



BONDED MEDICAL PROGRAM – Bonded Participant obligations

The Bonded Medical Program (the Program) provides students with 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 reduction[^] in the RoSO required compared to the Bonded Medical Places Scheme;
- a more flexible approach for completion of RoSO. Under the Program, RoSO can be non-continuous, full-time or part-time work[^], and fly in/fly out work in eligible locations; and
- clear and consistent processes to assist participants in managing their obligations using an online web portal to facilitate easier self-management of RoSO.

If you opt in and become a Bonded Participant under the Program, you have obligations under the *Health Insurance Act 1973*¹, and your Deed of Agreement ceases.

This fact sheet outlines key obligations for former Bonded Medical Places Scheme participants. It summarises the conditions of participation and the consequences of a breach of condition.

Opt in considerations for existing participants

Opt in is voluntary. Eligible existing participants of the Bonded Medical Places Scheme can choose to opt into the Program 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 Deed of Agreement.

Participants are encouraged to seek independent legal advice prior to making a decision to opt in.

Participants who choose not to opt in will remain in the Bonded Medical Places Scheme and subject to the requirements of their existing Deed of Agreement.

Return of Service Obligation (RoSO)²

Condition	Breach of condition ³
<p>If you opt into the Program, you will receive a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) in return for your commitment to work in eligible regional, rural or remote areas for a period of three (3) years.</p> <p>*NB: Participants from 2016-2019 who have a 12 month RoSO will keep this under the Program. You are required to complete your RoSO within 18 years from the day you complete your course of study in medicine at an Australian university.</p>	<p>If you do not complete your RoSO within 18 years of the date you completed your course of study in medicine (or an extended period), you will be in breach of Program conditions.</p> <p>You will be required to repay the CSP-related cost of your medical course less a proportional amount for any RoSO you have completed, plus interest.</p>

[^] Participants from 2016-2019 maintain the 12 months of RoSO but have some restrictions on how it can be completed

¹ [Health Insurance Act 1973](#) [Part VD] and [Health Insurance \(Bonded Medical Program\) Rule 2020](#)

² 124ZG(1)(c) Return of Service Obligations

³ 124ZH Breach of condition of Bonded Medical Program—repayment of education costs



Reporting⁴

Condition	Breach of condition ⁵
<p>As a Bonded Participant, you have reporting requirements – as detailed in Division 3 of the Rule – which commence in the final three months of your course of study in medicine.</p> <p>You must report the specified notifiable events and satisfy the RoSO reporting requirements by entering the required information and evidence into the Bonded Return of Service System (BRoSS).</p> <p>The requirements are described in Attachment A.</p>	<p>You may be liable for an administrative penalty of \$1,000 if you fail to comply with a condition to provide the Department with information or documents within required timeframes.</p> <p>The administrative penalty is considered a debt due to the Commonwealth and may be recovered by the Commonwealth.</p>

Withdrawing from the Program⁶

Condition	Breach of condition ⁷
<p>By opting in to 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 course of study in medicine.</p> <p>As a Bonded Participant, you will be able to withdraw from the Bonded Medical Program at any time by notifying the Department using the web portal – BRoSS – maintained by the Department.</p> <p>If you withdraw prior to the census date of your second year of study of your course of study in medicine, you will not be required to repay the CSP-related cost of your course of study in medicine.</p>	<p>If you withdraw from your course of study in medicine after the census date for the second year of study, you will be liable to pay the CSP-related cost of the course of study in medicine for the years or part year (semester) of study undertaken, plus interest.</p> <p>If you have completed your study but have not completed your RoSO within the 18 year timeframe (or an extended period), you will be liable to pay 100% of the CSP-related cost of your course of study in medicine, less a pro-rata amount based on any proportion of RoSO completed, plus interest.</p> <p>This amount will be recoverable as a debt due to the Commonwealth.</p>

Key features of the Program

Return of Service Obligation (RoSO)

- 3 year RoSO – reduced from 4-6 years under the *Bonded Medical Places Scheme*
 - NB: Participants who have a 12-month RoSO *will keep this under the Program*
- eligible locations for bonded participants are classified using any of the following: Modified Monash Model (MMM) 2-7; Distribution Priority Areas (DPA) for General Practitioners; and Outer Metropolitan District of Workforce Shortage (DWS) for all other specialities
- RoSO will be reduced by 1:1 credit for eligible work completed under previous arrangements
 - Full-time work in MM4-7 locations may attract scaling discounts of up to 6 months
- Attainment of Fellowship is not essential to complete RoSO

⁴ Division 3 – Reporting Obligations [Health Insurance \(Bonded Medical Program\) Rule 2020](#)

⁵ 124ZK Breach of condition of Bonded Medical Program—administrative penalty

⁶ 124ZP Withdrawal from Bonded Medical Program

⁷ 124ZQ Consequences of withdrawal



Time frame to complete RoSO

- 3 years of RoSO to be completed within 18 years of completing the course of study in medicine.
- 18 months RoSO can be worked pre-fellowship and 18 months post-fellowship
 - However, if Fellowship is not attained by the end of the 12th year after completing the course of study in medicine, all remaining RoSO must be completed within the remaining 6 years of the 18 year time frame.
- If the Bonded Participant – or a member of their family – has a medical condition that prevents them from completing their RoSO, they can apply for an extension.

