

# Information Sheet

## Rural and Remote Research Capacity Building Program (RRR-Cap): Graduate Diploma of Research Funding Support

The Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer (OCAHO) invites expressions of interest (EOI) from HHSs nominating an eligible rural and remote Health Practitioner to receive:

- reimbursement for associated fees in undertaking a Graduate Diploma course in research
- facilitated mentoring support program

Successful applicants will complete a relevant graduate diploma course in research, participate in the facilitated mentoring program, and develop a research proposal and protocol for a clinical or service development project/study of relevance to their local service setting.

HHSs can submit an EOI through the form that accompanies this information sheet, which can also be sourced from the OCAHO ([HP-Research@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:HP-Research@health.qld.gov.au)).

## Funding support

### Purpose and objective

The Rural and Remote Research Capacity Building Program (RRR-Cap) is supported by the Research Package for Health Practitioners outlined in Clause 8.1 of the [Health Practitioners \(Queensland Health\) Certified Agreement \(No.4\) 2022](#). This funding package aims to build research capacity in the health practitioner workforce and facilitate the implementation of evidence based clinical services.

The purpose of this initiative is to support rural and remote Health Practitioners to gain research skills and experience, along with a formal qualification that can enable the employee to subsequently embark on a formal research higher degree and/or apply for the Health Practitioner Research Scheme or other grant program.

### Education

Funding will be allocated for selected employees in Health Practitioner roles to complete a graduate diploma course in research. A graduate diploma is equivalent to four subjects (AQF Level 8) completed over a maximum of one year of part-time study.

The courses below are offered via online learning mode and may be appropriate options for study.

The OCAHO will consider EOIs that nominate another graduate diploma course if the course meets similar learning objectives and is of comparable cost to the examples below.

Please contact the OCAHO to discuss preferred training options ([HP-Research@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:HP-Research@health.qld.gov.au)).

- Griffith University - Graduate Diploma of Health Research  
Information: <https://www148.griffith.edu.au/programs-courses/Program/4161>
- James Cook University - Graduate Diploma of Research Methods  
Information: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/courses/graduate-diploma-of-research-methods-tropical-health-and-medicine>



## Mentoring

The successful applicants will access a facilitated learning set-style program of mentoring and support that complements and applies their concurrent post-graduate training and assists the employee to develop their peer networks. Mentoring sessions of 90-minutes duration will occur approximately bi-monthly via telehealth. Successful applicants will be expected to actively participate in a minimum of eight sessions. Participants will be nominated to provide a 'discussion resource' for some sessions to share with the group e.g. relevant journal article or draft methods section of protocol. The discussion resource will reflect the topic of the session and be used as a focal point of collaborative examination of the topic. An orientation will be provided by the mentoring program facilitator prior to the first session and all participants will complete a declaration of confidentiality prior to participating.

## Funding support

Strong organisational commitment is required to support an employee to undertake the selected course, participate in the mentoring program and to progress the development of a research proposal that aligns to service needs. As such, an employee cannot independently apply for funding support, and the allocation of funding will take account of the alignment of the work unit and organisation to the objectives of this initiative. The nominated employee will remain eligible for funding support only while employed in the role specified by the HHS in the EOI.

## Funding support details

### Graduate diploma course fees support

**Eligible subjects:** The nominated employee will complete all subjects, including any core subjects, required to meet the course rules for completion and award of the relevant qualification.

**Term:** The term of the funding support is not more than 24 months from the date of course commencement. The nominated employee must complete the full program of study in this period. When all course requirements are met the nominated employee will notify the OCAHO and provide evidence of completion.

**Value:** The funding support will cover:

- university enrolment fees for the minimum number of subjects required by the institution to qualify for the award of graduate diploma, and
- student services and amenities fees levied by the university in relation to the course subjects.

Subjects can be selected by the nominated employee and must meet the course rules. If the nominated employee fails or withdraws after the financial census date, the employee will be responsible for funding the subject. If reimbursement has been processed, the student will be responsible for repaying the OCAHO for the subject or for funding the subsequent subject re-enrolment, whichever is determined to be appropriate by the Chief Allied Health Officer, OCAHO.

