



# Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

*FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS*



The Balit  
Durn Durn  
Centre



**OFFICIAL**

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## Applicant FAQ

### 1. What eligibility criteria do I need to meet to apply for the scholarship program?

Applicants are eligible to apply for an Aboriginal SEWB scholarship if they meet all the following criteria:

- Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Have Australian citizenship or permanent residency
- Are currently living in Victoria
- Have applied or are in the process of applying for admission into an eligible program AND/OR
- Are currently employed by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) or a mainstream health organisation in a Victorian Aboriginal SEWB (social and emotional well-being) team or role OR
- If not currently employed by an ACCO or mainstream organisation in a Victorian SEWB role, intend to work in an Aboriginal SEWB team in Victoria or Victorian SEWB role. This includes any role across the spectrum of mental health and broader wellbeing, including connection to Land or Country, Culture, Spirituality, Ancestry, Family and Community.

### 2. What Universities/campuses are participating in the scholarship program from semester one 2025?

RMIT University	Deakin University	La Trobe
Melbourne (city), Melbourne (Bundoora) and online	Melbourne (Burwood) Geelong (Waterfront) Geelong (Waurin Ponds) Warrnambool and online	Albury-Wodonga Bendigo Bundoora Mildura Shepparton Brunswick (Bouverie) and online

### 3. What eligible courses are available for semester 1?

<p><b>RMIT University</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)</li> <li>• Bachelor of Social Work (Honours)</li> <li>• Bachelor of Youth Work and Youth Studies</li> <li>• Graduate Certificate in Domestic and Family Violence</li> <li>• Online Graduate Diploma in Psychology</li> <li>• Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Nursing</li> <li>• Master of Mental Health Nursing</li> <li>• Master of Clinical Psychology</li> <li>• Master of Social Work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deakin University</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Psychological Science</li> <li>• Bachelor of Health Sciences (majoring in Psychological Science or Psychology for Allied Health)</li> <li>• Bachelor of Occupational Therapy</li> <li>• Bachelor of Public Health and Health Promotion</li> <li>• Bachelor of Social Work</li> <li>• Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) (from 2023)</li> <li>• Graduate Certificate of Counselling</li> <li>• Graduate Diploma of Counselling</li> <li>• Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science</li> <li>• Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Advanced)</li> <li>• Master of Psychology (Clinical) (from 2023)</li> <li>• Master of Professional Psychology (from 2023)</li> </ul>
<p><b>La Trobe University</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Health Sciences (Psychological Science)*</li> <li>• Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Psychological Science*</li> <li>• Bachelor of Commerce/Bachelor of Health Sciences*</li> <li>• Bachelor of Cybersecurity/Bachelor of Psychological Science*</li> <li>• Bachelor of Health Sciences</li> <li>• Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Psychological Science</li> <li>• Bachelor of Psychological Science</li> <li>• Bachelor of Psychological Science with Honours</li> <li>• Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)</li> <li>• Bachelor of Social Work (Honours)</li> <li>• Diploma of Rural Health</li> <li>• Graduate Certificate in Mental Health</li> <li>• Master of Clinical Family Therapy</li> </ul>

- Master of Clinical Psychology
- Master of Mental Health
- Master of Mental Health Nursing
- Master of Professional Psychology
- Master of Social Work
- Graduate Certificate in Family Therapy
- Graduate Diploma in Rehabilitation Counselling
- Master of Art Therapy
- Master of Rehabilitation Counselling and Mental Health

\*denotes a double degree where the scholarship will only support the social and emotional wellbeing aligned subjects.

#### 4. Important dates.

##### **RMIT**

Applications currently open. Applications close 11:59pm Monday 27 January 2025.

##### **DEAKIN**

Applications for Trimester/Semester 1 2025 are currently open.

Bachelor Applications for Trimester/Semester 1 2025 close 5pm Friday 31 January 2025.

Honours and Postgraduate Applications for Trimester/Semester 1 2025 close 5pm Wednesday 12 February 2025.

##### **LA TROBE**

Applications currently open. Applications close 11:59pm Monday 27 January 2025.

**NOTE:** The Balit Durn Durn Centre (BDDC) will have a shutdown period between 4pm Friday 20 December 2024 to 4pm Friday 3 January 2025. All enquiries received during this time will be responded to on our return to the office.

