

Transition to Practice in Aged Care Scholarship

GUIDELINES

Introduction

The Office of the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, ACT Health Directorate, promotes a culture of innovation, learning and development through the provision of various scholarships and programmes made available to all nurses across the ACT.

The SYNERGY Transition to Practice in Aged Care Scholarship is available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early career Registered Nurses (RNs) working in residential aged care in the ACT and provides successful candidates paid study leave to complete the Gerontological Nursing Competencies Programme (Aged Care Transition to Practice) facilitated by University of Wollongong and University of Canberra.

Tuition fees for the Gerontological Nursing Competencies Programme are currently funded by the [Australian Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#), for eligible students.

Aims and Outcomes

The aims of the SYNERGY Transition to Practice in Aged Care Scholarship are:

- To support early Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early career RNs into the aged care workforce,
- To attract and retain high performing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RNs in the ACT,
- To enhance the professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RNs in the ACT, and
- To ensure best practice in nursing models of care and service provision to aged care patients and aged care facility residents.

Gerontological Nursing Competencies Programme (Aged Care Transition to Practice)

The Gerontological Nursing Competencies (GNCs) Programme is 6 months of supported study and mentorship to specialise in gerontological nursing. The Programme will be delivered via online distance learning and virtual video conferencing.

More information, including expressions of interest/applications, is available on the [University of Wollongong \(UOW\) website](#).

Paid Study Component

To assist with completing the GNCs Programme, SYNERGY scholarship recipients will be eligible for a total of \$3,000.00 paid study leave while undertaking the Programme over 6 months. This funding is paid directly to the recipient's employer to facilitate backfill for study days. This scholarship is not intended to cover the full cost of the recipient's time to undertake the Programme and should be understood as supplementary funding.

The recipient's work area is required to invoice the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre for reimbursement of \$3,000.00 along with evidence and an outline of the planned study days that will be provided to the scholarship recipient.

Any additional associated course costs, textbooks, equipment and other Programme related costs are met by the student.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for a SYNERGY Transition to Practice in Aged Care Scholarship, applicants must:

- Provide confirmation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage,
- Be an early career RN, registered within two years prior to this application, and
- Be employed, full or part time, as a RN with an ACT public or private residential aged care provider.

Conditions

The following conditions apply for successful recipients of the SYNERGY Transition to Practice in Aged Care Scholarship. Recipients must:

- Be enrolled in the Gerontological Nursing Competencies Programme (Aged Care Transition to Practice) and is expected to successfully complete all requisite units of the Programme facilitated by the University of Wollongong, and
- Present a copy of their GNCs Portfolio **at the end of six-months** to their Manager/Supervisor and the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre.

Application

To apply for a SYNERGY Transition to Practice in Aged Care Scholarship, candidates are required to complete the application form available on the [Synergy website](#) and email it to synergy@act.gov.au.

Other Leave

The SYNERGY scholarship recipient is responsible for negotiating annual and other leave over the period of the scholarship to ensure all requirements of the GNCs Programme are met. Long service leave and purchased leave will not be supported for the duration of the scholarship.

Assessment of Applications

Opportunities for the SYNERGY Transition to Practice in Aged Care Scholarship will be advertised and applications will be considered on merit by a panel of senior nurses and at least one nursing academic. Granting of the scholarship will be based on the written application.

Should an applicant be dissatisfied with the panel's decision, an appeal process has been established.

Written requests for review of panel decisions must:

- Be provided within two weeks of the applicant receiving notification of the panel's decision,
- Identify the basis of the appeal, and
- Be addressed to the Clinical Chair in Gerontological Nursing, SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre: synergy@act.gov.au.

The decision of the Clinical Chair in Gerontological Nursing is final.

Agreement

Successful recipients will receive a Scholarship Agreement. Recipients are required to sign the Agreement, have their signature witnessed, and return it to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre by the due date specified in the letter of offer.

The recipient's Manager will receive a Letter of Agreement for Funding which includes the commitment of the recipient's work area to invoice SYNERGY for the total amount of the scholarship and provide study days to the scholarship recipient. The Manager is required to sign the Letter of Agreement for Funding and return it to the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre by the specified due date.

Extension and Suspension

All requests for variation to the SYNERGY Scholarship Agreement must be notified in writing to the scholarship recipient's Manager and SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre.

Intermission from the GNCs Programme can be negotiated in extenuating circumstances. The scholarship recipient must discuss this with their mentor as well as their Manager and the SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre.

If the GNCs Programme is not completed within the agreed period, a request is to be made in writing for an extension of time for submission of results. An extension of time to complete the GNCs Programme will not include additional scholarship funding.

Illness which reduces the effective tenure of the Scholarship will not automatically entitle the recipient to an extension of the original period of the Scholarship. On formal application, a scholarship extension may be agreed if the extension can be met by the health service or facility's operational requirements.

Termination

The SYNERGY Scholarship may be terminated at any time if:

- The recipient's performance is unsatisfactory in accordance with fair performance management principles,
- The recipient terminates enrolment or does not enrol in the GNCs Programme,
- The recipient fails to complete or pass units of study within the GNCs Programme,
- The recipient fails to observe the conditions of the Scholarship Agreement, and/or
- The recipient's work area fails to provide study days to the recipient.

Contact

SYNERGY Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre: synergy@act.gov.au