

# Paramedic Practitioner/Advanced Practice Paramedicine Scholarship Program

## Guidelines

December 2023

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## Background

The Victorian Government has committed to establish a Paramedic Practitioner/Advanced Practice Paramedicine role within Ambulance Victoria, beginning in rural and regional areas. The role has the potential to increase the accessibility and timeliness of healthcare while alleviating pressure on busy emergency departments.

Paramedic Practitioners/Advanced Practice Paramedics will be highly experienced practitioners, demonstrating advanced knowledge, complex decision-making, and enhanced judgement to provide care and treatment in-place. It is anticipated that a Paramedic Practitioner/Advanced Practice Paramedic will be a key member of the integrated out-of-hospital healthcare team, undertaking assessment and diagnostic investigations, and planning and implementation of treatment plans, along with referral to other providers as appropriate.

Monash University will be delivering the postgraduate program, commencing in 2024, with a focus on advanced assessment and diagnostics, primary/community care, extended scope of practice (i.e., therapeutics), treatment planning, legal and ethical considerations, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The Paramedic Practitioner/Advanced Practice Paramedicine postgraduate program is a three-year, part-time course, employing a blend of online and hybrid learning, emphasising accessibility for students, especially in remote locations. A significant component will be dedicated to work-integrated learning, providing hands-on clinical experiences, facilitated by both clinical and professional mentors.

## Government-funded scholarships

Government-funded scholarships will be available for eligible Ambulance Victoria employees to contribute towards the course fees associated with completing the qualification.

Scholarships will be available commencing in 2024, and in three subsequent years (2025, 2026 and 2027) there will be additional scholarships offered to commencing students.

The Department of Health (the Department) and Safer Care Victoria, in partnership with Ambulance Victoria and Monash University, will undertake an equitable, fair and merit-based selection process to determine the allocation of scholarships to eligible students. A completed and submitted application **does not** guarantee awarding of a scholarship.

Scholarships will be managed by Monash University by invoicing the Department directly.

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## Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for a government funded scholarship, you must:

- Have a completed Bachelor of Paramedicine (or equivalent) with at least a pass (50%) average or qualifications and experience approved by the Department of Paramedicine, Monash University.
- Have a minimum of 5 years' FTE (full time equivalent) experience as a registered Paramedic in a directly patient-facing role. (*Please note - This can be an accumulative over a period greater than 5 years*)
- Be currently employed by Ambulance Victoria, working in a clinical position with direct patient contact.

Once successful, the applicant must:

- Maintain current paramedic registration with AHPRA/Paramedicine Board of Australia throughout the course.
- Maintain employment with Ambulance Victoria, minimum FTE of 0.6 throughout course duration.
- Be successfully enrolled in the Monash University post graduate program and remain enrolled for a minimum 0.5 Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL) (Please refer to clause 5.5 for exceptions).
- Provide a curriculum vitae (CV) which details the duration and nature of their work experience as a Paramedic, and includes referee details for verification of work experience, or a statement from the employer to substantiate the duration and nature of employment as a Paramedic.

## Application requirements

To apply for a scholarship, you must meet all the eligibility criteria above and achieve the following elements:

- Provide a written cover letter explaining:
  - why you wish to become a Paramedic Practitioner/ Advanced Practice Paramedic and how it will evolve your current practice and serve your community (no more than 250 words).
  - how are you on the trajectory to meet the requirements of advanced practice that you will ultimately work under as a Paramedic Practitioner/Advanced Practice Paramedic? Please address the Key Selection Criteria listed in Appendix 2 (no more than 450 words).
  - Share your experience and commitment to healthcare in Victorian rural and regional areas and explain what motivates you to progress your career within these specific regions (no more than 250 words).
- Commit to completing all components of the postgraduate qualification.
- Ambulance Victoria will be required to provide a 'Statement of Organisational Support' as part of the application process.
- Commit to identifying at least one Clinical Mentor and one Professional Mentor (further

information below).

- For shortlisted applicants only: provide undergraduate (and postgraduate if relevant) academic transcripts.

## Selection criteria

Applicants will be assessed against the following selection criteria. Shortlisted applicants may also be required to attend an interview to assist in the selection process.