#### 5. What cultural supports are provided to students by the universities?

Each University partner offers cultural safety supports to their students with access to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander support staff. Support includes culturally safe orientation and induction into the University, access to networks of current and former Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, ongoing mentoring, academic tutoring and cultural support for students throughout the duration of their studies.

#### 6. What other supports will I receive from the universities?

There may also be opportunities for scholars to attend relevant conferences, regional and local networks and communities of practice. Regular financial support, and access to textbooks and technology can also be provided.



## 7. What supports does the Balit Durn Durn Centre (BDDC) for Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing (hosted by VACCHO) offer?

In addition to the support your chosen University provides, the BDDC will support you through your scholarship application process. Once you commence your studies, the BDDC can provide additional cultural mentoring and supports through the duration of your course.

## 8. How do I apply for a scholarship?

There will be an online application process through the relevant University's website. The process will vary slightly between universities, so we suggest applicants check the University's website directly. Links to the relevant webpages will be available on the VACCHO and BDDC website.

## 9. University enrolments are closing soon, can I still apply for the scholarship?

This will depend on the course you are interested in. We suggest contacting the University directly regarding the course, and they can let you know the closing dates for that course. Scholarship applications will not be reviewed until after all enrolments have closed. If enrolments in your preferred course have already closed, you may like to consider applying in future rounds.

## 10. What are the stages of the scholarship application process?

1. You will be asked to complete an online application form, with two short written responses.
2. The BDDC, the Victorian Government's Department of Health and the University will then shortlist applicants
3. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to have an informal scholarship yarn with a small panel who will get to know you and understand your career aspirations and why you are interested in this scholarship.

## 11. What do I need to include in my application for the scholarship program?

You will need to ensure that you meet the minimum eligibility requirements for the scholarship, provide personal information, study details and short written responses in the online application form. The BDDC and the relevant University will be available for yarns and culturally appropriate support during the application process.

If you are already employed in a SEWB role, we highly recommend including a letter from your employer or an Indigenous community member who can provide support for your ability to balance your work, life and study commitments.

## 12. Who can I speak to if I need support completing my application?

Please contact the BDDC if you have any questions about the application process.

## 13. What should be addressed in my letter of support from my employer?

If you are including a letter of support from your employer, they should outline how they will support flexible work arrangements and/or study leave so that you can maintain both work and study commitments. The letter should also outline how your employer will support you through the course, such as any mentoring or cultural supports. They may also like to outline

what ongoing opportunities they see for you in their organisation.

#### 14. What financial support is provided by the scholarship program and what can I spend the financial support on?

The payments are designed to ensure that there are not out of pocket expenses for your course of study and include costs such as:

- Tuition fees
- Student services fees
- Financial supports throughout the duration of study
- Additional program supports to assist with purchasing study materials and to participate in professional development opportunities such as conference attendance, networking events and workshops.

Financial support will be paid as a fortnightly allowance, or an upfront payment, depending on your chosen University, and the final amount will depend on whether you are studying full time or part time, and your course requirements. Students will receive up to \$10,000 per year, if studying full time, and up to \$5,000 per year, part-time.

**NOTE:** For students studying part-time, payments are subject to tax in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office.

#### 15. What is the maximum scholarship duration?

The scholarship will be awarded for the entirety of your course, on either a full-time or part-time basis. The scholarship's maximum duration will be based on the recommended completion time for your course, and whether you are studying part-time or full-time.

#### 16. Can I defer my studies and still be eligible for the scholarship?

If you are accepted into an eligible course and fail to commence your scholarship in the period of offer, you may not be able to defer your scholarship unless approved by the Department of Health and University.

#### 17. Can I take a leave of absence? What is the maximum time I can take a leave of absence and still be eligible for scholarship support?

If during your studies you require a leave of absence, you will be able to take up to a year away from study and your scholarship will be paused during this time. Your University will be able to provide further information about this process once you begin your studies.

#### 18. I already have a tertiary qualification, am I still able to apply for the scholarship?

Yes. As long as you are applying for one of the approved courses and meet the eligibility criteria you are able to apply for a scholarship.

