



Taranaki DHB Postgraduate Study Funding for Registered Nurses Handbook

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Introduction

The Postgraduate Coordinator for Taranaki is:

Dr Diana Fergusson

Email: PostGraduatestudiescoordinator@tdhb.org.nz

Nurses new to postgraduate study – see a note about undertaking postgraduate study at the back of the handbook.

Nurses thinking about their career pathway, - see Appendix A

A Postgraduate academic nursing expo will be held about August/September each year. The tertiary education providers will be available to discuss academic qualification and pathways.

Health Workforce Directorate (HWD) strategically invests in the training needs of Registered Nurses (RNs) (and other Health Professionals) to achieve the best health outcomes for all New Zealanders now and in the future. HWD funding is an important means of giving the health workforce the essential knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications to provide care that meets changing population needs in a changing world. The intent of this funding is to enable RNs across the region to undertake post graduate (level 8/9) study that will enable them to deliver on improving the health outcomes for the people of Taranaki / reduce health inequities as well as progress their career.

HWD funds RNs to enroll in formal tertiary education programmes that lead to completion of a qualification at Level 8 or 9 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework such as a Postgraduate certificate, Postgraduate diploma, Master's degree or Nurse Practitioner. Postgraduate education for nurses is encouraged and supported by Taranaki DHB to:

- improve the quality, safety and patient experience of care
- improve the health of all populations, especially those residing in Taranaki
- improve health equity for people identifying as Māori
- obtain the best value for public health system resources
- enhance a healthy and productive workforce
- develop expert practice and advanced practice roles
- improve the delivery of nursing care by encouraging the application of evidence-based practice
- promote ongoing professional development for nurses

Eligible trainees must be employed by Taranaki DHB or by a Vote Health Funded Organisation (VHF) and may be employed in the following settings:

Provider arm:

Clinical/healthcare services provided by Taranaki DHB hospital and community-based settings.

Non-Provider arm:

- Primary health care: First point of contact care, population health, health promotion, disease prevention, wellness care and disease and chronic disease management services provided by primary health care services
- Rural health care: Healthcare services provided in rural communities served
- Aged Care: Healthcare services provided to the elderly in the community, rest homes and hospitals
- Palliative care: Health care services for people of all ages with a life- limiting condition
- Māori Health Care: Health care services provided to Maori in the community

Funding

All funding is allocated by meeting the specifications as set out by the HWD. Funding is allocated per calendar year.

Application process

Applications are made using the HWD Postgraduate Study Application Form for Registered Nurses. Applications open early September and close late October each year. The closure date is determined nationally. There is only one application round per calendar year including both semesters.

- HWD is very prescriptive about application information
- All completed applications will be forwarded to the Taranaki Nurse Workforce Development Committee. The committee considers all applications as per Terms of Reference
- Incomplete applications will be returned
- Late applications will not be accepted

Application criteria

- ✓ Applicant is Nursing Council New Zealand (NCNZ) Registered Nurse (RN)
- ✓ Applicant holds a current NCNZ issued Annual Practicing Certificate (APC) with no restrictions that impact on the nurses' ability to practice
- ✓ Applicant is a New Zealand citizen or has permanent residency
- ✓ Applicant is currently employed as an RN by a health service that is funded by the District Health Board or the Ministry of Health from Vote Health
- ✓ The applicant has a permanent contract, except RNs completing new graduate programmes (usually employed on a temporary contract)
- ✓ RNs on maternity leave are eligible for funding while they are still employed by Taranaki DHB or VHF organisation
- ✓ The applicant has a career plan identified and agreed with their manager

- ✓ Applicants hold a current professional portfolio as evidence of meeting NCNZ competency requirements. The portfolio has been completed within the employing organisation with a *NCNZ approved PDRP programme Portfolio* OR within an employing organisation that does not belong to a NCNZ approved PDRP programme, but the portfolio comprises the following:
 - Current (within 12 months) performance appraisal
 - NCNZ competency assessment form completed by self and peer including practice examples
 - Evidence of meeting the NCNZ required practice hours
 - Evidence of meeting the NCNZ required professional development hours

Allocation of funding prioritised based on locally agreed variance

1. Applicants, who successfully completed the NETP programme and are employed in a permanent position the following year, will be prioritised to complete a Postgraduate Certificate
2. Recruitment, retention and development of the RN workforce identifying as Māori
3. Prioritised workforce needs identified by the Taranaki DHB or VHF organisation
4. Employer support where post graduate study/qualification is a requirement of a role
5. Course of study aligns with National and regional health priorities such as Ministry of Health strategies, Whakamaua, DHB Health Action Plan or organisational strategies
6. Locally delivered papers

