



The New Arrangement

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

The Bonded Medical Program, established in 2001, 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 standard 3 year RoSO to be completed over an 18 year period
- a more 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 2020. Further information will be communicated to all participants as features become available.

New applicants

From 1 January 2020, all new students will enter the Program under the new arrangement.

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.

Opt in considerations for existing scheme participants

There are two existing schemes: the Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS) and the Bonded Medical Places (BMP) Scheme. The MRBS and BMP schemes are closed to new participants.

Eligible existing participants can opt in to the new arrangement at any time from 1 January 2020. MRBS scheme students will be able to opt in on completion of their medical course.

Opt in is voluntary. Participants who choose not to opt in will keep their existing contract or deed of agreement. The decision to opt in will depend on the benefits the new arrangement offers a participant and the current stage or phase of their existing arrangement.

Different features apply to opt in

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 and reduction in Medicare ban from 12 years to 6 years under a breach of conditions

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

Contact the Department of Health

- Telephone: 1800 987 104 (Monday – Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm AEST)
- Email: BRoSS@health.gov.au