#### 19. Can I study online?

Some courses are available to study online, as noted below:

- Online Graduate Diploma in Psychology (RMIT)
- Bachelor of Psychological Science (Deakin)



- Bachelor of Health Sciences (Deakin)
- Bachelor of Public Health and Health Promotion (Deakin)
- Bachelor of Social Work (Deakin)
- Graduate Certificate of Counselling (Deakin)
- Graduate Diploma of Counselling (Deakin)
- Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science (Deakin)
- Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Advanced) (Deakin)
- Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Health Sciences (Psychological Science) (La Trobe)
- Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Psychological Science (La Trobe)
- Bachelor of Health Sciences (La Trobe)
- Bachelor of Psychological Science (La Trobe)
- Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (La Trobe)
- Graduate Certificate in Mental Health (La Trobe)
- Master of Clinical Family Therapy (La Trobe)
- Master of Mental Health (La Trobe)
- Master of Professional Psychology (La Trobe)
- Graduate Certificate in Family Therapy (La Trobe)
- Graduate Diploma in Rehabilitation Counselling (La Trobe)
- Master of Counselling, Rehabilitation and Mental Health (La Trobe)

**NOTE:** Please refer to the University's website for the most current course offerings.

## 20. Will I be entitled to study leave?

Your leave entitlements will depend on your employer's leave policies. The preference is that your organisation will support you to take study leave or support flexible working arrangements.

## 21. Will I need to pay tax on my scholarship funds?

Tuition and student service fees are paid directly by the University. However, financial support will be counted as taxable income for part-time students (any load that is 50% or less). We recommend receiving tax advice from a professional.

## 22. What work placement opportunities are provided? Do I get credit points toward my degree for work placement opportunities? Does my current workplace role count as placement hours?

This will depend on the course you are undertaking. If work placements are required for your course, you will need to check with your University as to whether your current workplace would meet the requirements of a work placement.

## 23. I am already a student in an eligible course. Can I apply for the scholarship program?

Yes, you can apply. For example, if you have two years remaining of a three-year degree you will be supported for the remainder of your degree. You will still need to meet the eligibility and selection requirements of the scholarship and payments will not cover study that has already been completed.

#### 24. Will I be guaranteed employment once I complete my studies?

This scholarship program is part of the Victorian Government's commitment to expanding the number of Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing teams across the state. While we cannot guarantee ongoing employment, completion of an eligible course will make you a highly competitive candidate in an exciting and growing sector.

Your University and the BDDC will support you to find and apply for suitable employment opportunities throughout your studies if you are not already employed in an Aboriginal SEWB role.

#### 25. I am eligible for a scholarship but I don't meet the criteria for the course I want to study. What should I do?

There are several options available to you if you do not meet the criteria for a specific course, we suggest reaching out to The BDDC or the relevant University to talk through your options prior to course applications closing. For example, it may be that you are eligible for a different course that is covered by the scholarship.

If you are unsure or think you may not be ready to undertake a University degree, please contact The BDDC to discuss your circumstances and the various study pathways that may be open to you. This may include considering certificate and diploma-level qualifications, or preparatory or bridging courses that may support your eligibility for a University degree in future rounds.

#### 26. I am interested in studying but the timing is not right for me. Can I apply in future?

Yes, this is an ongoing scholarship program. We encourage you to talk to your employer about options for study and how you might best prepare yourself to apply in future years.

#### 27. My application was not successful, can I apply again next semester?

Yes. If your scholarship application was not successful, you will be able to apply in future rounds. We will provide feedback to all applicants who were not successful so they're in the best possible position to apply for a scholarship in the future.

#### 28. What is the yarn for short-listed applicants?

Short-listed applicants will be invited to a yarning session with representatives from the BDDC, the relevant University and the Department of Health. The yarn will be a culturally safe process, supported by the BDDC and other Aboriginal staff within the universities.

#### 29. What type of questions will be asked in the yarning session for the scholarship?

This will be a yarn and conversation with some informal questions that will help us get to know you better and inform us why you're interested in this scholarship.

#### 30. Who makes the final decision on successful scholarship applicants?

The selection decision will be made by a panel of representatives from the BDDC, the Department of Health, and the relevant universities.



### 31. I'm not quite sure if I am in an Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) role?

An Aboriginal SEWB role includes any role working with Aboriginal people and/or Aboriginal communities across the spectrum of mental health and broader wellbeing, including connection to Land or Country, Culture, Spirituality, Ancestry, Family and Community. If you are unsure if you would meet this definition, we encourage you to contact the BBDC to discuss it further.

