



Australian Government  

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Department of Health

# **Bonded Medical Places Scheme**

## **Student Information Booklet for 2019**

Bonded Medical Places 2019

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION - Privacy and your personal information**  
**AUSTRALIAN PRIVACY PRINCIPLE 5 NOTICE**

Your personal information is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 1988. The Australian Government Department of Health (**Department**) may collect personal information about you for the purpose of administering the Bonded Medical Places (**BMP**) Scheme, including assessing eligibility, monitoring your compliance with your obligations under your Deed of Agreement (**DoA**) with the Commonwealth and assessing any requests you may make in relation to your participation in the BMP Scheme.

If you do not provide all of the information requested by the Department:

- if you are applying to become a BMP participant – the Department will be unable to assess your eligibility to participate in the BMP Scheme; and
- if you are already a BMP participant – you may be in breach of the notification requirements in your DoA and the Department may not be able to assess a request or claim you make in relation to your participation in the BMP Scheme (e.g., a deferral request or an exceptional circumstances claim).

If necessary for the purposes of administering the BMP Scheme or if required or authorised by law, the Department may disclose your personal information to other organisations and government departments including:

- your university;
- the Department of Human Services;
- the Department of Education and Training;
- the Department of Immigration and Border Protection;
- the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency;
- Rural Workforce Agencies;
- the Medical Board of Australia; and
- Medical Colleges.

The Department is unlikely to disclose your personal information to overseas recipients.

If you disclose other people's personal information to the Department (e.g., if you are a BMP participant and, as part of an exceptional circumstances claim, you disclose personal information to the Department about your family members), in disclosing that personal information to the Department you undertake that those other people have:

- (a) consented to the Department collecting and using their personal information for the purposes set out in this notice; and
- (b) read and understood this privacy notice.

The Department has an Australian Privacy Policy (**APP**) which you can read at [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/privacy-policy](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/privacy-policy) You can obtain a copy of the APP privacy policy by contacting the Department using the contact details set out below. The APP privacy policy contains information about:

- how you may access the personal information the Department holds about you and how you can seek correction of it; and
- how you may complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles.

The Department of Health can be contacted by telephone on free call 1800 020 103 or by using the online enquiries form at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

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**Disclaimer**

This information is published as a guide only. It does not overrule or diminish what is stated in individual Bonded Medical Places Scheme DoAs with the Commonwealth of Australia and participants should seek their own legal advice before entering into any Agreement.

## 1.0 The Bonded Medical Places (BMP) Scheme

The BMP Scheme is an Australian Government initiative to provide more doctors to locations that are considered by the Department to be in need of qualified medical practitioners.

In Australian medical schools, 28.5 percent of all first-year Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) are expected to be bonded through the BMP Scheme each year from the 2016 academic year.

In return, following successful completion of their medical course, participants agree to work in an Eligible Location in Australia for a total of 12 months, prior to or within five (5) years of attaining fellowship. This work can take place from the date you become provisionally registered to five (5) years after you attain fellowship. However, once you have commenced your Return of Service Period (RoSP):

- you have five (5) years in which to complete it;
- you may undertake the twelve month RoSP in periods of no less than 12 consecutive weeks; and
- you must work full-time.

The eligibility of a location for the RoSP will depend to some extent on your level of training or qualifications at the time you undertake the RoSP. Information regarding Eligible Locations are explained in detail in Section 1.4 of this booklet.

**Students joining the BMP Scheme will enter into a BMP Deed of Agreement (DoA) with the Commonwealth which is a legally binding agreement.**

**It is strongly advised that you seek legal advice prior to signing a BMP DoA so that you understand your legal obligations.**

**Under the BMP DoA, you agree to provide ongoing information to the Commonwealth within 30 days as per clause 3.8 of the draft DoA to enable the contractual arrangements to be managed.**

**In future years, the administration of the BMP Scheme and the individual BMP Agreements may be managed by an external administrator appointed by the Department. If this occurs your information will be transferred to that external administrator.**

### 1.1 Eligibility

The Scheme is open to Australian citizens, permanent residents of Australia and New Zealand citizens who held a New Zealand Special Category Visa on or before 26 February 2001.

