



NEW ZEALAND

## **Voluntary Bonding Scheme Terms and Conditions for Postgraduate General Practice Doctors 2018**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Voluntary Bonding Scheme (the Scheme) is an incentive based payment scheme that has been introduced by the Government to encourage postgraduate doctors to work in hard-to-staff communities for three years after graduation.
- 1.2 These Terms and Conditions apply to Postgraduate Doctors who are postgraduate year 3 to postgraduate year 6 when commencing general practice vocational training (GPEP) year 1, 2, or 3 in December 2017, and who register for the Scheme in 2018. If you register for the Scheme as a new graduate doctor, please refer to the 2018 Terms and Conditions for New Graduate Doctors.
- 1.3 Postgraduate General Practice doctors who enter under the postgraduate category are eligible for one incentive payment under the Scheme after they have completed three years in a listed hard-to-staff community. Funding is intended to help postgraduate doctors to repay student loans (if they have them) or provide cash payments to top up income if their student loan balance is zero.
- 1.4 To be eligible for the Scheme in the postgraduate general practice category, you must:
- be postgraduate year 3 to 6 when you commenced GPEP training in December 2017;
  - have commenced the first, second, or third year<sup>1</sup> of GPEP training in a listed community in December 2017 (see clause 4.7);
  - be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident<sup>2</sup> at the time you make an application for payment;
  - be registered, or be eligible to be registered with the Medical Council of New Zealand;
  - be working, and intend to work, in a listed community for three years; and
  - comply with all other terms and conditions of the Scheme.
- 1.5 Involvement in the Scheme involves four phases:
- Registration of Interest
  - confirmation of place on the Scheme
  - participation (employment)
  - applications for payment.
- 1.6 **In order to be eligible for payment**, you must register for the Scheme, have your place on the Scheme confirmed and meet the Scheme's Terms and Conditions during the participation phase. **You must also apply for payment within twelve (12) months of becoming eligible for payment, under the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme.** The Ministry strongly encourages you to apply for payment no later than six months after becoming eligible to apply under the Terms and Conditions.
- 1.7 The Ministry also recommends that you check your progress while participating in the Scheme (by contacting us via email at [vbs@moh.govt.nz](mailto:vbs@moh.govt.nz)), particularly:
- at the three year point after registering for the Scheme, and
  - if you change employers, communities, take parental leave or extended leave.
- 1.8 You will not be eligible for the payment from the Scheme until you have completed the bond of three full years (36 months) on the Scheme, in accordance with these Terms and Conditions.
- 1.9 The Scheme is a voluntary process and you, not the Ministry of Health (the Ministry), are responsible for any employment decisions you may make based on your intended participation in the Scheme, including decisions about working in listed hard-to-staff communities.

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<sup>1</sup> GPEP1, GPEP2, or GPEP3

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of the Scheme, Permanent Residents include those who hold a NZ Permanent Resident Visa, or a Returning Resident Visa, or Australian Citizens.

- 1.10 You are responsible for notifying the Ministry of any change of postal address, email address or other contact details in a timely manner.
- 1.11 There are limited places available on the Scheme. Where eligible Registrations of Interest exceed the number of places available on the Scheme, a ballot process will be applied for selection. This is not subject to appeal.

### **Postgraduate Education Prerequisites**

- 1.12 You must:
- be postgraduate year 3 to 6 when you commenced GPEP training in December 2017;
  - have commenced the first, second, or third year<sup>3</sup> of GPEP training in a listed community in December 2017 (see clause 4.7);
  - be registered, or be eligible to be registered with the Medical Council of New Zealand;
- 1.13 New Zealand citizens and permanent residents who did not gain their base professional qualifications from a New Zealand training institution and who meet the registration requirements of the Medical Council of New Zealand may be considered for the Scheme on a case-by-case basis, if they meet all other eligibility criteria and other Terms and Conditions of the Scheme. This will be assessed prior to confirmation of a place on the Scheme.