### 32. I'm not currently employed but want to work in an Aboriginal SEWB role. Can I apply?

Yes, you can still apply. You will go through the same application process as those already currently employed and you will be asked about your interest in and commitment to Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing, as well as your future career aspirations in working in Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing.

### 33. How can I support my application if I'm not currently employed?

Your application and written responses to the criteria will suffice for an application. However, you have the option of including a support letter from an Aboriginal community member, outlining your commitment to Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing.

### 34. Where can I get more information?

We recommend you contact the BBDC or the relevant University if you have any questions that are not addressed above.

Please contact the BBDC if you need more information at [sewb@vaccho.org.au](mailto:sewb@vaccho.org.au) or by phone 03 9411 9411.

**NOTE:** The BBDC will have a shutdown period between 4pm, Friday 20 December 2024 to 4pm Friday 3 January 2025. All enquiries received during this time will be responded to on our return to the office.

## Manager of an Applicant FAQ

### 1. Who in an organisation should the letter of support come from?

Anyone who is the applicant's supervisor or manager. A CEO or an Executive officer may also provide a letter of support for the applicant. You will need to outline your support for the applicant to undertake studies and what support options your organisation can offer the applicant to ensure the applicant can balance both work and study commitments.

### 2. What leave entitlements do I need to offer the employee while they are studying?

As an organisation, it is preferable that you are willing to support the employee in their studies so they have the best possible chance of success. How this looks in practice is a matter for negotiation between the employee and employer.

### 3. What should be included in the support letter?

If the applicant chooses to continue working at your organisation while studying, you should outline how your organisation will support flexible work arrangements and/or study leave for the applicant. Alternatively, if the applicant is unsure of their employment arrangements while they study, a support letter can be in the form of a character reference.

### 4. I would like to nominate someone for the scholarship program, to whom should I speak?

We suggest speaking to the BDDC in the first instance to find out what options may be available.

### 5. What are the benefits to my organisation in supporting a scholarship recipient?

Your organisation, and the communities you support, will benefit from the additional skills, capabilities and experiences that the scholarship recipient will gain during their studies. Similar scholarship programs have also been found to increase employee retention and satisfaction, adding further value to your organisation.

### 6. Will my organisation receive additional funding to support a scholarship recipient?

No. Organisations are expected to support their employees with existing resources.

### 7. What happens if a worker's role finishes due to funding for their position ceasing whilst they are studying?

While students who are currently working in an Aboriginal SEWB role are encouraged to apply, this is not a mandatory requirement of the scholarship program. In the event that a worker's role finishes due to funding for their position ceasing, their scholarship will not be lost.

Please contact the BDDC if you have concerns about this, to discuss your organisation's options and potential employment pathways for the affected worker.

### 8. I have an employee who does not work in Aboriginal SEWB who is interested in the program, can they apply?

Yes they can. As long as they are intending to pursue a career in Aboriginal SEWB and meet the other eligibility criteria.

### 9. Why were these scholarships established?

In recognition of both the urgent need for reform and the need to take to a social and emotional wellbeing approach to mental health, the interim report of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System recommended a suite of reforms to support ACCOs to provide comprehensive care for Aboriginal people, their families and communities. A key workforce recommendation from the interim report was the establishment of scholarships to enable Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing team

members to obtain recognised clinical mental health qualifications from approved public tertiary providers. From 2019 to 2024, 49 scholarships have been awarded.

## 10. Where can I get more information?

Please contact the BDDC if you need more information at [sewb@vaccho.org.au](mailto:sewb@vaccho.org.au) or by phone 03 9411 9411. Please check the University's website directly.

### RMIT

<https://www.rmit.edu.au/students/careers-opportunities/scholarships/coursework/sewb>

### DEAKIN

<https://www.deakin.edu.au/study/fees-and-scholarships/scholarships/find-a-scholarship/aboriginal-social-and-emotional-wellbeing-scholarship>

### LA TROBE

<https://www.latrobe.edu.au/study/scholarships/other/aboriginal-social-and-emotional-wellbeing-sewb-scholarship>

## 11. Important dates.

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