Citizenship and residency status are determined by the Department of Home Affairs. Further information about citizenship, permanent residency status and visas can be obtained by visiting the Department of Home Affairs website at

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder>

## 1.2 Application Process

The application and selection process for a BMP Scheme place is determined by the university following the submission of an application to study medicine. BMP Scheme applicants must meet the same entrance requirements as any other student applying for a medical place.

While different universities may seek expressions of interest in a BMP Scheme place in different ways, the opportunity to receive a BMP Scheme place is available to all eligible students accepted by a university into a medical course.

If you require further information on the application processes used by the universities, you should contact the relevant medical schools directly.

## 1.3 BMP Scheme Deed of Agreement (DoA)

Following acceptance of an offer of a BMP Scheme place from the medical school of your university, you will receive a BMP DoA containing the terms and conditions with which you must comply. The BMP DoA is a legal contract between you and the Commonwealth of Australia.

Participating in the BMP Scheme is a legal commitment. You are encouraged to seek legal advice to ensure that you fully understand all the legal terms and conditions before signing the BMP DoA. A copy of the current BMP DoA is available on the [BMP Scheme](http://www.health.gov.au/bmpscheme) website ([www.health.gov.au/bmpscheme](http://www.health.gov.au/bmpscheme)).

You must sign and return the DoA to the Department of Health by the date specified in the email sent to you confirming your enrolment in the BMP Scheme (generally within 30 days of receipt of the email). If you do not sign and return the DoA you will lose your Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) for Medicine under the BMP Scheme.

## 1.4 Geographical Classification System

The eligibility of a location for completing the RoSP depends on the training and qualifications you may have at the time you choose to complete it. Eligible Locations are defined by the Modified Monash Model (MMM), or the District of Workforce Shortage (DWS) classification systems.

### Modified Monash Model (MMM)

The MMM is a classification system that categorises metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas according to both geographical remoteness and town size. The system was developed to recognise the challenges in attracting health workers to more remote and smaller communities.

The MMM uses the Australian Statistical Geography Standard Remoteness Area (ASGS-RA) as a geographic basis, overlaid by the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) residential population data.

<b>Modified Monash Model</b>	<b>Inclusions</b>
MMM 1	All areas categorised as ASGS-Remoteness Area (RA) 1
MMM 2	Areas categorised ASGS-RA 2 and ASGS-RA 3 that are in, or within 20km road distance of, a town with population >50,000.
MMM 3	Areas categorised ASGS-RA 2 and ASGS-RA 3 that are not in MMM 2 and are in, or within 15km road distance of a town with population between 15,000 and 50,000.
MMM 4	Areas categorised ASGS-RA 2 and ASGS-RA 3 that are not in MMM 2 or MMM 3, and are in, or within 10km road distance of, a town with population between 5,000 and 15,000.
MMM 5	All other areas in ASGS-RA 2 and 3.
MMM 6	All areas categorised ASGS-RA 4 that are not on a populated island that is separated from the mainland in the ABS geography and is more than 5km offshore.
MMM 7	All other areas – that being ASGS-RA 5 and areas on a populated island that is separated from the mainland in the ABS geography and is more than 5km offshore.

The information in the above table is correct at the time of publishing. The MMM will be updated after every national census.

To search the MMM category of a location, visit the Doctor Connect website and search the MMM locator:

[www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/MMM\\_locator](http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/MMM_locator)

Please note that you must type in the full physical address of the location, including postcode, to obtain an accurate classification for the location.

### **District of Workforce Shortage (DWS)**

In general for the purposes of the BMP Scheme, a DWS is an area in which the population's health needs are considered to be underserved because the ratio of doctors to total population is below that of the national average. A DWS is usually outside inner metropolitan areas where there are fewer doctors per head of population. As the DWS data is updated annually, it is subject to change over time.

For the purposes of the BMP Scheme, all Aboriginal Medical Services within Australia that deliver primary health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations and receive their core funding from the Commonwealth are also considered to be DWS.

To search the current DWS status of a location, visit the Doctor Connect website and search the DWS locator:

[www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/locator](http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/locator)

Please note that you must type in the full physical address of the location, including postcode, to obtain an accurate classification for the location.

