



Application Guidelines

Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS)
Scheme

2017



NATIONAL RURAL
HEALTH
ALLIANCE INC.

RAMUS is an Australian Government initiative.
The National Rural Health Alliance administers the RAMUS Scheme on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Health.

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RAMUS Guidelines

These Guidelines are to inform current scholarship holders of RAMUS requirements.

The ongoing conditions and requirements of the RAMUS are covered in these Guidelines.

These Guidelines also include:

- a Glossary of the key terms used in the RAMUS Guidelines (Appendix 1); and
- a list of accredited Australian medical degrees (Appendix 2).

RAMUS scholarships

The RAMUS Scheme is an Australian Government initiative aimed at attracting more doctors to **rural** and remote Australia. The Scheme assists selected students with a **rural** background, a demonstrated financial need and a commitment to working in rural Australia in the future.

RAMUS scholarships were awarded through an annual competitive process.

RAMUS scholarship holders receive financial support to assist in meeting accommodation, living and travel costs incurred while studying medicine.

The scholarships are not bonded. Instead, scholarship holders' ties to **rural** and remote Australia are reinforced through a **rural mentorship** scheme, as well as membership of their university's student **rural health club**. RAMUS scholarship holders are actively encouraged to follow a rural medical career for some or all of their working life.

The National Rural Health Alliance administers the RAMUS Scheme on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Health.

Further information

If you have any questions, or if you need further information about RAMUS, please contact the national management agency, the National Rural Health Alliance:

Web	http://ramus.ruralhealth.org.au
Email	ramus@ruralhealth.org.au
Free call	1800 460 440
Phone	(02) 6285 4660
Fax	(02) 6285 4670

Scholarship value and ongoing requirements

Annual scholarship value and payments

RAMUS scholarship holders receive \$10,000 (GST exempt) each year during the completion of a standard medical degree at their chosen university, or on a pro-rata basis where the standard medical degree includes a part-year of study.

Scholarship payments will be made in fortnightly periodic payments through direct electronic transfer of funds to a bank, credit union, or building society account of the scholarship holder's choice. Scholarship holders may arrange to have their scholarship paid directly to an agent such as a college or a person providing private board.

Scholarship holders are supported and encouraged to develop their knowledge and understanding of *rural* medical practice.

Other benefits to scholarship holders include: participation in a **mentoring** program; eligibility to apply for funding support to attend selected professional conferences; free online access to the *Australian Journal of Rural Health*; opportunity to join the RAMUS Alumnus Program on completion of their studies; and regular communications through the RAMUS website and newsletter.

Scholarship payments and tax

RAMUS scholarships are exempt from income tax under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

The National Rural Health Alliance will issue an annual statement to scholarship holders at the end of each calendar year, detailing the payments they have received under the Scheme in that year. Group Certificates/ PAYG Payment Summaries will not be issued.

RAMUS and its effect on Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, Austudy and other benefits

Students applying for, or in receipt of, Australian Government benefits through Centrelink, such as Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY or Austudy, should seek advice from Centrelink on how the receipt of a RAMUS scholarship will impact on their Centrelink benefits.

Centrelink has advised that the RAMUS scholarship qualifies as an 'Exempt Equity and Merit Based Scholarship' and therefore up to \$7,904 of RAMUS scholarship income is exempt from the personal income test when Centrelink is assessing the level of student income support entitlement.

Ongoing eligibility

RAMUS scholarship holders will continue to receive scholarship funds during the completion of the standard length medical degree at their chosen university, provided that they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

To maintain their eligibility for RAMUS scholarship holders must:

1. be enrolled in medicine full-time

RAMUS scholarship holders must be enrolled full-time in an accredited Australian medical course.

Scholarship payments are not made during periods that a scholarship holder is:

- repeating a period of study;
- taking an intermission or leave of absence from university; or
- completing extra elective or optional units.

No additional RAMUS payments will be made for the completion of double degrees or honours or PhD years.

See below under 'Academic status' for more information.

2. continue to have a financial need

Scholarship holders must demonstrate an ongoing need for financial support. They are required to provide information about their personal **taxable income** each year. Changes in income from year to year will be assessed on a case by case basis. Continued substantial increases in personal **taxable income** may affect a scholar's ongoing eligibility for a scholarship.

3. have a rural doctor mentor

Scholarship holders are required to have a *rural* medical practitioner as a **mentor** and to undertake **rural activities** with their **mentor's** guidance (see below under 'Rural Doctor Mentor Program').

4. be a member of the university rural health club

Scholarship holders are required to join and continue to be a member of the **rural health club** at their university.

5. not hold *other scholarships, cadetships or bursaries with a total value of more than \$7,000 per year*

Scholarship holders must inform the National Rural Health Alliance team about any ***other scholarships***, cadetships or bursaries that they hold or are awarded. (Refer to the Glossary, Appendix 1, for the definition of ***other scholarships***).