Minimum essential criteria:

- Address the eligibility criteria (see above).
- Commit to complete the supernumerary integrated professional practice requirements associated with the qualification.
- Demonstrate commitment to work as a Paramedic Practitioner/ Advanced Practice Paramedic in rural and regional Victoria.
- Demonstrate commitment to advancing a career within the paramedic profession, including to the philosophical underpinnings of advanced practice.

## Additional information

### Advanced practice

AHPRA defines advanced practice as:

- activities where practitioners incorporate professional leadership, education, research, and support of systems into their practice. This encompasses relevant expertise, critical thinking, complex decision-making, autonomous actions, ensuring safety and effectiveness. They operate within a generalist or specialist context, responsible for managing individuals with complex healthcare needs. Advanced practice is determined by the level of practice, not by job title or remuneration.

### Supernumerary integrated professional practice/Work Integrated Learning

During the post graduate program, students may undertake up to 300 hours of “supernumerary integrated professional practice” (SIPP) that provides exposure to a range of health care experiences relevant to the students’ learning needs. This is a form of work integrated learning (placement) in which the applicant will gain practical, supervised experience in a variety of settings to consolidate theoretical learning with practice.

These hours and the supervised practice undertaken will be mapped to competency frameworks within the work integrated academic unit within the post graduate program. This supervised practice time can be in a paid or non-paid capacity. Furthermore, students must have sufficient organisational Professional Indemnity Insurance when practicing in an extended scope in a supernumerary capacity.

"Supernumerary" is defined as:

- a scenario where the student engages in supervised practice outside of their employed position or is not counted in the staffing roster. Supernumerary integrated professional practice prepares students for their future role as Paramedic Practitioners/Advanced Practice Paramedics. They will apply advanced knowledge, skills, and experience to perform clinical tasks or care episodes deemed as advanced practice.

### Mentors

Students will nominate at least one clinical mentor and one professional mentor to guide them during their course, once suitable mentors have been identified after course commencement. (If the students

have more than one clinical/professional mentor, they need to nominate a 'primary' mentor who will be accountable for feedback to the University regarding student progress)

The clinical mentor/s must be:

- An endorsed Nurse Practitioner in the relevant area of specialty

OR

- An experienced Medical Practitioner in the relevant area of specialty (consultant, fellow or General Practitioner)

The professional mentor/s must be:

- A Paramedic, Nurse Practitioner or Medical Practitioner recognised as a leader within their institution who has influence over organisational policy development.

## 1. How to apply

1.1. In addition to the completed application, you must provide the following information and documentation in support of your application:

- Paramedicine Board of Australia registration number
- current Victorian residential address (i.e., where you are living while you study)

1.2. Proof of Identity

- The eligible student must be the person who applies for the scholarship and must provide proof of identity documents as per Monash requirements on formal course application.

1.3. Scholarship Agreement with the Victorian Government

As part of the application process, you must accept and agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the Scholarship Program as stated in the application form and these guidelines. By completing the application form, you are making an offer to the Victorian Government and will be bound by the terms of the offer if accepted by the Victorian Government.

If your application is successful, you will be notified via email. This will form an agreement between you, Monash University and the Victorian Government on the terms contained in the application, these guidelines and the conditions of grant in the application form on delivery of the successful email notification.

## 2. Assessment of eligibility

2.1. You will be required to confirm you meet the eligibility criteria at the time of application and throughout the duration of the course.

2.2. Applications will be assessed using the information and evidence provided by the applicant. As part of this process, any information provided by an applicant may be shared and subject to verification by Monash University, the Paramedicine Board of Australia, Ambulance Victoria and the Department of Health.

2.3. You may be requested to provide further information to assist in assessment of your application or claim.

## 3. Terms and conditions

3.1. If you receive a scholarship, you are responsible for enrolling in and successfully completing the program of study in line with course requirements and in the timeframes specified to remain eligible for payments. The scholarship will only cover initial enrolments in a unit.