## **Eligible Locations for the RoSP**

An Eligible Location is a location in which you may undertake your RoSP obligations. The types of locations that are Eligible Locations vary depending on how far you have progressed with your medical training along the pathway to obtaining fellowship. Accordingly:

- If you choose to undertake your RoSP following the completion of your medical course and prior to your admission into a vocational training program leading to fellowship, you may complete your RoSP in any geographic area that is classified under the MMM as a category 2-7 location.
- If you choose to undertake your RoSP after commencing a vocational training program or following your attainment of fellowship, you may complete your RoSP in a DWS for your chosen specialty (which includes any Aboriginal Medical Service within Australia that delivers primary health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations and receives its core funding from the Commonwealth) or in any geographic area that is classified under the MMM as a category 4-7 location.

Please note that while Inner Metropolitan Areas do not count as a DWS for General Practitioners, such areas may count as a DWS for other specialties if the Commonwealth is satisfied that the level of access to professional services of the relevant specialty is significantly less than the national average.

Information on a location's status as a MMM, Inner Metropolitan Area or DWS can be found by searching the maps on the Doctor Connect website. Participants who want to find out the current DWS status of an Inner Metropolitan Area for any specialty other than those mapped on the Doctor Connect website may email details of their specialty and the full physical address, including street number and postcode, of the potential location to the BMP Scheme Team at [BMPScheme@health.gov.au](mailto:BMPScheme@health.gov.au)

### **1.5 More Information**

You may contact the Department's BMP Scheme Team by email at [BMPScheme@health.gov.au](mailto:BMPScheme@health.gov.au)

### **1.6 Bonded Programs Reforms**

You may be interested to know about the recently announced reforms to the Bonded Medical Programs, announced as part of Budget 2018-19 on 8 May 2018.

For your interest, you can refer to the following link on the Department of Health website for Budget Fact Sheets on all measures related to the Strategy:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/budget/publishing.nsf/Content/budget2018-t-stronger-remote-rural-and-regional-health-outcomes>

## **2.0 Participant Obligations**

By agreeing to accept a BMP Scheme place and signing the DoA, you are committing to work in an Eligible Location in accordance with the DoA for at least 12 months. In general, if you work full-time for a total of 12 months outside of the major metropolitan areas between the time you become an intern and five (5) years after you become a fellow, you should be able to meet your RoSP obligation under the BMP Scheme.

## 2.1 BMP Scheme DoA

If you decide to take up an offer of a BMP Scheme place, you will be required to enter into a legal agreement with the Department (representing the Commonwealth of Australia) that specifies your rights and obligations and those of the Commonwealth in relation to your bonded medical place.

In brief, the BMP DoA requires you to:

- work for a total of 12 months in an Eligible Location following completion of your medical course, and to complete your RoSP prior to (including during your internship year) or within five (5) years of, attaining fellowship.
- Work to be counted towards fulfilling your RoSP obligation is subject to conditions including the obligation to:
  - obtain written approval from the Department prior to commencing any period of work you wish to apply towards your RoSP;
  - undertake the 12 month RoSP in periods of no less than 12 consecutive weeks;
  - work full-time (i.e., a minimum average of 35 hours per week) during any period that is to be applied towards your RoSP, unless you obtain prior written approval to work less than full-time; and
  - complete your RoSP within five (5) years of commencement (unless you do not commence your RoSP until after obtaining fellowship, in which case you must complete it within five (5) years of the date you obtained fellowship, not the date you commenced your RoSP).

In addition, the BMP DoA requires you to make satisfactory progress on the pathway to attaining fellowship (but only until such time that you complete your RoSP obligations, at which time your BMP DoA and all your obligations come to an end). This pathway requires you to:

- complete your medical studies and become registered as a medical practitioner with general registration within 10 years of the census date of the first year of your medical course;
- commence training in a vocational training program within 13 years of the first census date of the first year of your medical course; and
- gain fellowship, either as a General Practitioner or other specialist, within 16 years of the census date of the first year of your medical course.

(These times are not intended to represent the typical linear time frame for achieving these qualification milestones. Rather, they are the maximum length of time you have to achieve them for as long as you have not completed your RoSP.)

These milestones can only be deferred where you have applied in writing to the Department for approval, and the Department has given approval. Any approval may be subject to further conditions and the Department may request information from you to substantiate your deferral application.

If you are under 18 years of age at the time of signing the BMP DoA you must notify the Department within 30 days of turning 18. A Deed of Ratification (DoR) will then be sent to you by the Department, which you are required to sign and return within 30 days of receipt.

By signing the DoR, you will unconditionally ratify and accept in writing the legal promises made under the BMP DoA.

