

# Health practitioners – Higher education incentive

## Human Resources Policy C27 (QH-POL-144)

### Purpose

To outline the entitlement and process for the higher education incentive as outlined in clause 2.11 of the *Health Practitioners and Dental Officers (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No.4) 2022*.

### Application

This policy applies to all Queensland Health and Hospital and Health Service (HHS) permanent, temporary and casual health practitioners employed at HP1 to HP4 classification levels.

### Delegation

The 'delegate' is as listed in the relevant Department of Health Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, or Hospital and Health Services Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, as amended from time to time.

### Legislative or other authority

- *Health Practitioners and Dental Officers (Queensland Health) Award – State 2015*
- *Health Practitioners and Dental Officers (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No.4) 2022*

### Related policy or documents

- *Higher Duties HR Policy B30 (QH-POL-260)*
- Higher Education Incentive, Vocational Education and Training Incentive and Clinical Assistant Advancement Scheme – Application for recognition of qualification form

### Contents

Policy.....	2
1. Principles.....	2
1.1 Eligible level 1 qualifications.....	3
1.1.1 Post graduate certificates and diplomas.....	3
1.1.2 Second degrees.....	3
1.2 Eligible level 2 qualifications.....	4



1.2.1	Post graduate masters degree .....	4
1.2.2	Doctorate degree .....	4
1.3	Sonographers and Radiographer/Sonographers.....	4
	History.....	5

Attachment 1 – [Application of entitlement](#)

Attachment 2 - [Examples](#)

## Policy

### 1. Principles

This policy enables Queensland Health to recognise health practitioners from HP1 to HP4 classifications who obtain higher education qualification(s), thus providing a highly skilled workforce and improved service delivery.

The higher education qualification for which an incentive is payable must be relevant to the health practitioner’s discipline or their current position and must be additional to the minimum qualification required for registration purposes or entry level equivalent.

#### **Types of eligible qualifications**

The following two levels of qualifications or equivalent credentials are to be considered for the higher education incentive allowance on the condition they are relevant to the discipline/position and meet the criteria set out in the policy:

**Level 1 qualification:** Relevant post graduate certificate, post graduate diploma, second degree or equivalent overseas acquired qualification.

**Level 2 qualification:** Relevant post graduate masters degree or PhD.

The following accreditations/qualifications or equivalent credentials are not to be considered for the higher education incentive allowance:

- Certificate I
- Certificate II
- Certificate III
- Certificate IV
- Diploma
- Vocational graduate certificate
- Vocational graduate diploma.

When an employee possesses an overseas qualification, it is the responsibility of the employee to provide a conversion statement, including a list of all completed subjects in English, with their application to their line manager.

When an employee possesses an overseas qualification, it is the responsibility of the employee to provide an assessment statement, and copies of certified relevant documents, with their application to their line manager. The employee is to contact their local

Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) office to attain such a statement at their own expense.

Where the conversion statement outcome is at eligible AQF level, the qualification will need to be reviewed to ensure the completed subjects are applicable to the relevant discipline. The delegate will forward the application form, conversion statement and list of all completed subjects in English to the Health Practitioner and Dental Officers Consultative Group (HPDOCG) Secretariat for review of eligibility to table for assessment of the application by HPDOCG.

## **1.1 Eligible level 1 qualifications**

### **1.1.1 Post graduate certificates and diplomas**

Post graduate certificates and diplomas are to be at the AQF level 8.

### **1.1.2 Second degrees**

Second degrees must be relevant recognised bachelor degrees that do not provide eligibility for registration or current entry level employment in that profession or discipline. All degrees that provide eligibility for registration or entry level employment are considered first degrees, this includes a bachelor degree that is a prerequisite for a higher qualification that provide eligibility for registration or current entry level employment. The order in which the qualifications are undertaken does not influence the definition of first or second degree.

Examples of first degrees include (but are not limited to):

- Bachelor of Speech Pathology (employed as a speech pathologist)
- Bachelor of Pharmacy (employed as a pharmacist)
- Graduate Entry Bachelor, Masters or Doctorate of Physiotherapy Studies (employed as a physiotherapist)
- Bachelor of Psychology (employed as a probationary psychologist)
- Bachelor of Medical Radiation and Graduate Diploma in Medical Ultrasound (employed as a radiographer/sonographer both qualifications are therefore considered as first degrees)
- Graduate Diploma in Medical Ultrasound (employed as a sonographer)
- Bachelor of Social Work (employed as team leader).