- 3.2. You are responsible for associated payments and costs incurred beyond the value of the course unit costs (the scholarship).
- 3.3. Receiving a scholarship does not guarantee work as a Paramedic Practitioner/Advanced Practice Paramedic after study completion. You are responsible for maintaining, seeking and/or arranging employment with a suitable employer on completion of your studies.
- 3.4. If you enter into the Scholarship Agreement and do not comply with its terms and conditions, you may be required to repay scholarship offsets received.
- 3.5. By entering into the Scholarship Agreement, you consent to the State of Victoria sharing information provided by you within the Victorian Government and between the Victorian Government and external parties for the purposes of validating enrolment and other eligibility requirements, including but not limited to:
  - Monash University
  - Ambulance Victoria
  - the Department of Health
  - the Paramedicine Board of Australia
  - Victorian public health services
  - Victorian community health services
- 3.6. Applications and claims may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives for a period of up to three years following the completion of the scholarship to determine whether the application and information provided during the term of the Scholarship Agreement was compliant.
- 3.7. The Department of Health may, at any time, remove an applicant from the application assessment process or terminate an agreement if, in the Department's opinion, association with the applicant may bring the Department, a minister or the Victorian Government into disrepute.
- 3.8. You are responsible for adhering to Monash University policies and procedures.
- 3.9. Program surveys and evaluation:
  - You must agree to participate in the Victorian Government's performance monitoring and evaluation of this program by completing survey questions, which may be for a period of up to seven years after applying to the program. This information will be treated in accordance with the privacy statement detailed below.
- 3.10. Fraudulent claims:
  - By submitting your application form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true, accurate and not misleading about a material fact.
  - If any information in the application or claims for payment is found to be false, misleading or fraudulent (as determined by the administering department in its discretion), the scholarship will be repayable on demand and the Victorian Government reserves the right to take further action, including referring the applicant to the relevant law enforcement agency. Providing inaccurate, untrue, or misleading information may result in an offence being committed and serious penalties may apply.

## 4. Privacy statement

- 4.1. Information you provide for this program, that includes personal information, will be collected and used by the Victorian Government. The Department of Health, Monash University and Ambulance Victoria, as the program administrators, may collect your personal information for the purpose of assessing eligibility and to administer payments.
- 4.2. By applying for a scholarship, applicants consent to the sharing of information as outlined in the Terms and Conditions. The Department of Health, Monash University and Ambulance Victoria, as the program administrators, may contact you to clarify your submitted information, and for program review, reporting, monitoring, audit and evaluation purposes.
- 4.3. For verification purposes, the Department of Health/Monash University will share your personal information with other agencies such as the Paramedicine Board of Australia and Ambulance Victoria.
- 4.4. If there is an intention to include personal information about a third party in the application, the applicant applying must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.
- 4.5. As an administering entity, the Department of Health collects demographic information for economic reporting purposes on behalf of the Victorian Government. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated data.
- 4.6. Any personal information about the applicant applying or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred and stored in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* and other applicable laws.

## 5. Payments

- 5.1. Following a successful outcome of your application for the scholarship, the initial payment will be offset against your Monash University student invoice.
- 5.2. Subsequent scholarship offsets will be contingent on your continued enrolment in the postgraduate program.
- 5.3. To remain eligible for scholarship must maintain your eligibility and remain enrolled in good standing for the year of study.
- 5.4. You must, on request, provide updated information to confirm your eligibility, including proof of enrolment and your EFTSL for the current year and confirmation of address.
- 5.5. In special circumstances, assessed on a case-by-case basis, consideration may be given to scholarship recipients who have had to take a leave of absence from their course beyond the times specified above. The scholarship recipient will be responsible for providing sufficient reasons or evidence to be considered as a special case. In such cases, the decision of the Victorian Government, Monash University and Ambulance Victoria on special circumstances will be final.

## 6. Other information

- 6.1. It is strongly recommended when you are considering applying to this program of study that you obtain relevant professional advice on any impact of the payment of a scholarship has on your tax liability or any other benefits paid under an Australian Government scheme, such as Austudy, Abstudy, aged, disability or carer allowances, pensions or the like.
- 6.2. The administering entity reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at

any time as it deems appropriate (subject to appropriate notice being given either by publication on the program website or by email to applicants and recipients).

## Appendix 1: Definitions

Term	Definition
Eligible program of study	Postgraduate program offered by Monash University both entirely online or online and on-campus (hybrid approach).
Census date	The census date is the last date that a student can withdraw from a program of study or apply for a leave of absence without remaining liable to pay for the course.
EFTSL	An Equivalent Full-Time Student Load defined by the tertiary education provider delivering the eligible program of study.

