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| Inclusion scholarships for social work placements |
| Round 3 - Frequently asked questionsUpdated: 7 October 2024 |

# What are the Inclusion scholarships for social work placements (Placement scholarships)?

The Victorian Government is supporting future social workers to complete mandatory practical placements. Placement scholarships will reduce the financial burden of placements for students needing support. The Placement scholarships will support students to finish their degrees and start their careers.

# What is the scholarship value?

Placement scholarships are $7,500.

The scholarships will be paid to successful applicants in two instalments. The first payment of $4,000 will be made:

* following your university census date
* after confirmation from your university that you have secured a placement.

You may receive your payment earlier, if you:

* commence your placement prior to the university census date
* are within the scholarship round timeframe
* have the university’s confirmation that the placement has commenced.

The second payment of $3,500 will be made at a mid-placement milestone.

Successful applicants can use scholarship payments to help meet day to day living expenses while undertaking placements.

# When are scholarships being offered?

Scholarships will be available for unpaid placements taking place during the 2025 academic year.

# Am I eligible?

To be eligible for a Placement scholarship, you must be:

* a domestic student. This means that you are either an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand), an Australian permanent resident, or an Australian permanent visa holder.
* undertaking a mandatory unpaid practical placement in 2025 ie between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025, as part of a Bachelor or Master of Social Work with one of the following Victorian public universities:
	+ Deakin University
	+ Federation University
	+ La Trobe University
	+ Monash University
	+ RMIT University
	+ University of Melbourne
	+ Victoria University
* a current Victorian resident or a resident of a defined border community
* meet one or more of the socio-economic and demographic criteria listed below.

The socio-economic criteria are:

* people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, you may receive Austudy, ABSTUDY, or other government payment or allowance
* the main user of social or community services
* the primary carer of a family member who is the main service user of social or community services.

The demographic criteria are:

* Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
* refugees and people from ~~or~~ multicultural backgrounds
* people who identify as LGBTIQA+
* people with disability
* people with caring responsibilities, including
	+ single parents
	+ people caring for a person with disability, chronic health conditions or mental illness
	+ people caring for a person who is frail or aged (as defined by the [Commonwealth Carer Recognition Act](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/carer-recognition-act-2010-guidelines) <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/carer-recognition-act-2010-guidelines>).
* people who live in regional or rural Victoria or defined border communities.

Appendix 1 of the program guidelines contains further information about the socio-economic and demographic criteria. Appendix 2 details the defined border communities.

# What does ‘experience of using social or community services’ mean?

This can include students or their families who have lived in social or public housing. It can include students or their families who have accessed or been involved with:

* homelessness services
* family violence or sexual assault services
* child and family support including:
	+ child protection
	+ out-of-home care
	+ foster care
	+ kinship care
	+ residential care
* youth justice
* services delivered by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.

This can also include students who are the primary carer of a family member who has used social or community services.

Examples of accessing social and community services may include the following:

* carer support programs
* case management
* counselling
* crisis care response
* family preservation and reunification
* parenting services
* respite and support care.

See Appendix 1 of the program guidelines for further information.

# Will I receive a scholarship if I meet the eligibility criteria?

Placement scholarships are limited, and eligible applicants are not guaranteed a scholarship. An assessment process will prioritise applications according to the above criteria.

# How will my application be assessed?

A panel will assess applications using the information and evidence you provide.

Preference will be given to applicants who meet multiple criteria from both the socio-economic and demographic areas.

Scholarships are available for unpaid placements taking place from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025. Round 3 will prioritise eligible applicants who will be undertaking their placements between 1 January – 30 June 2025.

# I currently receive a scholarship under another program. Am I still eligible?

If you are currently receiving a scholarship listed below, you are **not eligible** for a Placement scholarship:

* Master of Social Work (Child and Family Practice) as part of the Switch to Social Work program
* scholarships through the Victorian Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Scholarships Program
* an academic scholarship through another organisation, including a university, valued at over $7,500 per year.

I have been successful for a scholarship under this program, can I apply again in another round?