Examples of eligible second degrees include (but are not limited to):

- Bachelor of Education (employed as a pharmacist with an education role)
- Bachelor of Exercise Physiology (employed as a musculoskeletal physiotherapist)
- Bachelor of Music (employed as a music therapist)
- Bachelor of Business (employed in a line management or supervisory role with formal management responsibilities).

Examples of second degrees which would not typically be eligible include (but are not limited to):

- Bachelor of Education (employed as an HP3 occupational therapist without a teaching responsibility)

- Bachelor of Science (employed as a dietician)
- Bachelor of Music (employed as a scientist)
- Bachelor of Business (employed in a professional HP3 role, e.g. a social worker).

## **1.2 Eligible level 2 qualifications**

### **1.2.1 Post graduate masters degree**

Post graduate masters degrees are defined in the AQF (<https://www.aqf.edu.au/>). These may include coursework, research or professional coursework masters degree programs. These qualifications do not include masters programs that are considered equivalent to bachelor degree programs as described by the AQF as: “the graduate entry degree, which is a minimum of two years in duration, is specifically designed on the assumption of graduate entry, sometimes in a specified discipline, often as a shorter alternative to the standard four year (or longer) degree for initial professional preparation”.

### **1.2.2 Doctorate degree**

Post graduate doctorate degrees (PhD) are defined in the AQF (<https://www.aqf.edu.au/>). These may include both research doctorates as well as professional doctorates, however do not include graduate entry programs called doctorate programs, e.g. Doctorate of Physiotherapy Program, Bond University.

Refer Attachment 2 sections 1 (higher education incentive for occupations requiring a degree qualification for registration) and 2 (higher education incentive for occupations not requiring a degree for registration or practice purposes) for examples.

## **1.3 Sonographers and Radiographer/Sonographers**

As per *Health Practitioners and Dental Officers (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No. 4) 2022 clause 2.11.10*, sonographers and radiographer/sonographers who possess only the minimum qualifications required to undertake their role, or whose additional qualifications are not relevant to the role, and are in receipt of the higher education incentive allowance as at the date of certification, will continue to receive this allowance as a grandparented arrangement, provided they continue to meet the other requirements of this policy.

## History

Date	Policy change
15 June 2023	Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• amended to update references and naming conventions</li> <li>• include new qualifications under Second Degrees (section 1.2)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bachelor of Medical Radiation and Graduate Diploma in Medical Ultrasound (employed as a radiographer/sonographer both qualifications are therefore considered as first degrees)</li> <li>– Graduate Diploma in Medical Ultrasound (employed as a Sonographer)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reference overseas acquired qualifications (section 1)</li> <li>• amendment of accelerated pay point advancement</li> <li>• removal of 1,200 ordinary hours requirement for part-time employees</li> <li>• formatted as part of HR Policy review.</li> </ul>
June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formatted as part of the HR Policy review</li> <li>• application amended as a result of changes to the <i>Hospital and Health Boards (Changes to Prescribed Services) Amendment Regulation 2019</i>.</li> </ul>
October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formatted as part of the HR Policy review</li> <li>• amended to update references and naming conventions</li> <li>• amended to clarify incremental advancement (Attachment One section 1.1)</li> <li>• amended to remove transition information relating to the date of commencement of the higher education incentive (Attachment One section 7)</li> <li>• amended to clarify appeal process (Attachment One section 8).</li> </ul>
December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amended section 8.6 to reflect related higher education incentive forms.</li> </ul>
October 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amended to adjust end date for applications to 3 January 2009 as agreed between Queensland Health and unions.</li> </ul>
September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed as a result of the certification of the <i>Health Practitioners (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No.1) 2007</i>.</li> </ul>

# Attachment 1 – Application of entitlement

## 1 Higher education incentive

### 1.1 Accelerated pay point advancement

Employees at levels HP1, HP2, HP3 and HP4 who gain a relevant Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, second bachelor degree or equivalent overseas acquired qualification, or postgraduate masters degree or PhD who have not yet reached the maximum pay point of their classification will be entitled to immediate advancement of one increment. Such employees are to retain their existing increment date and continue to increment on this date annually until they reach the maximum pay point in their level. The advancement will take effect from the date the completed application is submitted to the supervisor.

After completion of 12 months service at the maximum pay point, they are to be paid the higher education incentive allowance.

Employees who have advanced a pay point under the above provisions are not eligible for any further advancement in their current classification level i.e. obtaining a further qualification will not entitle an employee to a second pay point advancement.