Once the total annual value of ***other scholarships*** held exceeds \$7,000, RAMUS scholarship holders must either:

- forgo part or all of one or more of the ***other scholarships*** so that their total value is no more than \$7,000 per year; or
- must withdraw from the RAMUS Scheme.

6. sign a Scholar Agreement and provide the specified reports and other documents

On acceptance of the scholarship and at the beginning of each year, scholarship holders are required to sign a Scholar Agreement confirming their agreement to meet the obligations attached to receiving RAMUS scholarship funds. They are also required to provide specified documents and reports to confirm their ongoing eligibility for the RAMUS.

The scholarship benefits and requirements are set out in detail in an information booklet sent to all new scholarship holders and available online at <http://ramus.ruralhealth.org.au>

Toward the end of each year, the National Rural Health Alliance will send scholarship holders information about the requirements to be met to continue as a scholar the following year. RAMUS payments for the year will not commence until all the required documents are received and the scholar's ongoing eligibility is confirmed.

Scholarship holders may be required, by way of an annual survey, to provide the National Rural Health Alliance with demographic, academic and other information each year they hold a scholarship.

Scholarship holders who fail to provide, within a reasonable timeframe, the documents required to

confirm their ongoing eligibility for the scholarship may have their scholarship withdrawn.

Academic status

Deferred studies

Scholarship holders who are granted a leave of absence from their studies by their university may defer their scholarship. The National Rural Health Alliance must be informed promptly of any deferrals and provided with evidence of deferral from the university. Length of deferrals and repeat years will be reviewed by the National Rural Health Alliance.

Withdrawal from studying medicine

Scholarship holders who withdraw from their study of medicine will forego their RAMUS scholarship. They will not be required to return scholarship funds paid prior to the date of their withdrawal from medicine.

Scholarship holders who withdraw from their studies should inform the National Rural Health Alliance as soon as possible.

In the event that a former scholarship holder who had earlier withdrawn from their studies is accepted into a full-time medical course at a later date, he or she will need to reapply for RAMUS in the relevant application round.

Failure and exclusion from university

Scholarship holders who fail to meet the academic requirements of their medical course, and are excluded from further study by their university, must notify the National Rural Health Alliance immediately. In these circumstances their scholarship will be revoked. They will not be required to return scholarship funds paid prior to their exclusion from study.

Scholarship holders who fail to meet the academic requirements of the previous year of their medical course, but are permitted by the university to continue their study, will have their RAMUS payments suspended. Their scholarship payments will recommence once they provide evidence that they have met the academic requirements.

Scholarship holders who fail, repeat and/or defer their studies in two consecutive academic years will need to provide a sound case in writing to the National Rural Health Alliance to establish that

exceptional circumstances have prevented them from meeting their academic requirements. In the event that exceptional circumstances are not established, their RAMUS scholarship will be withdrawn. They will not be required to return any scholarship funds previously paid.

Rural Doctor *Mentor* program

Scholarship holders are required to have a *rural* doctor as a *mentor*.

Scholarship holders will nominate a RAMUS *mentor* of their choice and will be assisted to locate a *mentor*, if required. The *mentor* should be a medical practitioner working within an Australian *rural* location.

Scholarship holders will develop an annual Scholar-Mentor Plan with their *mentor*, will have ongoing contact on at least a quarterly basis with their *mentor*, and will undertake appropriate *rural activities*. No additional payment is made to the scholarship holder for contact with their *mentor*.

Scholars' continuing eligibility for RAMUS is dependent on a report from their *mentor* indicating satisfactory involvement in *rural activities*. Scholarship payments may be suspended or the scholarship may be forfeited if a scholar's participation in the Rural Doctor *Mentor* program is inadequate.

The *mentor* will be paid an annual honorarium of \$300 (plus GST if applicable) for each year of their participation. This amount will be paid directly to the *mentor* by the National Rural Health Alliance on receipt of a completed Mentor Report and a

payment claim. The *mentor* payment is in addition to the \$10,000 scholarship amount.

Repayment of funds

Scholarship holders who cease to fulfil the terms of the RAMUS scholarship and fail to inform the National Rural Health Alliance, will be required to repay funds received from the time they ceased to be eligible. Ceasing to fulfil the terms of their RAMUS scholarship may include:

- withdrawal from a medical course;
- ceasing to be an Australian resident; or
- accepting other scholarships, bursaries or cadetships that have a total value of over \$7,000 per year.

It is in the scholarship holder's best interest to notify the National Rural Health Alliance if they cease to fulfil the terms of their RAMUS scholarship.

In the event that a scholarship is withdrawn due to an ongoing substantial increase in personal income, the scholarship holder will be required to forego the remainder of their scholarship without further penalty.