### **Definition of a Postgraduate**

- 1.14 Eligible postgraduate are those who are postgraduate year 3 to 6 at the time they commenced their first, second, or third year of general practice vocational training in December 2017 and can provide evidence of this.

## **2. Registration of Interest**

- 2.1 In order to be a participant on the Scheme, you must successfully register your interest and be confirmed on the Scheme.
- 2.2 To register your interest you must complete the online Registration of Interest form and provide information to show that you meet, or intend to meet, the eligibility criteria of the Scheme. The Registration of Interest period is typically six weeks in duration. You are responsible for ensuring that you register during this period. Entries outside this period will not be considered. It is your responsibility to ensure that you successfully register for the Scheme, and obtain an email from the Ministry confirming this.
- 2.3 Completing a Registration of Interest does not guarantee a place on the Scheme. The purpose of the Registration of Interest process is to provide information about your future work plans so that you can be considered for one of the places on the Scheme.

## **3. Confirmation on the Scheme**

- 3.1 There are limited places on the Scheme. Successfully registering your interest for the Scheme does not guarantee you will be confirmed on the Scheme.
- 3.2 A separate process will be conducted by the Ministry (following consideration of your Registration of Interest) to formally confirm you on the Scheme. You will be advised in writing whether your place on the Scheme has been confirmed.
- 3.3 Where the eligible numbers of Registrations of Interest exceeds the number of places on the Scheme, a ballot process will be applied for selection. This is not subject to appeal.

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<sup>3</sup> GPEP1, GPEP2, or GPEP3

## 4. Participation

4.1 Once you are confirmed on the Scheme, your participation is determined by:

- your commencement date on the Scheme
- minimum employment requirements
- movement between hard-to-staff communities and/or specialties
- breaks and pauses in your employment
- parental leave
- work you may undertake as a locum.

In order to be eligible to receive payment from the Scheme you must comply with the eligibility criteria for payment (clause 5).

### Eligibility Criteria

4.2 There are two options for doctors to enter the Scheme:

- **Postgraduate General Practice doctors:** These 2018 Terms and Conditions apply to postgraduate doctors from PGY3 to 6 when they commenced their first, second, or third year of general practice vocational training in December 2017 and who register for the Scheme in 2018 in the postgraduate category.
- **New graduate doctors:** These 2018 Terms and Conditions **DO NOT** apply to new graduate doctors, who completed studies towards their undergraduate degree in 2017, and register for the 2018 Intake of the Scheme – please consult the 2018 Terms and Conditions for new graduate doctors.

4.3 If you have previously registered for the Scheme and have received payment under the new graduate category, you are not eligible to re-register in a later year under the postgraduate general practice category. If you have previously registered for the Scheme but have not received any payments from the Scheme, your previous registration can be voided at your request, and you may re-register under the postgraduate general practice category. Please contact [ybs@moh.govt.nz](mailto:ybs@moh.govt.nz) if you have any queries.

### Postgraduate General Practice Doctor Entry

4.4 Doctors who are postgraduate year 3 to 6 when commencing their first, second, or third year of general practice training in December 2017, and who will work for three years in a hard-to-staff community are eligible to register for the Scheme.

4.5 Participants within this category are eligible for a maximum of one payment of \$30,000 net for 36 months working in a hard to staff community.

4.6 Where communities are defined by reference to a DHB, the area is that specified for the DHB under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000.

4.7 **Hard-to-staff training communities in 2018 for GPs** are:

- Bay of Plenty DHB (excluding Tauranga and Whakatane urban)
- Nelson Marlborough DHB (excluding Nelson/Richmond and Blenheim)
- Southern DHB (excluding Dunedin, Mosgiel and Invercargill)
- Hawke's Bay DHB
- MidCentral DHB
- Tairāwhiti DHB
- Wairarapa DHB
- Whanganui DHB
- Canterbury DHB (excluding, Christchurch other than Banks Peninsula)
- Northland DHB (excluding Whangarei urban)
- Waikato DHB (excluding Hamilton and Cambridge)
- Lakes DHB
- South Canterbury DHB
- Taranaki DHB
- West Coast DHB

## Changes to Hard-to-Staff Communities

- 4.8 You must commence working in one of the hard-to-staff communities listed in clause 4.7. If you wish to change the community you are working in you may do so only in accordance with clauses 4.13 to 4.14.