## 2.2 Completing medical training

Once you complete your medical course and internship, you are likely, at some stage, to commence training to become a fully qualified doctor (including a specialist) with fellowship of a recognised medical college. Please note that you are not obliged under the BMP DoA to continue your medical training once you have satisfied your RoSP. However, until you have fully satisfied your RoSP you are obliged under your BMP DoA to continue your medical training. The time limits which apply to your continued medical training are outlined in this booklet (see section 2.1) and also in the BMP DoA (see clause 3.1 (b)).

If you choose to complete all of your medical training before commencing your RoSP, you will have five (5) years from the date you obtained fellowship to complete your RoSP.

However, you may find it more convenient in your particular circumstances to satisfy your RoSP earlier in your medical career. The choice is entirely yours, as long as you fulfil your RoSP within five (5) years of commencing it.

You can also choose to undertake training and satisfy your RoSP obligation at the same time, providing you are doing so in an Eligible Location.

## 3.0 Return of service period (RoSP)

Following successful completion of your medical course, you will be required to work in an Eligible Location for a total of 12 months to complete your RoSP. The RoSP may be undertaken in periods of no less than 12 consecutive weeks. Once you have commenced your RoSP, you have five (5) years in which to complete it (although your RoSP *must* be completed within five (5) years of you obtaining fellowship). You can undertake your RoSP during your internship year if you so choose.

**For a period of work to count towards your RoSP obligation, you *must* apply to the Department *in advance* and you must receive written approval that the proposed work location is an Eligible Location. If you do not apply in advance for a proposed placement to count towards your RoSP obligation, the Department cannot approve it retrospectively. This requirement is clearly specified in clause 3.2 of the BMP DoA.**

Except as outlined in the following paragraph, you must work full-time during any period that is applied towards your RoSP. In the BMP DoA, full-time is defined as employment as a medical practitioner for a minimum average of 35 hours per week. You must provide satisfactory evidence from your employer of your full-time status during any periods you wish to have recognised towards reducing your RoSP.

It is possible under the BMP DoA to request approval from the Department to work less than full-time during periods you choose to count towards your RoSP. You will be required to provide a case, including evidence where appropriate, as to why you should be allowed to complete your RoSP part-time. Any approval given at the Department's discretion may be subject to conditions, including a condition that you agree that the duration of your RoSP is

extended correspondingly.

You are not permitted to work in an ineligible area at the same time as you undertake your RoSP, unless you apply in writing to the Department for approval to do so and such approval is given.

As a BMP Scheme participant you can choose where and when you work, and for whom, when undertaking the RoSP, providing you do so in compliance with the obligations set out in the BMP DoA.

For further information about which locations are Eligible Locations for the purpose of undertaking your RoSP, refer to section 1.4 in this information booklet.

## 4.0 Breach of BMP Agreement

If you fail to fulfil your obligations in your BMP DoA with the Commonwealth, you will be in breach of your BMP DoA.

You may be considered to be in breach of the BMP DoA if, for example, you:

- discontinue, withdraw or are excluded from the medical course after the first census date of your second year of study;
- have not yet completed your RoSP *and* do not become registered as a medical practitioner with General Registration within 10 years of the first census date of your first year of the medical course;
- have not yet completed your RoSP *and* have not commenced training in a vocational training program within 13 years of the census date of your first year of the medical course;
- have not yet completed your RoSP, *and* fail to obtain fellowship of a medical college within 16 years of the Census date of your first year of the medical course;
- if commencing your RoSP prior to obtaining fellowship, have not completed your RoSP within five (5) years of its commencement;
- if commencing your RoSP after obtaining fellowship, do not complete your RoSP within five (5) years of attaining fellowship; or
- fail to complete your RoSP in an Eligible Location in accordance with the terms of your DoA; and
- render a professional service outside an Eligible Location during your RoSP without prior permission from the Department

If you breach your BMP Agreement, may be required to repay all or some of the Commonwealth contribution amount for each year or part year that you held a Bonded Medical Place at university prior to your breach. The amounts for each year are available on the Department of Education and Training website at [www.education.gov.au/funding-clusters-and-indexed-rates](http://www.education.gov.au/funding-clusters-and-indexed-rates) (refer to the Commonwealth contribution amount for the funding cluster that includes medicine).