### 1.2 Higher education incentive allowance

An eligible part-time or full-time employee who has been employed at the maximum pay point of their classification for 12 months, and obtains a level 1 or level 2 qualification is entitled to receive the higher education incentive allowance, in lieu of the incremental advancement referred to in section 1.1 of this Attachment. The allowance is to be paid on the following basis:

**Level 1 qualification allowance:** calculated on the basis of 3.5% of:

- HP2.7 for level HP1 and HP2 employees
- or
- HP3.7 for level HP3 and HP4 employees

or

**Level 2 qualification allowance:** calculated on the basis of 5.5% of:

- HP2.7 for level HP1 and HP2 employees
- or
- HP3.7 for level HP3 and HP4 employees.

In the case of a casual employee, the employee is required to have either 12 months service or 1,200 hours, whichever is greater, consistent with Award provisions relating to casual increments.

For the purposes of this policy, the maximum pay point for HP2 is HP2.7, and for HP3 the maximum pay point is HP3.7.

Employees who translated to either HP2.8 or HP3.8 are automatically eligible for payment of the allowance. There is no requirement for these employees to complete 12 months service at HP2.8 or HP3.8 to be eligible to receive the higher education incentive allowance.

The higher education incentive allowance is an all-purpose allowance, i.e. the allowance attracts shift penalties, weekend penalties, overtime, leave payments, and leave loading. Leave payments and loading attract payment only when the allowance is being paid at the time of taking the leave.

The higher education incentive allowance is included in superannuable salary, paid through the payroll system and taxed as part of gross income.

## 2 More than one qualification

### 2.1 Additional qualifications within level 1 or within level 2 qualifications

Employees may only make application for the higher education incentive for one eligible qualification within a category.

An employee who holds more than one eligible qualification within level 1 or 2 and is in receipt of the higher education incentive is not eligible for additional advancement and/or additional allowance.

### 2.2 Additional qualifications across level 1 and level 2 qualifications

An employee who holds a level 1 qualification and subsequently obtains an eligible level 2 qualification, may apply for recognition of the level 2 higher education incentive allowance in lieu of the level 1 higher education incentive allowance, thus changing the employee's entitlement from the 3.5% to the 5.5% incentive.

## 3 Entitlements upon higher duties

When an employee who is in receipt of an incremental advancement or the higher education incentive allowance subsequently undertakes higher duties at either HP2, HP3 or HP4 level, the employee becomes eligible for the incremental advancement (one pay point) at the higher HP classification level, on condition the qualification remains relevant to the higher duties position. The incremental advancement is payable irrespective of whether the employee is in receipt of the allowance at their substantive level. The higher duty qualifying period is to be in accordance with the approved eligibility requirements in *Higher Duties HR Policy B30*. The employee becomes eligible to access the higher education incentive allowance once they have served 12 months at the top pay point of the higher classification level.

Employees who are in receipt of a higher education incentive are **not** entitled to retain the higher education incentive allowance or the incremental advancement when relieving in positions classified at HP5 and above. These employees are to resume payment of the higher education incentive when they revert to their substantive position.

Employees in receipt of an allowance at classification HP2, who relieves in a position at classification HP3, will be placed on the pay point within the HP3 classification which ensures the health practitioner's current rate of pay is not reduced (including the relevant qualification allowance received at the HP2 rate but excluding penalty rates).

## 4 Entitlement upon promotion

When an employee who is in receipt of the higher education incentive is subsequently promoted to either HP2, HP3 or HP4 based on merit selection, they become eligible to be advanced one increment level, on condition the qualification remains relevant to the higher level position.

The relevance of the higher education incentive is to be assessed by the selection panel. The selection panel is required to document whether a particular higher education qualification held by the successful applicant(s) for the position is relevant for the purposes of the higher education incentive policy.

It is the selection panel's task to ensure that the successful applicant is appointed to the appropriate pay point after consideration of the appointee's higher education qualification.

All periods of acting/relieving in higher duties are to be considered and the *Higher Duties HR Policy B30* is to be applied.

An employee becomes eligible to access the higher education incentive allowance once they have served 12 months at the top pay point of the higher HP2, HP3 or HP4 classification level.

Employees are not entitled to the higher education incentive when promoted to positions classified at HP5 and above. However, when a health practitioner who is in receipt of the higher education incentive is subsequently promoted to HP5, they will commence at HP5.2.

## 5 Approval process for the higher education incentive

The line manager (supervisor) must sign to endorse the application. When the line manager is of a different profession, the professional supervisor or discipline lead is also required to sign to endorse the application. If the employee is promoted via a merit selection, the chairperson of the selection panel must sign to endorse the application.

Refer to your HR Delegations manual for the relevant approval position.