Discretion of the Taranaki Nurse Workforce Development Committee applies

- Applicants who have previously failed or withdrawn from study
- Applicants who have previously received funding for four or more papers
- Tenure of applicants
- Casual staff, where they meet the Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) TDHB minimum hours requirement of 0.5 FTE in preceding 12-month period

Specialty Practicum Papers

RN prescribing

Applicant needs to meet the requirements set by Nursing Council New Zealand and

- Have completed 3 years full time practice in the area they intend to practice as RN Prescriber
- Have completed all academic requirements

- Obtained Professional Lead – Nursing / Midwifery approval
- Have employer support to complete the practicum and practice as RN Prescriber on successful completion of study (i.e.: has a role where prescribing comprises a component of the job description)
- Practicum needs to be in the clinical area the nurse intends to practice
- Must have a collaborative working relationship with the multi-disciplinary team
- Understands the NCNZ requirements for expanded practice annual practising declarations as well as ongoing portfolio competency requirements

Other Speciality practicum papers

Applicants need to meet the following requirements

- Obtained manager’s approval i.e.: undertaking the study will support the development of the service
- Working in a role that supports the development of the specialty skills
- Will have a role at the end of the paper that supports the use of the specialty skills to improve patient outcomes / reduce health inequities

Application Outcomes

Applicants and their managers will be notified of the application outcome in writing within two weeks of the committee meeting.

Application Outcome Definitions

Fully funded	Full funding is provided for tuition and compulsory fees charged by tertiary education providers and paid directly to the provider by TDHB.
Waitlisted	Funding currently not available however your application will be reconsidered if funding becomes available.
Declined	Your funding application was unsuccessful.
Travel & Accommodation Subsidy	Maximum amount that can be claimed for travel and accommodation cost. The subsidy may not cover all travel and accommodation related costs.
Clinical Release Study days	The number of study days approved for clinical release payment

Reimbursement Process

Tertiary Fees	Tertiary education providers will invoice TDHB directly – please do not pay any fee invoice.
Travel & Accommodation Subsidy	Reimbursement claimed up to the maximum amount stated on the outcome letter. TDHB RNs – Reimbursement of Expenses Claim form. (with accompanying tax invoices) VHF Organisations – via employer invoice at end of each semester

Clinical Release	The number of study days approved for clinical release payment.
Study days	TDHB – Paid automatically to department budget codes at end of each semester VHF Organisations – via employer invoice at end of each semester

VHF Organisations

The individual employer reimburses travel and accommodation cost to the RN. VHF Organisations submit all invoices for travel, accommodation and study release, to the TDHB Post Graduate Funding Coordinator at the end of each semester.

PG Funding Approved – Next Steps

Each nurse will receive an email from the PG Coordinator thanking them for their application and confirming the outcome of the paper(s) applied for. Then details and information that applies to the acceptance of the funding will be provided:

- What the funding approved does and does not include
- How the funding will be applied including instructions NOT to directly pay the education provider. This will be done via bulk invoice to the TDHB.
- A directive to apply for admission immediately with your tertiary provider to generate your student ID number and card (if you have not previously enrolled at the university).
- A directive to enroll in your paper online with your tertiary provider – some papers have limited numbers which fill rapidly e.g. Biological Science for Practice.
- Confirm your study day dates (if any) with your tertiary provider and inform your manager/employer as soon as practical.
- Regularly check your emails for post graduate funding related communication and requests.
- Agree to promptly provide your final grade from your tertiary provider to the Post Graduate Coordinator at the end of each semester (e.g. a scanned copy of results)
- Agree to notify the Post Grad Coordinator immediately if you do not undertake your funded papers, withdraw from study during a semester, or change employers.
- Agree that if you withdraw from studies you will need to advise your tertiary provider promptly in order to avoid financial penalty (usually within 14 days from course start date). Withdrawal after this time may see you liable for full fee costs.

MOST IMPORTANTLY the Nurse **MUST** confirm their decision to continue with PG studies in 2021 to the Taranaki Post Graduate Coordinator by the date provided. Failure to do so may result in funding being re-allocated.

Completion of paper

RNs are required to provide their results for each funded paper at the end of each semester. VHF organisations are to support this process and ensure relevant documentation is received by Taranaki DHB.