If you withdraw from the medical course you will not have to repay any of the amounts the Commonwealth has paid the university for your Bonded Medical Place if you:

- withdraw from the medical course before the first census date of your second year of study;
- withdraw from the medical course after the first census date of your second year of study due to illness or injury with supporting evidentiary documentation from a medical practitioner; or
- are excluded from the medical course after commencing your second year of study with no qualification, provided that you sign a separate deed in favour of the Commonwealth in which you agree that you will not study in an Australian medical course within five (5) years of signing the separate deed; or
- discontinue or withdraw from the medical course after commencing your second year of study with no qualification, provided that you sign a separate deed in favour of the Commonwealth in which you agree that you will not study in an Australian medical course within five (5) years of signing the separate deed.

**Please note: The above information is intended only as a summary of the key breach conditions in the BMP Agreement. It does not overrule or diminish what is stated in your individual BMP DoA with the Commonwealth, which is the legally binding agreement between you and the Commonwealth. It is strongly recommended you read the breach conditions in the BMP DoA carefully and seek legal advice before signing your BMP DoA.**

## **5.0 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **5.1 FAQs from prospective BMP participants**

#### **How do I apply for the BMP Scheme?**

The application and selection process for the BMP Scheme is the responsibility of universities and takes place after an application to study medicine has been lodged.

While different universities may seek expressions of interest in a BMP Scheme place in different ways, the opportunity to receive a BMP Scheme place is available to all eligible students accepted into a medical school.

For more information on the application processes, please contact the university directly.

#### **Do I have to sign a Deed of Agreement to participate in the BMP Scheme?**

Yes. Bonded Medical Places only exist because the people who take them agree to complete a RoSP. If you do not sign the BMP DoA your medical place at university may no longer be available.

If you sign the BMP DoA before 18 years of age, you must notify the Department within 30 days of turning 18. On receiving this notification, a DoR will be supplied to you. By signing the DoR, you will give unconditional consent and adopt in writing the promises made under the BMP DoA.

#### **Do I have to come from a rural or remote area to be eligible for the BMP Scheme?**

No. The BMP Scheme is open to all first year medical students who are eligible for a CSP.

**Will I have to pay the HECS-HELP?**

Yes. You will be responsible for your HECS-HELP debt. Further advice on your individual income and HELP repayments can be obtained from the Department of Education HELP enquiry line on free call 1800 020 108 or [www.studyassist.gov.au](http://www.studyassist.gov.au).

**Will I receive a scholarship with my BMP Scheme place?** No. There is no scholarship associated with the BMP Scheme. However, you may apply for other scholarships. Please see section 5.2 below.

**What is the time commitment of the BMP Scheme?**

The time commitment of the BMP Scheme depends on when you choose to complete your 12 month RoSP obligation in an Eligible Location. You have from your internship year up until five (5) years after attaining fellowship to complete your RoSP obligation. Furthermore, your RoSP obligation may be undertaken in periods of not less than 12 consecutive weeks. Work is expected to be completed on a full-time basis, unless permission is otherwise granted. Once you commence your RoSP, you then have five (5) years in which to complete it (but you still must, in any case, complete it within five (5) years of obtaining fellowship).

## 5.2 FAQs from BMP participants at university

**If I receive an offer of a BMP Scheme place from one university, will it be valid at another Australian university?**

No. The BMP Scheme place is allocated and linked to the university making the offer of a BMP Scheme place at medical school. This means that if you are successful in receiving an offer of a BMP Scheme place from a university, it is only valid for that specific university.

**Can I transfer from my BMP Scheme place to a standard entry Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP)?**

You cannot transfer your BMP Scheme place to a standard entry CSP unless the university agrees. However, if the university agrees then you may change to a CSP before the first census date in the first year that you start your course. Your place at university is tied to the BMP Scheme. Withdrawal from the BMP Scheme after commencement of second year will mean that you forfeit your medical school place.

**Can I defer the start of my medical degree?**

Yes, providing your university agrees. Universities may allow you to defer starting your study after you have been offered a place under the BMP Scheme. The Commonwealth may not immediately enter into a BMP DoA with you in this case. It remains at the university's discretion as to whether a BMP Scheme place would be offered to you when you commence your study in the following year.

