

## Area of Priority Service Fields of Medical Practice List

### **Queensland Health Bonded Medical Scholarships – Griffith University School of Medicine**

#### **Introduction**

This paper explains the purpose and operation of the Area of Priority Service Fields of Medical Practice List for Qld Health Bonded Medical Scholars.

The Queensland Government made a commitment to fund 235 reserved places in the Graduate Medical Course at Griffith University's School of Medicine in 2005. An equal number of linked scholarships supports students who enter these places through the Qld Health Bonded Medical Scholarship (QHBMS) Program. In 2008, the Commonwealth Government agreed to reimburse the Queensland Government for the cost of training the 235 medical students.

Students who enter a QHBMS funded place enter an agreement with Queensland Health (the Agreement<sup>1</sup>), which amongst other things, prescribes that:

- (i) *Once the Student has obtained the Degree [MBBS] and Registration [by the Medical Board of Queensland], Queensland Health will, after consultation with the Student:*
  - (ii) *Determine an Area of Priority Service to be filled or met by the Student;*
  - (iii) *Arrange for the Student to be employed on a full-time basis (consistent with the requirements of full-time employment in the relevant and then current industrial agreement relating to such employment) in the Area of Priority Service for a period at least equal to the Work Period.*
- (b) *The Student agrees:*
- (i) *To accept such employment and serve on a full-time basis for at least the Work Period; and*
  - (ii) *That Queensland Health may, after consultation with the Student and by written notice to the Student, require the Student to relocate during the Work Period to another Area of Priority Service.*

“Area of Priority Service” is defined by the Agreement to *mean either or both of:*

- (a) *any geographical location in Queensland;*
- (b) *a field of medical practice (taking into account the Degree and Registration obtained by the Student) in either public or private health sector in Queensland.*

“Work Period” as defined by the Agreement, *means, subject to a period of approved leave in accordance with this agreement, a period of 6 consecutive years, commencing in accordance with this agreement.*

#### **Purpose**

Please note that in terms of the Agreement, Queensland Health need not determine an Area of Priority Service until a QHBMS Scholarship Recipient has first obtained their Degree and Registration. Queensland Health commits to support QHBMS Scholarship Recipients throughout the graduate entry medical course and Work Period.

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to the 2009 version.

It commits to ensure greatest possible alignment of Scholarship Recipients vocational career choice and Work Period service. It also recognises that determination of Area of Priority Service carries some risk for its Scholarship Recipients’ choice of vocational career.

In view of this, Queensland Health determines (outside the terms of the Agreement) to share risk with its Scholarship Recipients and to provide guidance for their vocational career choices in the Work Period. For this purpose it determines for each annual cohort of candidates for QHBMS medical places, a list of available fields of medical practice ordered into risk categories as shown in Figure 1. The annually revised list is titled, “20-- Area of Priority Service Fields of Medical Practice List for Qld Health Bonded Medical Scholars” (the List).

**Table 1 Area of Priority Service Listing of Fields of Medical Practice**

Sub-list Title	Core APS Fields	Possible Future APS Fields	Fields Not APS Specified	Out of Scope Fields
<b>Risk Category</b>	Guaranteed Area of Priority Service (at Queensland Health risk)	Likely Area of Priority Service in future	Area of Priority Service status not specified	Which will NOT be an Area of Priority Service

## Application

Take the candidates for State funded places in 2008 as an example. The *Area of Priority Service Fields of Medical Practice List for Qld Health Bonded Medical Scholars* –nominated for application to the 2009 Cohort (recommended<sup>2</sup> in May 2008 by a Reference Group established by Queensland Health) nominates fields of medical practice in the above risk categories. From this List, a candidate for a 2009 QHBMS place will know that when she/he obtains the Degree and Registration at the end of the graduate entry course in 2012, the Areas of Priority Service determined by Queensland Health to be relevant to her/his Work Period commencing in 2013 will:

1. Certainly include those fields of medical practice listed as *Core APS Fields*;
2. Likely include those fields of medical practice listed as *Possible Future APS Fields*;
3. May or may not include those fields of medical practice listed as *Fields Not APS Specified*;
4. Will NOT include those fields of medical practice listed as *Out of Scope Fields*.

The candidate may then decide to nominate a preference for a QHBMS funded place and scholarship based upon this shared risk. Those who are successful in their application and become a QHBMS Scholarship Recipient may then plan an indicative vocational pathway in association with professional mentors and scholarship support staff within the degree of certainty and guidance provided by the List.

In addition to the *Area of Priority Service List* developed for each QHBMS Scholarship cohort prior to the commencement of the Graduate Medical Course (GMC), once Scholarship Recipients reach the final year of the GMC, an updated *Area of Priority Service List* will be developed and made available to the respective cohort. Developing an updated List aims to allow Scholarship Recipients to have access to increased vocational training opportunities consistent with workforce changes. No fields of medical practice listed as *Core APS Fields* from the initial cohort Lists will be removed from the updated Lists.

While the 2009 List of Core APS Fields will remain guaranteed for 2009 candidates, each succeeding List will provide an indication of what additional fields of medical practice are likely to be determined Areas of Priority Service for all other QHBMS Scholarship cohorts.

The 2006 *Area of Priority Service List* was the first such List approved and it has relevance to the 2007 QHBMS cohort. Since a List was not predetermined in 2005 for the 2006 QHBMS cohort, the 2006 List has some application for this cohort of Scholarship Recipients. However, since these Scholarship Recipients did not have the benefit of such a List at the time of their candidature, Queensland Health will also share risk and plan with them the best alignment of their vocational career interests and Work Period on a scholar by scholar basis.

<sup>2</sup> Utilising a range of medical workforce data – national and state – supplied principally by Queensland Health’s Workforce Analysis and Research Unit but also by other member organisations.