**Reimbursement:** Successful applicants will be reimbursed on proof of up-front payment of fees.

**IMPORTANT:** reimbursement cannot be processed on fees that are deferred to the taxation system or similar student loan scheme e.g. FEE-HELP. Fees must be paid in full and claimed back through the OCAHO. Reimbursement can take up to 4 weeks to process. Fees cannot be reimbursed if paid by the HHS, without prior negotiation and approval by OCAHO.

Reimbursement claims for course fees must be submitted by the study period census date or 23 September whichever occurs sooner. Claims for reimbursement will be submitted using an Expense Reimbursement or Advance Claim Form as advised by the OCAHO and have all accompanying evidence including tax invoice/receipt issued by the university (Note: payment cannot be processed on a financial statement). See below for reporting and reimbursement details.

If applicants do not complete the full program of study, they will be required to repay all course fees paid by the OCAHO. When accepting an offer of funding employees will be required to authorise the OCAHO to source enrolment and academic results information from the university.

### Reporting and reimbursement requirements.

The below reporting requirements are to be provided to [HP-Research@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:HP-Research@health.qld.gov.au) in order for the HHS and nominated employee to have continued eligibility for the funding support. Failure to meet the reporting requirements may lead to withdrawal of the funding support.

Report	Due by	Items
<b>Enrolment confirmation</b>	<b>June 28, 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of enrolment</li> <li>- Changes to contact information (if any)</li> </ul>
<b>Scheduled report 1</b>	<b>September 23, 2024</b> (census date)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- research proposal summary (e.g. abstract / 2-page outline)</li> <li>- academic results / evidence of submission from first assessment in all subjects currently enrolled</li> <li>- tax invoice/receipt of fees paid for subjects *</li> </ul>
<b>Scheduled report 2</b>	<b>January 31, 2025</b> (6 months after commencement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- brief report (~1 page) on progress of research proposal development, including any completed / draft components (e.g. literature review).</li> <li>- academic results from all subjects currently enrolled</li> <li>- a tax invoice/receipt of fees paid for subjects *</li> <li>- staff expense claim form for fees paid.</li> </ul>
<b>Scheduled report 3</b>	<b>August 1, 2025</b> (12 months after commencement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- completed research proposal**</li> <li>- academic results from all subjects currently enrolled</li> <li>- a tax receipt of fees paid for subjects *</li> <li>- staff expense claim form for fees paid</li> </ul>
<b>Scheduled report 4</b>	<b>September 22, 2025</b> (census date)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- academic results from all subjects currently enrolled</li> <li>- a tax receipt of fees paid for subjects *</li> <li>- staff expense claim form for fees paid</li> </ul>
<b>Completion report</b>	<b>January 30, 2026</b> (24 months after commencement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- final report on project outcomes**</li> <li>- academic results from all subjects currently enrolled</li> <li>- report on learnings, outcomes and outputs from previous study period, and overall</li> </ul>

**\*Note:** OCAHO cannot process reimbursement on a 'financial statement', only a 'tax invoice/receipt'; OCAHO cannot reimburse any fees that are not paid 'up front' including fees deferred to FEE-HELP (taxation system) or student loan program. The tax invoice/receipt must list the subjects undertaken, or evidence of subjects currently enrolled accompany the tax invoice/receipt.

\*\*Templates will be supplied to the employee and manager for the midpoint and completion reports.

**Costs not covered by the OCAHO**

All costs associated with undertaking the graduate diploma course other than subject enrolment fees will be met by the nominated employee or by negotiation with the HHS. The costs include:

- travel and associated costs incurred for mandatory or optional residential (on-campus) teaching
- other costs associated with undertaking post-graduate study including data usage/internet, textbooks or other resources, printing, stationery, consumables etc.

The HHS is expected to provide in-kind resourcing to support the applicant to meet and maintain the eligibility requirements described in this information sheet (see Eligibility).

