

## **Bachelor of Midwifery Honours Scholarship**

### **SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES 2023**

#### **Introduction**

The Office of the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, ACT Health Directorate, promotes a culture of innovation, learning and development through the provision of various scholarships and programmes made available to all nurses and midwives across the ACT.

The Bachelor of Midwifery Honours Scholarship has been on offer since 2013. The scholarship is provided to enable midwives to complete a Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours).

This initiative is available to level 1 midwives (1.1 to 1.8) and provides successful candidates the opportunity to complete the Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) course part-time with a paid study component for two years. The program involves a supervised research thesis.

#### **Aims and Outcomes**

The aims of the Bachelor of Midwifery Honours Scholarship program are:

- to attract and retain high performing midwives in the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD), Canberra Health Services (CHS) and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (CPHB);
- to increase the capacity of the midwifery workforce in research and related skills (e.g., research appraisal and project management);
- to facilitate supervised research, service evaluation and quality assurance initiatives in the ACTHD, CHS and CPHB; to enhance the professional development of midwives in the ACTHD, CHS and CPHB;
- to promote a culture of inquiry and practice informed by evidence; and
- To ensure best practice in midwifery models of care and service provision for mothers, people and babies.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for the Bachelor of Midwifery Honours Scholarship applicants must:

1. Be permanently employed as a midwife level 1.1 to 1.8 within the ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services or Calvary Public Hospital Bruce.
2. Have graduated within the last ten years, and

3. Be willing to enrol in, and committed to completing, the Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) program with the University of Canberra on a part-time basis for two years.

### **Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) with the University of Canberra**

The Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) is a 24-credit point (cp) course that aims to enhance the research skills of participants to develop new, more effective midwifery practice solutions, providing them with a pathway to higher degrees by research if desired.

Successful candidates will undertake the Honours course, which involves a supervised research thesis, on a part-time basis enrolling into at least three credit points per semester to complete the course within two years.

Tuition fees for the Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) course as well as associated course costs, textbooks, equipment, and research project related costs are met by the student.

### **Paid Study Component**

Successful candidates will be eligible for one paid study day per week, from the first week of semester one in the first year of study to the final week of semester two in the second year of study (inclusive of winter terms and summer break between the first and second year of study) to assist with completing coursework and research components of the Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours).

The recipient's work area is required to invoice the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre within 10 working days of the end of each quarter (3 monthly) for reimbursement of the equivalent of one full shift per week. **If the invoices for reimbursement are not submitted on time the work area risks losing their funding for the quarter.**

The scholarship does not cover course fees or other student and administration fees, textbooks, equipment, or research project related costs.

### **Conditions**

The following conditions apply for successful applicants of Bachelor of Midwifery Honours Scholarship:

- The midwife must be enrolled in the Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) program at the University of Canberra and is expected to successfully complete all requisite units of the Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) program
- Be enrolled in at least three credit points per semester.
- Undertake a research project that is negotiated with the maternity service.
- Meet regularly with their academic supervisor as agreed by the academic supervisor.
- Present a copy of their results **each semester** to their Director of Midwifery (DOM) or line manager and the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre Have a current Performance Management Agreement (PMA) that identifies specific learning goals to identify opportunities for skill and knowledge development, and
- Present their final project to staff members at the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre Grand Rounds, or another appropriate forum.
- Provide a written reflection (no longer than 500 words) to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre to include:
  - Personal and professional learnings from taking part in the Honours program, and

- How learnings from the program will be implemented in the student's workplace and career

## Leave

The scholarship candidate is responsible for negotiating annual and other leave over the period of the scholarship to ensure all requirements of the Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) program are met. Long service leave and purchased leave will not be supported for the duration of the scholarship.

**Assessment of Applications** Opportunities for the Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) Scholarship will be advertised within the ACTHD, CHS and CPHB with applications considered on merit by a panel of senior midwives and at least one midwifery academic. Granting of the scholarship will be based on written responses to selection criteria, academic transcripts, and interview where necessary. Scholarships are often made available to new graduate midwives and in this case, the application process for the scholarship will be integrated with the application for a new graduate position.

The scholarship usually aims to support midwives to enrol in semester one (February) of the academic year. In some circumstances the scholarship may be offered for a second semester commencement.

Should an applicant be dissatisfied with the panel's decision, an appeal process has been established.

Written requests for review of panel decisions must:

- Be provided within two weeks of the applicant receiving notification of the panel's decision,
- Identify the basis of the appeal, and
- Be addressed to the Clinical Chair in Midwifery, SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre: [synergy@act.gov.au](mailto:synergy@act.gov.au).

The decision of the Clinical Chair in Midwifery is final.

## Agreements

Successful recipients will receive a Scholarship Agreement. Recipients are required to sign the Agreement, have their signature witnessed, and return it to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre by the due date specified in the letter of offer.

The recipient's DOM or line manager will receive a Letter of Agreement for Funding. The is required to sign the Letter of Agreement for Funding and return it to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre by the specified due date. The Letter of Agreement includes the commitment of the candidate's work area to invoice SYNERGY every quarter.

## Extension and Suspension

All requests for variation to the Scholarship agreement should be notified in writing to the scholarship recipient's DOM and SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre.

Intermission from the academic program can be negotiated in extenuating circumstances. The RM must discuss this with their academic supervisor as well as their DOM. Leave for one semester can be accommodated, and such leave can be applied for one time only. In this case, the paid study day will be suspended for the period of intermission and the scholarship recipient will be rostered to practice for their full FTE equivalent. The paid study day will be reinstated in week 1 of the first semester of study following intermission.

If the course of study is not completed within the agreed period, a request is to be made in writing for an extension of time for submission of results. An extension of time to complete the academic program does not automatically include additional Scholarship funding.

Illness which reduces the effective tenure of the Scholarship will not automatically entitle the recipient to an extension of the original period of the Scholarship. ACTHD, CHS and CPHB may, on formal application, agree to a scholarship extension if the extension can be met by the service operational requirements.

## **Termination**

A SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre Scholarship may be terminated at any time:

- If in the opinion of the ACTHD, CHS or CPHB, the recipient's performance is unsatisfactory in accordance with fair performance management principles,
- If the scholarship recipient terminates enrolment or does not enrol in the required units of study within the Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) course,
- If the recipient fails to complete or pass units of study within the Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours) course
- If the recipient fails to observe the conditions of the Scholarship Agreement.

## **Contact**

SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre: [synergy@act.gov.au](mailto:synergy@act.gov.au)