**Can I take leave of absence while studying for my medical degree?**

Yes, providing your university agrees. You can take leave of absence without the Department's approval. However, you will still need to meet your obligations under your BMP DoA, including achieving general medical registration within 10 years of the first census date of the first year of your medical course. You must notify the Department if this occurs.

**If I fail one year of my studies, can I repeat?**

Yes, if the university gives approval for you to repeat. You must notify the Department if this occurs.

**Are graduates and undergraduates required to commit to the same RoSP?**

Yes, the RoSP is 12 months in total for anyone who joins the BMP Scheme from 2016.

**What information do I need to provide if my circumstances change?**

The Department must be kept informed as your circumstances change. Clause 3.8 of the BMP DoA specifies what information you will need to provide to the Department if/when your circumstances change.

This information helps the Department to track your progress towards completing your obligations under the BMP Scheme. The BMP Scheme Team is always happy to help you ensure you understand your obligations and options. You can advise of any change to your circumstances, clarify any concerns or ask questions by contacting the BMP Scheme Team by emailing [BMPScheme@health.gov.au](mailto:BMPScheme@health.gov.au)

**Can I apply for scholarships while in a BMP Scheme position?**

Yes. Students who agree to take up a new medical school place through the BMP Scheme are able to apply for other Australian Government or State Government assistance schemes. It is your responsibility to ensure that you will still be able to meet your obligations under your BMP DoA if you accept a scholarship.

**5.3 FAQs from BMP participants who have completed their university course****Where can I work as a BMP Scheme participant?**

You can choose where you work but you must ensure you complete your 12 month RoSP obligation in an Eligible Location within five (5) years of commencing it and within five (5) years of obtaining fellowship.

**What is an Eligible Location?**

The eligibility of a location for completing the RoSP depends on the training and qualifications you have when you choose to complete it. Eligible Locations are defined by the MMM or DWS classification systems (also refer to sections 1.4 and 3.0 of this booklet for more information).

**What is the Modified Monash Model (MMM)?**

The MMM is a classification system that categorises metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas according to both geographical remoteness and town size. The MMM was developed to recognise the challenges in attracting health workers to more remote and smaller communities (also refer to section 1.4 of this Booklet for more information).

To search the MMM category of a location visit the Doctor Connect website and search the MMM locator: [www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/locator](http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/locator)

**What is a District of Workforce Shortage (DWS)?**

A DWS is a geographical area of Australia in which the population's need for health care is underserved. Broadly, a location is considered a DWS if it falls below the national average for the provision of medical services of the type provided by the BMP participant. Areas that are classified as DWS are subject to change, as is the name "District of Workforce Shortage" and the methodology for determining them (also refer to section 1.4 of this booklet for more information).

To search the current DWS status of a location visit the Doctor Connect website and search the DWS locator:

[www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/locator](http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/locator)

**Can I choose where to work and will I be able to practise in more than one location during my RoSP?**

Yes, you choose where to work. While the Department does not provide assistance to find placements for BMP participants, you may wish to contact the Rural Workforce Agency in your state to assist you. You can fulfil your RoSP obligation by practising in up to four (4) Eligible Locations for 12 consecutive weeks each, provided that your other RoSP obligations are being met.

Irrespective of whether you have approval to complete your RoSP on a part-time basis or if you are completing it on the standard full-time basis, you are not permitted to provide a professional service for which a Medicare rebate is payable in an ineligible area during your RoSP unless you have applied to the Department and received prior approval to do so.

**Is there flexibility in my working hours during the RoSP?**

Your BMP DoA outlines the requirement to work full-time during any period you want counted towards reducing your 12 month RoSP obligation. The definition of full-time is employment as a medical practitioner for a minimum average of 35 hours per week.

It is possible under the BMP DoA to request approval from the Department to work less than full-time during periods you choose to count towards RoSP. You will be required to provide a case, including evidence where appropriate, as to why you should be allowed to complete your RoSP working part-time. Any approval is given at the Department's discretion and may be subject to conditions, including a condition that you agree to your RoSP being correspondingly extended.

You are not permitted to work in an ineligible area at the same time as you undertake your RoSP, unless you apply in writing to the Department for approval to do so and such approval is given.

**Am I entitled to have annual leave/sick leave during the RoSP?**

Yes, in line with normal working conditions and arrangements agreed with your employer and providing you meet your obligations under the BMP DoA.