## 6 Process for applying for the higher education incentive

- The employee receives an eligible post graduate qualification or completes the application for recognition of the qualification under the *Health Practitioner - Higher education incentive HR Policy C27* (refer higher education incentive increment or allowance application for recognition of qualification form).
- The application is to be accompanied by a certified copy of the qualification for which recognition is being sought.
- The supervisor provides the employee with written acknowledgement that the complete application (i.e. all evidence is included with the application form) has been received (refer employee receipt for higher education incentive form).
- The supervisor, or the selection panel in the case of a merit-based promotion, assess the relevancy of the qualification and sign to endorse the application.
- When the line manager is of a different profession, the professional supervisor or discipline lead also assesses the relevancy of the qualification and signs to endorse the application.
- The relevant delegate approves the application.



- The higher education incentive is applied as per this Policy.

## 7 Date of commencement of the higher education incentive

Once an application for recognition of qualification(s) is approved, the employee is to receive the higher education incentive from the date the complete application is submitted to the supervisor.

## 8 Qualification no longer relevant

A qualification may cease to be relevant when an employee is appointed to a position away from the area in which the qualification is relevant. In such cases the higher education incentive ceases.

The HHS/Department is to provide the employee with written advice of their intent to cease any advancement or allowance, stating the reason for which it is believed no longer relevant. In the case of merit appointments, the interview panel is to provide the employee with written advice of their intent not to recognise a higher education qualification, stating the reason for which it is deemed no longer relevant to the position.

In addition, the HHS/Department or selection panel is to provide written advice to Payroll Services of the date the allowance is to cease, including a copy of the letter provided to the employee.

The date of discontinuing any allowance is the date that the HHS/Department or selection panel formally advised the employee in writing.

## 9 Dispute resolution procedure

When an employee does not agree with the decision of the HHS/Department or selection panel and wish to challenge the decision, they are to follow the prevention and settlement of disputes procedure outlined in *Health Practitioners and Dental Officers (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No. 4) 2022* clause13, Prevention and Settlement of Disputes relating to the Interpretation, Application or Operation of this Agreement.

## Attachment 2 – Examples

### 1 Higher education incentive for occupations requiring a current degree qualification

- A speech pathologist who requires a four year bachelor degree for registration purposes and obtains a Post graduate Diploma in Speech Pathology can apply for recognition.
- A scientist who holds a Bachelor of Science degree and completes a Master of Bio-chemistry can apply for recognition.
- A nutritionist who holds a Diploma in Natural Medicine (undertaken through a registered training organisation (RTO)) is **not** able to seek recognition for the higher education incentive as the minimum qualification for registration purposes in this profession is a degree qualification. For recognition, a higher education qualification needs to be obtained, e.g. a post graduate certificate, post graduate diploma, post graduate masters or a PhD. A second degree which is relevant to the current position the employee occupies may also be relevant.
- A physiotherapist who undertakes a short course in massage therapy and is awarded a Diploma in Remedial Massage (undertaken through a (RTO)) is **not** eligible to make application as the minimum qualification is a bachelor, masters or doctorate of physiotherapy. For recognition, a higher education qualification needs to be obtained.
- An audiologist who holds a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (undertaken through an RTO) is **not** eligible to make application as the minimum qualification is a Masters degree in Audiology. For recognition, a higher education qualification needs to be obtained, e.g. a Doctoral (PhD) in Audiology. A second degree which is relevant to the position the employee currently occupies may also be relevant.
- A radiation therapist who previously only required a diploma qualification for registration and practice purposes obtains an entry level qualification (current relevant bachelor degree). This bachelor degree is deemed to be an entry level qualification. Therefore, this qualification is ineligible for the higher education incentive as it is deemed an entry level qualification.

### 2 Higher education incentive for occupations not requiring a degree for registration or practice purposes

The higher education incentive enables recognition of health practitioners who have obtained a higher qualification in addition to the minimum requirement. Some professional groups included in the Certified Agreement do not require a degree for registration or practice purposes. As a result, establishing definitive guidelines for this Policy is complex. The following examples are provided for general guidance however specific cases may need to be assessed on their merits.

- A medical laboratory technician employed as a technician who holds a Diploma of Biosciences from an RTO completes a Bachelor of Biomedical Science degree can submit an application for recognition.
- A biomedical technician who holds an Advanced Diploma in Electrical Engineering undertakes a certificate IV in Work Health and Safety (through an RTO). The Certificate IV

is not a higher education qualification and therefore the employee is **not** eligible to make application for the higher education incentive. However, if the biomedical technician held a Diploma in Electrical Engineering undertook a Bachelor in Electrical Engineering, this employee can submit an application for recognition.