types of leave may result in inactive quarters?

Inactive quarters may occur during periods such as:

- parental leave
- extended sick leave
- sabbatical or unpaid leave
- time away from providing eligible services in MM 3–7 locations.

## 6. Administration and tax

### 6.1 What is Health Professional Online Service (HPOS) and why is it important?

Health Professional Online Service (HPOS) is used to manage registrations, service history, payment statements, and correspondence. Medical practitioners are responsible for ensuring their details are accurate and current.

### 6.2 How do I update my bank details?

You must provide and keep current bank account details with Services Australia specifically for WIP–Doctor Stream payments.

To update your bank details, follow the steps outlined below:

1. Log in to HPOS with your individual Provider Digital Access (PRODA) account

2. Navigate to the Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) Doctor Stream section
3. Update your bank account details under the Payment Details section
4. Ensure that the updated details are visible and take effect immediately.

### 6.3 Why didn't I get paid for working remotely and how do I check that my details are recorded correctly?

Payments for rural and remote work are based on the address and MMM classification recorded against your registered provider location. To ensure this information has been recorded correctly, log into HPOS and review the address details for each registered provider location by following the steps outlined below.

1. Log in to HPOS using your PRODA account
2. Select the 'My Details' tile
3. Select 'My provider numbers'
4. Select 'My provider number details' to edit the details
5. Select 'Submit'
6. Check that the changes are correct.

### 6.4 Do WIP – Doctor Stream payments attract GST?

WIP–Doctor Stream payments do not attract GST and are not subject to PAYG withholding. Payments are assessable income and must be declared in accordance with the Income Tax Assessment Act.

## 7. Applications

### 7.1 Do I need to apply for a WIP-Doctor Stream Payment?

**CPS:** No application is required. Payments are made automatically when you meet CPS eligibility. To receive an automated payment, you must ensure that your bank account details are up to date in HPOS.

**FPS:** Yes. You must submit a separate application, with its own supporting documents for each claim period.

### 7.2 Where can I access the FPS application form?

The most current FPS application form is available on the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing website:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/flexible-payment-system-application-form?language=en>

### 7.3 Where do I submit a Flexible Payment System (FPS) application?

FPS applications must be submitted to the RWA in the state or territory where you delivered most of your eligible services.

Applications must:

- use the current approved application form; and
- include all required supporting documentation.

If you work across multiple states or territories, the FPS application must be submitted to the RWA in the jurisdiction where most of the eligible services were delivered during the reference period.

If service delivery is evenly split and it's unclear which RWA to apply to, you should contact any relevant RWA for guidance before submitting your application.

## 7.4 What supporting documents are required for an FPS application?

Supporting documents depend on the type of FPS claim.

- **Alternative employment / alternative employment top-ups:**  
A letter from the employer or practice manager confirming dates worked, hours or sessions, locations, and that claimed sessions relate to eligible primary care services.
- **Special top-ups:**  
A letter from the employer or practice manager confirming dates worked, locations, service type, and any eligible travel.
- **RFDS medical practitioners:**  
A covering letter from the RFDS confirming service locations (and overnight locations, where relevant) and the total number of eligible sessions per week. Patient retrieval and transport are not eligible.
- **Approved training pathways:**  
Session records must be confirmed and signed by the GP College (AGPT) or approved supervisor. MM 1–2 training placements must also be signed off by the GP College.

A standard template is included with the FPS application form. A statutory declaration with session records is only accepted where the standard letter cannot be provided.

## 7.5 FPS application timeframes

FPS applications must be submitted as soon as practicable following completion of the required number of active quarters for payment.

# 8. Contacts and Support

## 8.1 Where can I get help?

Support is available from different organisations depending on the nature of your enquiry.

### 1. Services Australia:

For enquiries relating to payments, payment timing, HPOS access, service history, or bank details.

**Email:** [WIPDoctor@servicesaustralia.gov.au](mailto:WIPDoctor@servicesaustralia.gov.au)

**Phone:** 1800 222 032

## **2. Rural Workforce Agencies (RWA):**

For enquiries relating to the FPS, including applications, supporting evidence, session calculations, and assessment timeframes, contact the relevant RWA in the state or territory where you delivered most of your eligible services.

RWA contact details are provided in Section 7 of the WIP-Doctor Stream Guidelines at <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/workforce-incentive-program-guidelines-doctor-stream?language=en>.

## **3. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing:**

For enquiries about program rules, eligibility interpretation, or policy intent.

**Email:** [WIP@health.gov.au](mailto:WIP@health.gov.au)

### **8.2 I'm having trouble accessing HPOS. Who should I contact?**

If you experience difficulties accessing or using HPOS, contact Services Australia, who manage HPOS and provide technical support.

Services Australia can assist with:

- logging in to HPOS;
- accessing messages or correspondence;
- updating bank or contact details; and
- viewing service history and payment statements.

### **8.3 Where can I find further information?**

Further information is available in the WIP-Doctor Stream Guidelines at <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/workforce-incentive-program-guidelines-doctor-stream?language=en>.