Before applying, consider your post-approval responsibilities

- It is your responsibility to ensure you understand your obligations concerning your study
- Ensure you are enrolled with the tertiary provider and course approved for funding.
- Be aware that some papers have capped numbers – apply early, you can always change your options down the track.
- University course fees are paid directly to the academic provider by the TDHB.
- Notify your employer and the PG Coordinator as soon as you have your study day dates for rostering and payment purposes.
- TDHB staff request study leave via Stargarden, entering PG study leave in the comment box.
- Inform the PG Coordinator when you change position, FTE, employment, surname.
- Inform the PG coordinator and tertiary institute immediately if there are any changes to my enrollment (e.g. withdrawal, cancellation of paper, change of semester)
- If withdrawal from a paper is needed, every effort to access a full refund prior to the tertiary institute's withdrawal cut off dates will be made
- If the nurse fails to complete the paper (for reasons beyond fair and reasonable) the nurse accepts they may be required to repay any funding received by TDHB
- Provide a copy of course results to the PG Coordinator at the end of each semester.
- Complete a short survey monkey for HWD at the end of each semester.
- Agree to disseminate knowledge gained to relevant nursing forums through teaching sessions in both clinical and wider settings or complete a quality improvement related to the study involved
- Travel and accommodation subsidy:
 - ✓ The travel and accommodation allowance is a subsidy only and does not necessarily cover all expenses. You may need to be creative, share and/or self-fund some expense.
 - ✓ Travel and accommodation expenses will only be reimbursed on submission of a tax receipt.
 - ✓ Travel and accommodation expenses can include fuel, plane tickets, taxi, bus, parking, accommodations, etc – a tax invoice is always required.
 - ✓ TDHB staff submit travel and accommodation claims to the PG Coordinator by completing a Reimbursement of Expenses Claim Form available on Wilson > Forms
 - ✓ Non provider arm external RNs submit travel and accommodation claims to their respective employers. Your employer will invoice the TDHB at the end of each semester for reimbursement.

Finally, a note about undertaking postgraduate study

Postgraduate study can facilitate career specialisation, development of managerial skills, or a move into roles in areas such as education, midwifery, becoming a nurse practitioner or health research.

With awareness comes choice.....

With education comes awareness of where you might take your nursing career. For many nurses, gaining registration is just the beginning of a career of life-long learning.

For most health professionals, postgraduate study is vital to career advancement. Nurses and their employers can see it as an investment in their professional future. Postgraduate nursing education internationally is seen as an important aspect of career development and lifelong learning. Postgraduate education has a positive impact on the health outcomes for clients through evidence-based care provision – sound like your kind of practice?

All very well you may say but what about.....

- I already have a student loan. Why would I want to add to that?
- I just want to get on and have a life now I've finished my degree.
- I came nursing to be a nurse not a student.
- I may not get any more pay so why bother.
- I've been nursing for 10, 15, 20+ years and haven't need to so why start now
- I've been nursing for 15, 20+ years and am too old to start now.

These things may be your reality however new realities must be considered. If you are aiming at a career as a nurse anywhere in the New Zealand workforce, you will be required to maintain competency and the evidence that proves your competency. One way of providing that evidence is by continuing to engage in ongoing professional development in the form of an education programme. If you are heading in the direction of becoming a Nurse Practitioner, you will need to plan your clinically focused master's study. Other compelling reasons for ongoing education are that if you are involved in education it means:

- You can learn to understand something you've always known in a new way
- You can practice knowing you are informed by the latest evidence
- You have the opportunity to meet with peers to discuss your ideas.
- You have an excuse to take over the home computer.
- You can legitimately get your family to pick up after themselves.
- You have an excuse to go to the library to read and think
- You can progress in your organisation and make a contribution to health care in New Zealand.
- You can have your exploration of knowledge facilitated by nurse leaders.

- You can attend conferences because you will know when they are on and who is presenting at them.
- You can move up in the professional development recognition pathway giving you access to a wider range of career choices in nursing.
- You can be a role model for your children.
- You can actively participate in being the best person and registered nurse you can be.
- The bottom line is you have more choices.....

The challenge that some nurses' face is the identification of just what is available in their area of interest. As a student and a consumer, you need to know what the programmes offered will give you in terms of qualification, credits towards a higher programme and nursing competencies. Discuss your career aspirations with your manager / educator. Talk to the nurse academics offering the programmes and other students. Remember with awareness comes choice.....

Dr Kathy Holloway (n.d.)

Postgraduate education in New Zealand can be different to that offered overseas. Please do seek out assistance with understanding about study with your manager, Clinical Nurse Educator or PG Coordinator. Every education provider will also offer advice and resources to help you. There is pastoral care, library advice, academic advice and course/programme guidance available. Check with your provider of choice what the timeframes are to complete postgraduate qualifications. This will help you plan your programme of study.