Yes, you can apply again if you have already been successful for a scholarship under this program. You must meet the eligibility criteria and apply for a different field placement. Each application is assessed individually in the context of the application round. Placement scholarships are limited, and eligible applicants are not guaranteed a scholarship.

# I have been unsuccessful for a scholarship under this program, can I apply again in another round?

Yes, you can apply again after an unsuccessful outcome in previous rounds. You must still meet the eligibility criteria. Any further applications will be assessed on its own merit within the context of the application round. Placement scholarships are limited, and not all eligible applicants are guaranteed a scholarship.

# I am studying at a Victorian university via distance education while living interstate. Can I still apply for a scholarship?

Students who live interstate are **not eligible** for a Placement scholarship. Further information is available in the program guidelines. Appendix 2 in the program guidelines lists the defined border communities.

To be eligible for a Placement scholarship you must be enrolled in a public Victorian university **and** live in Victoria or a defined border community.

# I am studying at an interstate university via distance education while living in Victoria. Can I still apply for a scholarship?

Students who are enrolled in an interstate university are **not eligible** for a Placement scholarship.

# To be eligible for a Placement scholarship you must be enrolled in a public Victorian university **and** live in Victoria or a defined border community. I have already started my placement and will finish in 2025. Am I eligible to apply?

Students who have commenced a placement prior to 1 January 2025 are **not eligible**.

To be eligible for a scholarship in Round 3 (opening on 28 October 2024), students must be commencing their placement between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025.

# What are the application dates?

Round 3 applications will open on Monday 28 October 2024 and close at 4pm on Monday 25 November 2024.

Indicative Round 4 dates are from Monday 31 March 2025 and closing Wednesday 30 April 2025.

 At least 4 weeks before applications open, the Round 4 dates will be confirmed via the website: [Inclusion scholarships for social work placements](http://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/inclusion-scholarships-social-work-placements) <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/inclusion-scholarships-social-work-placements>.

# When will I know the outcome of my application?

You will be notified of the outcome of your application by Monday 20 January 2025.

If successful, when will I receive my payments?

The first payment of $4,000 will be made after your university census date. Confirmation from your university that you have secured a placement is also required. The census date will depend on your university. Please refer to your university’s website to verify the relevant semester census date or see details in the table below.

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| Rounds and placement eligible dates | Round 3: 1 January – 30 June 2025 | Round 4: 1 July – 31 December 2025 |
| Deakin University  | 31 March 2025 | 15 August 2025 |
| Federation University  | 31 March 2025 | 15 August 2025 |
| La Trobe University  | 31 March 2025 | 31 August 2025 |
| Monash University  | 31 March 2025 | 31 August 2025 |
| RMIT University  | 31 March 2025 | 31 August 2025 |
| University of Melbourne  | 3 April 2025 | 2 September 2025 |
| Victoria University | 22 January 2025 | 3 June 2025 |

You may receive your payment earlier, if you:

* commence your placement prior to the university census date
* are within the scholarship round timeframe
* have the university’s confirmation that the placement has commenced.

The second payment of $3,500 will be made at a mid-placement milestone.

# How do I apply?

You can apply online from 28 October 2024 on the website [Inclusion scholarships for social work placements](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/inclusion-scholarships-social-work-placements) <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/inclusion-scholarships-social-work-placements>.

# Can I apply for a round 3 or 4 Placement scholarship if I am undertaking a placement starting in 2026?

No. Your placements must be taken between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025 if you are applying for a scholarship in round 3 or 4.

# Can I apply for a Placement scholarship if I am part way through my placement unit?

No. You must secure a scholarship prior to commencing your placement unit during the eligible timeframe for the round you wish to apply for.

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| **Round** | **Eligible dates** |
| Round 3 | 1 January – 31 December 2025 |
| Round 4 | 31 March – 31 December 2025 |

Priority will be given to applicants whose placements occur between 1 January – 30 June 2025.