## Commencement Date

- 4.9 Your commencement Date on the Scheme will be the date you commenced your first, second, or third year of postgraduate general practice training in a listed hard-to-staff community in the December before you registered for the Scheme (i.e. December 2017). If you commenced general practice training prior to December 2017, this time does not contribute towards the bonding period.

## Minimum Employment Requirements

- 4.10 To be eligible for the Scheme, you must be employed for a minimum of 0.6 FTE (this may be an average FTE for any 12 month period of employment if your hours worked fluctuated for any reason).
- 4.11 You will not be eligible for payment from the Scheme if you undertake substantive or continuous locum work that means you cannot meet the breaks and pauses clauses (clauses 4.15 to 4.18 and 4.22 to 4.25).
- 4.12 You are responsible for verifying that the FTE requirements have been met and will be required to make a declaration and provide a certificate of service from your employer(s) before each bonding payment is made (clause 5).

## Moving Between Hard-to-Staff Communities

- 4.13 Postgraduate doctors in General Practice vocational training may move between communities listed in clause 4.7 OR communities listed in Voluntary Bonding Scheme Terms and Conditions for postgraduate doctors in General Practice vocational training after 2018.
- 4.14 You cannot move to a hard-to-staff community that is listed in any Voluntary Bonding Scheme Terms and Conditions before 2018.

## Breaks and Pauses in the Term of Service

- 4.15 You can take up to 14 weeks absence (total paid and unpaid leave, not including Parental Leave) in a 12 month period from your position in a hard-to-staff community without affecting your eligibility for bonding payments. Such an absence is known as a “break”.
- 4.16 A “pause” is any time beyond the 14 weeks break allowance that you spend away from the hard-to-staff community. Time taken as pauses is added to the term necessary to complete the bond, and no more than ten weeks may be added during the course of any one year. No more than 50 weeks in total can be added to the five-year bonding term. **Total absences of more than 24 weeks in any 12 month period (not including Parental Leave) will render an applicant ineligible for the Scheme and payments.**
- 4.17 Breaks and pauses include any leave or absence from employment, with or without pay, including normal employment leave entitlements, such as annual leave and sick leave.
- 4.18 Locum work will also be considered against the breaks and pauses provisions (see clauses 4.22 to 4.25).

## Parental Leave

- 4.19 You may take up to 52 weeks parental leave, in accordance with the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 and remain on the Scheme.

- 4.20 Time spent on parental leave does not accrue towards your bonding period and must be made up. The bonding period will automatically restart as soon as you return to work in a hard-to-staff community listed in clause 4.7.
- 4.21 Time spent on parental leave is separate to the break and pause provisions (clauses 4.15 to 4.18).

### **Working as a Medical Locum**

- 4.22 Locum work that you may undertake is considered an absence under these terms. If you undertake locum work such that you cannot meet the breaks and pauses clauses (clauses 4.15 to 4.18), you will not be eligible for payment from the Scheme.
- 4.23 Locum work that you undertake as a necessary part of general practice vocational training may be permitted, but verification of this must be submitted with an application for payment, or otherwise written authorisation for this must be obtained from the Ministry.
- 4.24 For the purposes of the Scheme, a locum is considered to be someone who provides the services in the stead of another practitioner registered within the same scope of practice during normal working hours.
- 4.25 When you apply for payments from the Scheme, you will be asked to confirm that you have not engaged in “substantive” locum work.