Note: There is no other provision for a deferral to be approved under the Program.

Administration

- clear processes for consideration of exceptional circumstances for medical reasons which, if approved, will extend the time frame to complete RoSO
- consistent management of withdrawals
- self-service for all reporting requirements and RoSO via an online web portal (BRoSS)

Bonded Return of Service System (BRoSS)

BRoSS is being progressively released throughout 2022. The reporting requirements for a bonded participant are detailed in Sections 15 and 16 of the Rule.

Section 19 of the Rule outlines a ‘transitional provision’ in relation to reporting obligations. The purpose of this transitional provision was to ensure that bonded participants would not be subject to an administrative penalty until “the elements of the Department’s web portal [BRoSS] required for a bonded participant to comply with the relevant provision are functional.”

The transitional provision will cease to operate on 30 June 2022. This means that, from that date, you will be required to comply with reporting obligations outlined in the Rule. Should you not comply with a relevant provision, you will be subject to an administrative penalty of \$1,000 on each occasion of non-compliance.

The Department has provided detailed guidance material on its [website](#) to support you to understand and remain compliant with your obligations.

In addition, once bonded, you will receive automatic notifications and messages from BRoSS to remind you of your upcoming obligations.

Support

Rural Workforce Agencies in each State and the Northern Territory are able to provide support to Bonded Participants throughout each phase of the Program

Further information

For general enquiries, go to the Department’s website at: [Bonded Medical Program | Australian Government Department of Health](#). If you are a Bonded Medical Places Scheme participant with a general Program enquiry, you can contact the Department’s Call Centre on: 1800 987 104 (Monday–Friday 8:30am–5:00pm AEST).

Enquiries requiring consideration of a Participant’s personal circumstances will require an email to: BondedMedicalProgram@health.gov.au

Please use ‘*[Scheme/Program] – [Participant name] – [Request type]*’ as the subject heading format to assist us to manage your enquiry.



Attachment A

[Health Insurance \(Bonded Medical Program\) Rule 2020](#)

Division 3 – Reporting Obligations – 15 Notifiable events & 16 Return of service obligation plan

Notifiable Event Obligations	
<p>Section 15(1): within 6 months of the following events, participants must upload the following information and evidence to BRoSS.</p> <p>Section 15(2): if a participant is unable to provide the evidence or information, they must upload a statutory declaration to BRoSS that:</p> <p>(a) explains why the relevant evidence or information cannot be obtained; and</p> <p>(b) attests the relevant information.</p>	
Notifiable Event	
Item 1 – Name change	
Item 2 – Any change in the primary or secondary contact details, including phone number, email address or postal address	
Item 3 – Any change which impacts upon completion time of study in medicine	
Item 4 – Completion of study in medicine (i.e. graduation)	
Item 5 – Provisional registration with AHPRA	
Item 6 – Commencement of internship	
Item 7 – Completion of internship	
Item 8 – General registration with AHPRA	
Item 9 – Commencement of vocational training	
Item 10 – Attainment of medical specialisation	
RoSO Reporting Obligations	
<p>Section 16(1): a participant must, within the timeframes outlined below, upload the following information and evidence to BRoSS.</p> <p>Section 16(2): if a participant is unable to provide the evidence or information, they must upload a statutory declaration to BRoSS that:</p> <p>(a) explains why the relevant evidence or information cannot be obtained; and</p> <p>(b) attests the relevant information.</p>	
Required information	Reporting timeframes
Item 1 – Participant must: Register a RoSO plan in BRoSS that proposes one or more eligible locations where the participant can complete their RoSO.	(a) For students: no later than the study completion date (b) For participants: within 3 months of opting into the new Program
Item 2 – Participant must provide evidence to confirm completed work in accordance with registered RoSO plan.	No later than 3 months after a participant has completed work at an eligible location
Item 3 – Participant must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update their RoSO plan • update expected completion date • upload evidence verifying any changes to terms of work 	No later than 3 months after participant changes the expected completion date of work in eligible location
Item 4 – Participant must: Confirm or update the details of their RoSO plan.	(a) For students: every 6 months from the completion date of the participant's course of study in medicine. (b) For participants: every 6 months from the participant's date of opt in to the new Program.