## Appendix 2

### Monash entry requirements

Monash Minimum entry requirements for Admission

- A Bachelor of Paramedicine (or equivalent) with at least a pass (50%) average or qualifications and experience approved by the faculty

AND

- Registration with Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) as a Paramedic

AND

- A minimum of 5 years full time equivalent experience as a registered Paramedic in a directly patient-facing role

### Additional selection criteria

**Applicants must also submit the following documents:**

- Proof that they are currently organisationally endorsed to undertake the course.
- A curriculum vitae (CV) which details the duration and nature of their work experience as a Paramedic, and includes referee details for verification of work experience, or a statement from the employer to substantiate the duration and nature of employment as a Paramedic.

## Appendix 3: Tips for Addressing Key Selection Criteria

AHPRA defines advanced practice as:

*Activities that incorporate professional leadership, education, research, and support of systems into their practice. This encompasses relevant expertise, critical thinking, complex decision-making,*

*autonomous actions, ensuring safety and effectiveness. They operate within a generalist or specialist context, responsible for managing individuals with complex healthcare needs. Advanced practice is determined by the level of practice, not by job title or remuneration.*

Applicants to the Monash University postgraduate program must clearly evidence in their application in a separate document, under the specified domains, **how they are on the trajectory to meet the requirements of advanced practice that they will ultimately work under as a Paramedic Practitioner/Advanced Practice Paramedic**. Applicants are encouraged to address each area using bullet points.

## **Research**

*Definition:* Activities that foster a culture of inquiry and innovative problem-solving to enhance health outcomes and the efficiency of health care delivery systems. This encompasses conducting clinical research and translating evidence into clinical practice and policy development.

Evidence in this domain may include, but is not limited to:

- Active participation in research projects.
- Publications/Conference presentation/Government reports.
- Leadership roles in quality audits.
- Efforts in translating evidence into clinical practice and policy development.
- Leading investigations to monitor and enhance the quality of patient care practices.
- Recommending policy changes when integrating theory into practice.

## **Education**

*Definition:* Activities that aim to enhance health literacy, support illness self-management, and foster the development and education of oneself and others within the healthcare community.

Evidence in this domain may include, but is not limited to:

- Advocacy for and contribution to continuous professional development and evidence-based practice.
- Identification of learning needs across various populations and contributing to the development of educational programs/resources.
- Active involvement in the creation of regional or broader educational activities.
- Participation in postgraduate education programs.
- Reflective practice and fostering this in others.
- In-service education for senior paramedics, other health professionals, or management.
- Evaluation of education programs and recommendation revisions.
- Acting as a clinical preceptor for other paramedics or other health professionals.
- Offering patient and family education.

## **Clinical Leadership**

*Definition:* Activities that emphasize the sharing and dissemination of knowledge, promote the paramedic profession, and disseminate paramedic knowledge. It showcases leadership as a consultant both within and outside the profession across healthcare settings.

Evidence in this domain may include, but is not limited to:

- High-level communication skills showcasing paramedic knowledge through presentations or publications.
- Active roles in professional organisations.
- Demonstrated professional judgment and leadership in managing complex clinical care.
- Initiative in patient services and clinical practices.
- Development, review, and implementation of clinical practice guidelines.

### **Support of Systems**

*Definition:* Activities contributing to the optimal performance of health systems. This includes advocacy, mentorship, crafting and implementing innovative care models, and enhancing access to high-quality healthcare and improved health outcomes.

Evidence in this domain may include, but is not limited to:

- Collaboration with healthcare personnel on recruitment and retention strategies.
- Active roles in strategic planning for services, departments, or hospitals.
- Leadership in the development, execution, and review of standards of practice, policies, and procedures.
- Mentoring roles.
- Spokesperson roles for paramedics and the healthcare system.
- Leadership in strategic planning initiatives.
- Management of significant projects or leading projects related to substantial practice changes.
- Development of quality activities advocating for and showcasing the contributions of advanced paramedic practice roles to the healthcare team and broader health system.

Please ensure that all evidence provided in your application is recent, relevant, and showcases your commitment and capabilities in the advanced practice of paramedic care.