



**HIGHER EDUCATION CONTRIBUTION SCHEME (HECS)
DEBT SUPPORT FUNDING PROGRAM
FOR GRADUATE REGISTERED NURSES MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM (GRNMHP)**

The Department of Health will assist Graduate Registered Nurses (GRNs) choosing a mental health graduate program commencing January 2010 with HECS debt payment. Funding support is for GRNMHP only and is not applicable to collaborative programs. Conditions apply.

The initiative aims to improve attraction and retention in the mental health nursing workforce in Western Australia (WA).

The initiative will provide and assist eligible applicants HECS debt repayment of up to \$16,000 or pro rata. HECS debt payment will be made yearly (in portions) over 3 years to those in full time/part time employment in a mental health care setting. From program commencement, individual applicants are entitled to a maximum of 3 years of funding support at a total maximum value of \$16,000 or pro rata. The initiative will NOT be extended beyond 3 years for individual eligible applicants.

Limited funding available and applications are competitive. If the demands for the positions exceed funding available, priority will be given to full time employee applicants.

GRNMHPs are available at:

- Armadale Health Service,
- Bentley Health Service,
- Fremantle Hospital and Health Service,
- Graylands Hospital,
- Older Adult Mental Health Service,
- Peel and Rockingham Kwinana Mental Health Service, and
- Swan Kalamunda Health Service.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding GRNs must:

- have completed a Nursing/Health Science degree in WA,
- be registered with the Nurses and Midwives Board of Western Australia prior to commencement,
- be an Australian Citizen/Permanent Resident at time of application/enrolment,
- meet all Graduate Nurse Connect entry criteria and must have applied via Graduate Nurse Connect to be eligible for the funding support,



- commence a GRNMHP (not collaborative [general/mental health programs]) on or after 1 January 2010 to 30 December 2011, (GRNs commencing a GRNMHP from 1 January 2012 are NOT eligible for this funding initiative)
- must gain full time or part time employment, and confirm that the employing public hospital is one listed above and is a part of the funding program support initiative (casual employment not acceptable),

Conditions

To fulfil the criteria, the following conditions apply:

- GRNs applying for a GRNMHP are entitled to a maximum of HECS debt support over 3 years to a total maximum funding of \$16,000 or pro rata.
- HECS debt support payments are calculated on full time or part time pro-rata basis.
- Successful applicants must commit to working continually in a mental health clinical care setting for 3 years to receive the full funding support.
- Funding will only be provided yearly with continued full time/part time employment for 3 years from the employment commencement date.
- Evidence of HECS debt must be provided with the application.
- If the eligible GRN chooses to change health service/hospital, employment must be maintained within the Public Mental Health sector of WA to gain continued HECS debt support funding.
- If the eligible GRN chooses to change employment sectors (e.g. medical, surgical, critical or aged care settings) within the 3 year period, they will forego subsequent future entitlements under this funding program.
- Any approved leave accrued in the course counts towards service for the purpose of these entitlements.
- To be eligible for the HECS debt support funding program continuous service must be maintained. Eligible GRNs will forfeit entitlements under this funding program if there is a break in service over the 3 year period.



Payment Guidelines

- Successful GRNs will receive payments at 12 months, 24 months and 36 months of employment over a 3 year period.
- HECS debt support funding payments are distributed over 3 years at a maximum of \$16,000 or pro-rata.
- Payments will be distributed as per the following:
 1. Full time employee eligible for funding program will receive the following: (assuming individual's total HECS debt of \$16,000)

30% of the individual's total HECS debt at the end of first year of full time employment	\$4,800
30% of the individual's total HECS debt at the end of second year of full time employment	\$4,800
40% of the individual's total HECS debt at the end of third year of full time employment	\$6,400
100%	\$16,000

2. Part time employees eligible for funding program payment will be dependent on the average FTE worked for that year provided by the employer. Payment entitlements will be calculated based on the following:
 - 30% of the individual's average FTE worked at the end of first year of part time employment
 - 30% of the individual's average FTE worked at the end of second year of part time employment
 - 40% of the individual's average FTE worked at the end of third year of part time employment

Calculation Example: (assuming individual's total HECS debt of \$14,500)

30% of the individual's average FTE worked (0.6 FTE) at the end of first year of part time employment
$30\% \times 0.6 = 18\%$
$\$14,500 \times 18\% = \mathbf{\$2,610}$



30% of the individual's average FTE worked (0.8 FTE) at the end of second year of part time employment

$$30\% \times 0.8 = 24\%$$

$$\$14,500 \times 24\% = \mathbf{\$3,480}$$

40% of the individual's average FTE worked (0.5 FTE) at the end of third year of part time employment

$$40\% \times 0.5 = 20\%$$

$$\$14,500 \times 20\% = \mathbf{\$2,900}$$

** Department of Health reserve the right to make changes without notice.*