Withdrawal of scholarship

Ongoing RAMUS scholars who have their scholarship withdrawn and consider that their particular situation has not been adequately addressed, can write to the National Rural Health Alliance and provide a sound case as to why their RAMUS scholarship should not be withdrawn.

Appendix 1 - Glossary

Terms used in the RAMUS Application Form and Guidelines

Certified copy: a copy of an original document that has been certified as a true and correct copy of the original document. A person who is authorised to witness a *statutory declaration* may certify a copy. A list of persons authorised to witness a *statutory declaration* (under the Commonwealth Statutory Declarations Act 1959) is available at http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Statutory_declaration. A list of authorised witnesses will be provided to applicants who are offered a *conditional scholarship*.

Mentor: a trusted guide and advisor who, in the RAMUS Scheme, must be a *rural* doctor. The primary role of a RAMUS *mentor* is to assist the scholar to develop ties to medical practice in *rural* and/or regional Australia. As experienced medical practitioners working in *rural* Australia, RAMUS *mentors* are able to provide support and guidance to scholars outside the university and formal study environment.

Other scholarships: include scholarships, bursaries and cadetships funded by the Australian Government; state or territory governments; universities; or philanthropic organisations. Examples of *other scholarships* are:

- Scholarships funded by the Australian Government or state/territory governments, such as the, Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship, Queensland Health Rural Scholarship, Country Health SA Undergraduate and Professional Entry Scholarship;
- University scholarships; for example, Monash University Excellence and Equity Scholarship, University of New England Country Scholarship, University of Newcastle David Beer Scholarship, University of WA Ralph Pervan Scholarship;
- Other scholarships, such as Country Education Foundation of Australia grant; NSW Farmers' Association Tertiary Scholarship.

Rural: eligible *rural* locations are those identified as being within ASGC Remoteness Areas (RA) categories 2-5.

Rural activities: activities that reinforce scholars' ties to *rural*, regional and remote Australia; that further develop their understanding of the challenges and rewards of *rural* health practice; and/or increase their exposure to specific *rural* health issues. Activities may be undertaken through the university *rural health club*, through other organisations and/or in conjunction with the scholar's mentor.

Rural health club: a university club which encourages and supports students with a background and/or interest in *rural* health. There is a *rural health club* in, or affiliated with, each university with a medical school.

Statutory declaration: a written statement declared to be true in the presence of an authorised witness. The *statutory declaration* must be in a prescribed format and must be duly declared and witnessed by a person authorised to do so. A person who wilfully makes a false statement in a *statutory declaration* is guilty of an offence and may be fined or jailed, or both. A Commonwealth *statutory declaration* form and a list of persons authorised to witness a *statutory declaration* (under the Commonwealth *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*) is available at http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Statutory_declaration. A list of authorised witnesses will be provided to applicants who are offered a *conditional scholarship*.

Taxable income: income you must declare to the Australian Taxation Office (*assessable income*), including income that is below the tax-free threshold, minus all deductions that are allowable under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936*. These deductions include all normal business expenses, certain special deductions of a capital nature and non-business deductions. An individual's *taxable income* is shown on their Australian Taxation Office Notice of Assessment.

Appendix 2 – Guide to standard Australian medical degrees

This list is intended as a guide only. Applicants should confirm medical degree details directly with individual universities.

University	Degree title	Duration (Years)	Classification
Australian National University	MChD, Doctor of Medicine and Surgery	4	Graduate
Bond University	MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	4 years and 8 months	Undergraduate
Deakin University	BMBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	4	Graduate
Flinders University	MD, Doctor of Medicine Bachelor of Clinical Sciences/Doctor of Medicine	4 6	Graduate Undergraduate
Flinders University – Northern Territory Medical Program	MD, Doctor of Medicine Bachelor of Clinical Sciences/Doctor of Medicine	4 6	Graduate Undergraduate
Griffith University	MD, Doctor of Medicine	4	Graduate
James Cook University	MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	6	Undergraduate
Monash University	MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	4 5	Graduate (Gippsland Campus) Undergraduate (Melbourne Campus)
University of Adelaide	MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	6	Undergraduate
University of Melbourne	MD, Doctor of Medicine	4	Graduate
University of New England	Bachelor of Medicine	5	Undergraduate
University of New South Wales	BMed/MD, Bachelor of Medical Studies/Doctor of Medicine	6	Undergraduate
University of Newcastle	Bachelor of Medicine	5	Undergraduate
University of Notre Dame, Fremantle	MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	4	Graduate
University of Notre Dame, Sydney	MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	4	Graduate

University of Queensland	Doctor of Medicine	4	Graduate
	MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	4	Graduate (Ipswich Campus)
University of Sydney	Doctor of Medicine	4	Graduate
University of Tasmania	MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	5	Undergraduate
University of Western Australia	MD, Doctor of Medicine	4	Graduate
University of Western Sydney	MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	5	Undergraduate
University of Wollongong	MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery	4	Graduate