**Important information: Taxation**

The payment or reimbursement of education expenses by Queensland Health may have Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) implications. A course that is Commonwealth supported will result in a reportable fringe benefit and will impact those employees eligible to access the public hospitals FBT exemption cap (\$17,000 GUTV). Non-salary sacrifice fringe benefits such as taxable self-education expenses have first priority in applying the cap and will impact the amount an employee may salary package without incurring a personal cost for the FBT liability.

For further information refer to FBT Fact Sheet – Public Hospital FBT Exemption Cap & Salary Packaging Arrangements.

[https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0031/680746/fbt-exemption-cap.pdf](https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0031/680746/fbt-exemption-cap.pdf).

Employees are recommended to seek independent financial advice to determine whether an adjustment is required to their personal salary packaging arrangements. Please see links below for further information.

- Queensland Health (2020) FBT and Self-Education – Finance Practice Statement at [https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0034/668329/self-education.pdf](https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0034/668329/self-education.pdf)

**Expressions of interest**

HHSs can submit an expression of interest (EOI) for more than one nominated employee (separate EOI forms). EOIs will be assessed by a panel led by the OCAHO, with notifications of the selection outcome distributed approximately two weeks after the closing date. Supported employees will need to enrol in the relevant course by the published enrolment date (for study commencement in the study period that immediately follows the EOI closing date, for EOIs that close in May 2024, study will commence July 2024).

**Eligibility**

A HHS is eligible to submit an EOI if the nominated employee meets criteria listed below.

**Position classification**

Health Practitioner Level 3 (HP3) and above.

**Position status**

The employee can be temporary or permanent. If temporary, the employees' appointment should extend to at least three months beyond the funding term. The employee can be full-time or part-time.

### Position location

The Applicant's position base location is classified according to the [Modified Monash Model](#) (MMM) as Remoteness Classification MMM Level 3 (large rural town) up to MMM Level 7 (very remote community). A full list of RRR-Cap eligible Queensland Health locations can be found [here](#).

### Research proposal

The nominated employee must develop a research proposal during the period of funding support (see Research proposal Performance Indicators below for details of the components of the proposal) which needs to be submitted to the OCAHO during the funding period. The research topic can be determined by the employee, but should be relevant to the health, clinical, or service needs of their rural or remote region and HHS and/or align with the "Optimising the allied health workforce for best care and best value: A-10 year Strategy 2019-2029". OCAHO's HP Research team is available to provide advice on developing research proposals at any stage of the application process.

### University admission requirements

The nominated employee must meet the admission requirements for the selected graduate diploma course and must qualify for enrolment as a *domestic tuition fee paying student*.

### Responsibilities

The OCAHO will provide enrolment fee funding as outlined in this information sheet. The OCAHO will facilitate and coordinate the group-based mentoring sessions and can provide direct, one-on-one research support for the participants. The OCAHO is responsible for providing administrative support for the initiative including processing of reimbursements, providing supportive contact for nominated employees, and monitoring reporting. The HHS will support the nominated employee to meet the performance framework for this program and ensure reporting requirements are implemented. The OCAHO recommend approximately 0.1 FTE is allocated by the work unit to allow the nominated employee to undertake education, mentoring and research development activities. HHS in kind and any relevant funding support will be negotiated between the employee and manager at the local level.

Consequently, the employee should expect to commit personal time and resources to complete the graduate diploma course. Universities generally estimate study time investment for a standard load AQF Level 8 subject is approximately 10 hours per week. Prior to submitting an EOI, the nominated employee should examine study time estimates and the scheduling options for their preferred course. Students generally need to study more than one subject at a time for at least part of the course in order to complete within the two-year funding term.

Prior to submitting an EOI the operational manager and nominated employee should discuss the expectations regarding allocation of work and personal time to study, and the responsibility for financial costs that the OCAHO funding support does not cover (i.e. block mode teaching if applicable, textbooks, laptop, internet data etc). The nominated employee should demonstrate to the operational manager that they understand the personal time commitment of undertaking post-graduate study.