### **Exemptions and Reviews in Exceptional Circumstances**

- 4.26 If there is a change in your circumstances that is exceptional and results in an inability to meet the 2018 Terms and Conditions, you may request an exemption for a specified period from the Ministry. Exemptions from the standard Terms and Conditions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Ministry. It is strongly recommended that you seek an exemption prior to becoming ineligible under the normal terms. If you are applying for payment, and have not met the terms due to exceptional circumstances, you can also request a retrospective review.
- 4.27 Applications for exemptions under exceptional circumstances must be made in writing, with a clear explanation as to what clauses cannot be met and the exceptional circumstances which have prevented you from meeting the Terms. These can be sent to [vbs@moh.govt.nz](mailto:vbs@moh.govt.nz), or submitted along with an application for payment.

## **5. Payment**

- 5.1 You are responsible for initiating the claim for payment after three full years (36 months) have been completed on the Scheme, in accordance with these Terms and Conditions, starting from your Commencement Date (see clause 4.9). Doctors that enter the Scheme through the postgraduate entry option for general practitioners in vocational training are only eligible for one payment.
- 5.2 **To receive payment under the scheme, you must apply for payment within twelve (12) months of becoming eligible for payment under the Terms and Conditions.** The Ministry strongly encourages you to apply for payment no later than six months after becoming eligible to apply, under the terms and conditions.
- 5.3 The Ministry also recommends that you check your progress while participating in the Scheme (by contacting us via email at [vbs@moh.govt.nz](mailto:vbs@moh.govt.nz)), particularly:
- at the three year point after registering for the Scheme, and
  - if you change employers, communities, take parental leave or extended leave.
- 5.4 You will only be eligible for a payment if:
- you have been employed for three full years in accordance with these Terms and Conditions

- you have met the minimum full time equivalent (FTE) employment requirements (clauses 4.10 to 4.12)
- you have complied with the rules governing breaks and pauses (clauses 4.15 to 4.18), Parental Leave (4.19 to 4.21), and locum work for the Scheme (clauses 4.22 to 4.25).

5.5 No payment will be made until you have:

- applied for payment in accordance with the application for payment process
- submitted a declaration confirming that you have met these Terms and Conditions
- provided a certificate of service from your employer(s) confirming that your employment has complied with the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme during the bonding period.

5.6 Details of further information required to confirm that you have met these Terms and Conditions and to enable payment to be made (e.g. proof of identity) are outlined in the payment application form, which will become available on the Ministry of Health website in January 2021.

5.7 If you have a student loan, the net Scheme payment will be made against your student loan. If the balance of your student loan is less than the Scheme payment, you will need to contact Inland Revenue once the payment has been made to enable the difference to be paid to you.

5.8 If you do not have a student loan, the net Scheme payment will be paid directly to you.

5.9 Payment for doctors for each period of 12 months completed on the Scheme is **\$10,000** after tax (net)

5.10 If you are an independent contractor, a gross payment will be made and the net amount you receive will depend upon your personal tax situation.

5.11 Scheme payments are subject to income tax and may affect your tax situation, for example, in relation to provisional tax, Working for Families and child support payments.

5.12 The Ministry recommends that you seek independent advice on how the payment will affect your tax position. For further tax information, contact Inland Revenue.

## **6. Privacy Statement**

6.1 All of the information you provide in the Registration of Interest form will be treated as personal information and will be used, stored and disclosed in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993.

6.2 By submitting the Registration of Interest form, you are authorising the Ministry of Health to collect personal information about you, and consenting to relevant information being shared with other key stakeholders, including your employer, for the purposes of the Voluntary Bonding Scheme. This information will be stored and used by the Ministry for purposes associated with the Scheme, in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993.

6.3 The information will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to any person except in connection with the purposes for which it is obtained, or by operation of law.

6.4 You have the right to contact the Ministry to request access to and correction of any personal information held about you.

6.5 We suggest you print a copy of these Terms and Conditions for your records.