# What information do I need to apply?

You will need one of the following proof of identity documents:

* Medicare card
* Australian passport or New Zealand passport
* Victorian driver~~s~~ licence or learner permit
* Foreign passport (for those issued with an Australian permanent resident or humanitarian visa)

You will also need to provide evidence that supports your application including:

* name of your educational institution and program of study
* student ID number from your educational institution
* Unique Student Identifier number
* your current Victorian or eligible border community residential address (i.e., where you are living while you study)
* any government payments or benefits you receive.

# How do I know if I meet the eligibility criteria experience of using social or community services

The terms social and community services can be used to describe a broad range of community-based services targeted at addressing disadvantage or vulnerability experienced by people or communities.

For these scholarships, social and community services refers to contact with statutory Child Protection and youth justice services or accessing the following types of services:

* Child and family services
* Disability services, including those funded through the National Disability Insurance Scheme, WorkSafe or the Transport Accident Commission
* Family violence services
* Sexual assault services
* Social housing (including public and community housing) and homelessness services
* Services for Aboriginal people and communities delivered by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations

Examples of accessing social and community services may include the following:

* carer support programs
* case management
* counselling
* crisis care response
* family preservation and reunification
* out of home care, which includes foster care, kinship care, residential care
* parenting services
* respite and support care

If you are unsure about whether you are eligible, please contact the Placement scholarships team at placement.scholarships@grants.vic.gov.au.

# I have applied for a government pension, allowance or benefit and will likely get an outcome before the assessment period is final. How do I answer this question?

If you are awaiting a decision, answer ‘no’ to the question about currently receiving a government pension, allowance or benefit. You must let the Placement Scholarships team know that you are awaiting an outcome, as this information may assist your application.

# If I am awarded a scholarship but my placement does not proceed, can I still receive the scholarship payments?

If you withdraw from your program of study following the university census date or take a leave of absence in accordance with your university’s policy, you may not be able to claim both scholarship payments and may be required to return payments.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing cannot hold, postpone, or defer a scholarship. If a recipient is unable to start their nominated placement, they will need to withdraw their application. They may have to return any payment(s) they have received.

# What happens if I defer or withdraw from my studies?

You may be required to repay some or all of your scholarship payment in the event of a withdrawal. Decisions regarding repayments are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing cannot hold, postpone, or defer a scholarship. If a recipient is unable to start their nominated placement, they will need to withdraw their application. They may have to return any payments they have received.

# How will my information be used?

Your information will be used to assess your scholarship application.

In applying for a Placement scholarship you will be providing personal, sensitive, and health information which will be collected and used by the Department of Government Services (DGS) and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) as the program administrators. Your personal, sensitive and health information is collected for the purpose of assessing eligibility, administering claims and payments and other functions necessary for the effective delivery of the program, including monitoring and evaluation.

By applying for a Placement scholarship, you consent to the sharing of information as outlined in the Terms and Conditions section outlined in the program guidelines and in the application form. DGS or DFFH, as program administrators may contact you to clarify your submitted information, and for program review, reporting, monitoring, audit and evaluation purposes.

All information will be treated in accordance with the privacy statement set out in the program guidelines. <add guidelines link>

# Will you share information about me with my university?

The specific socio-economic and demographic information that you provide will not be shared with your university. Your university will be asked to verify that you are enrolled in and have commenced your placement, and that you have met mid-placement milestones.

Universities will not be asked to provide information about your university results or progress, or to provide any advice on your suitability for a scholarship.

# Who do I contact for further information?

For further information, please visit [Inclusion scholarships for social work placements](http://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/inclusion-scholarships-social-work-placements) <www.dffh.vic.gov.au/inclusion-scholarships-social-work-placements>. If you have any further questions, you can email placement.scholarships@grants.vic.gov.au

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| To receive this document in another format, phone 03 9067 0393 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email or email the Department of Government Services <placement.scholarships@grants.vic.gov.au>.Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, October 2024.In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Koori/Koorie’ is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.Available at [Inclusion scholarships for social work placements](http://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/inclusion-scholarships-social-work-placements) <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/inclusion-scholarships-social-work-placements> |