



# The Bonded Medical Program

On 1 January 2020, the Bonded Medical Program (the Program) came into effect.

The Bonded Medical Program provides a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) in a medical course at an Australian university, in return for a commitment to work in eligible regional, rural or remote areas for a specified period after completion of their medical course. This commitment is referred to as a Return of Service Obligation (RoSO).

The Program provides:

- a standard 3 year RoSO to be completed over an 18 year period
- a flexible approach in undertaking RoSO, where RoSO can be on a non-continuous basis, full-time or part-time work, and fly in/fly out work in eligible locations
- clear and consistent processes to assist participants in managing their obligations using an online web portal to facilitate easier self-management of RoSO

## The Bonded Return of Service System

To support the new arrangement, the Department of Health online web portal, the Bonded Return of Service System (BRoSS), will allow bonded students and doctors to self-manage their RoSO and identify eligible locations where they can work.

Functions of BRoSS will be released throughout 2021-22. Further information will be communicated to all participants as features become available.

## New applicants

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From 1 January 2020, all new medical students enter the statutory Program.

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When universities have finalised their firm offer lists in BRoSS, the department will provide these students with log in details to access BRoSS.

Students need to log in to BRoSS to review and agree to participate in the Program. Once this is complete, the student has entered the Program.

## Legacy scheme participants

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Eligible existing legacy scheme<sup>A</sup> participants can opt in to the statutory Program.

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There are two existing legacy schemes: the Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS) Scheme and the Bonded Medical Places (BMP) Scheme. The MRBS and BMP schemes are closed to new participants. Opt in is voluntary for eligible participants.

- MRBS Scheme participants can seek to opt in once they have completed their course of study in medicine.
- BMP Scheme Participants can seek to opt in at any time.

The decision to opt in will depend on the participant's assessment of the benefits of the Program compared to their existing legacy scheme contract or deed of agreement.

Fact sheets linked below outline the key obligations for former MRBS Scheme and former Bonded Medical Places Scheme participants under the Program respectively and a comparison between the relevant legacy scheme and the Program for ease of reference.

[Obligations Fact Sheet for MRBS Scheme Participants](#)

[Obligations Fact Sheet for Bonded Medical Places Scheme Participants](#)

Participants who choose not to opt in will keep their existing contract or Deed of Agreement. All participants are encouraged to keep their existing contract or Deed of Agreement obligations up to date.

## Return of Service Obligation (RoSO)

All participants who opt in can reduce their RoSO by 1:1 credit for all RoSO worked under previous arrangements.

- Existing BMP Scheme participants who opt in (cohorts 2015 and earlier) - 3 year RoSO
- Existing BMP Scheme participants (cohorts 2016 -2019) who opt in - retention of a full time 12 month RoSO
- Existing MRBS Scheme participants who opt in - 3 year RoSO

## Program time frames

- 3 year RoSO completed within 18 years of finishing the medical course
- 18 months RoSO can be worked pre-fellowship and 18 months post-fellowship
- if Fellowship is not attained within 12 years of completion of the medical course, all RoSO must be completed within the next and final 6 years of the required 18 year time frame

## Administration

- clear processes for consideration of exceptional circumstances to extend the time frame to complete RoSO for medical reasons
- clear consistent management of withdrawals
- breach is triggered by a failure to: complete the medical course within university requirements and time frame; or complete all RoSO obligations within 18 years of completing the medical course

## Support

Rural Workforce Agencies in each state and the Northern Territory will provide support to participants throughout each phase of the Program.

## Legislation

The conditions and requirements of the Program are legally binding. More information about the details can be found in Part VD of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019A00070> and the *Health Insurance (Bonded Medical Program) Rule 2020* <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019L01513>.

## Further information

Department of Health website: [health.gov.au/new-arrangements-bonded-medical-program](http://health.gov.au/new-arrangements-bonded-medical-program).

Contact the Department of Health;

- Telephone: 1800 987 104 (Monday – Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm AEST)
- Email: [BondedMedicalProgram@health.gov.au](mailto:BondedMedicalProgram@health.gov.au) using the subject line: '[Scheme/Program] – [Participant name] – [Request type]'