Comparison Factsheet: Bonded Medical Places Scheme & Bonded Medical Program (June 2022)

Bonded Medical Places Scheme		Bonded Medical Program	
What does it do?	<p>The Bonded Medical Places Scheme provides a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) in medicine at an Australian university in exchange for which participants agree to work (Return of Service Obligation (RoSO)) in an underserved area for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a length of time equal to six consecutive years for participants from 2004–2007*; a length of time equivalent to the length of the medical degree for participants who joined the scheme from 2008–2015**; Eligible locations: RRMA 2–7 (other than general practice), <i>Distribution Priority Area</i> (DPA), eligible Aboriginal Medical Services (RRMA 1) and After Hours <u>Only</u> Medical Service. If speciality is considered a District of Workforce Shortage*** (DWS) in RRMA 1 location is eligible; and MM4–7 locations for participants commencing RoSO after Fellowship who accept this additional classification layer. 12 months for participants who joined the scheme from 2016–2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible locations: MM2–7 for participants commencing their RoSO in the pre-Vocational phase and MM4-7 or a DWS in the Vocational phase and for RoSO completed after Fellowship. <p>*NB1: If the offered Deed of Variation was signed, participants have a length of time equivalent to the length of the medical degree.</p> <p>**NB2: Any inner/outer metro location within Australia other than inner metro for general practitioner. If an inner metro must be an eligible DWS specialist location.</p> <p>***NB3: DWS for GPs changed to DPA for GPs in 2019.</p>	<p>The Bonded Medical Program offers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 year RoSO completed within 18 years of completing the course of study in medicine; eligible locations for RoSO include MM 2–7 DPA for GPs and also Outer Metropolitan DWS for all other specialities; 18 months of RoSO can be worked pre-fellowship and 18 months post-fellowship; if fellowship is not attained within 12 years of completion of the course of study in medicine, all RoSO must be completed within the next (and final) 6 years of the 18 year timeframe; and access to the Bonded Return of Service System (BRoSS) to self-manage RoSO. 	
Terms and Conditions (Milestone obligations)	<p>Participants agreed to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 years permitted for commencing the medical course and to become a medical practitioner; 16 years permitted for commencing the medical course and to obtain a Fellowship; 12 months permitted to commence RoSO from obtaining first Fellowship; RoSO requires 20 hours per week (or 80 hours over the month) for 9 months of the calendar year; working no less than 3 months in any 6 month period; must not work outside eligible locations between the date of Fellowship and the date they complete their RoSO; up to 50% of RoSO can be completed pre-Fellowship; and pre-Fellowship work must be completed in a minimum of 12 week blocks of full-time work. 	<p>Bonded Participants agree to the following obligations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> up to 18 months of RoSO can be completed pre-Fellowship; if a participant reaches the 12th year marker and has not obtained Fellowship all remaining RoSO can be completed as a non-Fellowed medical practitioner; RoSO can be started in the intern phase and completed non-continuously on a per day basis (a total of 20 hours over two or more days), part-time (a minimum of 20 hours per week) or full-time (35 hours or more a week); once a participant reaches 20 hours the RoSO will be reduced by 1 week; additional hours worked above 35 hours in a week do not accrue; and eligible full-time RoSO work for 24 months in MM4-7 locations may attract scaling discounts from the 25th month – to a maximum of 6 months. <p>2016-2019 Bonded Medical Places Scheme participants, once opted in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> keep the 12 month RoSO; and RoSO must be completed on a full-time basis and may be completed in a series of periods of at least 10 consecutive weeks. 	
Timeframes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no completion timeframes for the 2004-2015 Bonded Medical Places Scheme participants to complete the RoSO; 2016-2019 Participants must complete the RoSO within 5 years of commencing the RoSO or 5 years after Fellowship; and Deferrals can be put in place to account for post-Fellowship study, parental leave and life circumstances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonded Participants must complete the RoSO within 18 years of completing their course of study in medicine; There are no deferrals of the RoSO to accommodate post-Fellowship study, parental leave and life circumstances; and Any extension (up to two years) under exceptional medical circumstances only. 	
Breach of Condition	<p>A breach of the terms and conditions of the Agreement may mean participants are liable to repay the CSP (less a pro rata amount for any RoSO completed).</p>	<p>A breach of the conditions of the Program may mean Bonded Participants are liable to repay the CSP (less a pro rata amount for any RoSO completed).</p>	