**Does the RoSP need to be continuous?**

No, you may complete your RoSP obligation in periods of **no less** than 12 consecutive weeks. You must apply for and receive approval from the Department prior to commencing any period of work you wish to count towards reducing your RoSP obligation. Approval will not be provided retrospectively (see clause 3.2 of the BMP DoA).

**Can I specialise in an area of my choice?**

Yes. However, you need to carefully consider your choice of specialty so that you can meet your obligations under the BMP DoA.

A list of recognised medical colleges offering programs that lead to a fellowship can be found in Attachment A of the BMP DoA (Attachment A is provided for information only as it may change over time) or you can visit the Medical Board of Australia's website for the most up to

date list: [www.medicalboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Specialist-medical-colleges.aspx](http://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Specialist-medical-colleges.aspx)

**How do I know if an organisation or service is an Aboriginal Medical Service?**

For the purposes of your RoSP, an organisation or service is considered to be an Aboriginal Medical Service if it delivers primary health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations and receives its core funding from the Commonwealth. To identify Aboriginal Medical Services, please access the current lists of the Services at [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pfps-grantsreporting](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pfps-grantsreporting)

**What if I begin to work towards reducing my RoSP obligation in an Eligible Location and it is subsequently reclassified and ceases to be an Eligible Location? Will I need to move locations?**

No, provided you do not cease work at that location. Once your employment in that specific work location has ended you cannot return to that location (while it remains ineligible) and continue to count the new period as part of your RoSP.

**If I don't complete my RoSP within five (5) years of obtaining fellowship will I still be able to practise as a doctor?**

Yes, but you will be in breach of your BMP DoA and you may be required to repay the Commonwealth's contribution towards your medical education by funding the university to provide your medical place.

**Can BMP Scheme participants undertake vocational training overseas?**

Yes, however you must continue to fulfil your obligations under your BMP DoA until such time as you have completed your RoSP, which must be completed in an Eligible Location in Australia within five (5) years of commencing your RoSP or within five (5) years of obtaining fellowship.

When making a decision about studying overseas, the [Australian Medical Council \(AMC\)](http://www.amc.org.au) website has information about the implications for medical registration on your return to Australia.

You may also wish to consult with the [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency \(AHPRA\)](http://www.ahpra.gov.au) and relevant Australian specialist medical college(s) to find out whether they allow overseas placements within their fellowship courses and what process applies in recognising the training you may undertake overseas.

If you choose to obtain fellowship qualifications overseas you would then have to seek assessment of your qualifications through the AMC and the relevant Australian medical college before being recognised as a general practitioner or other specialist in Australia.

Although this procedure is administered by the AMC, the relevant specialist medical college undertakes assessment of each applicant's training and experience. The AMC website also contains information about the recognition of overseas specialist qualifications in Australia.

**Can I complete my RoSP overseas?**

No. You must work in an Eligible Location in Australia in order for you to complete your RoSP.

**I have been thinking about doing my RoSP after I attain fellowship, although I want to do some additional training in another medical speciality. Can I defer the requirement to complete my RoSP within five (5) years of attaining Fellowship?**

No. Under your BMP DoA you are required to complete your RoSP at any time from the moment you become provisionally registered when you leave medical school to within five (5) years of attaining your first fellowship. The Commonwealth considers this should be sufficient time for any participant to complete a 12 month RoSP.

**What happens after I complete my RoSP in an Eligible Location?**

After completing your RoSP in an Eligible Location, you will have satisfied your legal requirements and will have no further obligations under the BMP DoA. Your BMP DoA will then expire.

**What happens if I only complete part of the RoSP?**

If:

(a) five (5) years after you have attained fellowship; or

(b) five (5) years after you commenced your RoSP;

you have only completed part of the RoSP and you will be in breach of your BMP DoA. You may then be required to repay some or all of the Commonwealth's contribution towards your medical education by funding your university to provide your medical place.

## **6.0 BMP Scheme Contact Details**

To make further enquiries please contact the Department of Health:

<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:BMPScheme@health.gov.au">BMPScheme@health.gov.au</a>
<b>Phone</b>	BMP Hotline 1800 987 104 Mon-Fri (8.30am-5pm)
<b>Fax</b>	(02) 6289 8600
<b>Mail</b>	(Attention BMP Scheme) Bonded Medical Places Scheme Department of Health MDP 610 GPO Box 9848 Canberra ACT 2601