



John Flynn Placement Program 2011 Guidelines

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1. General Information

The John Flynn Placement Program (JFPP) was established in 1997. The JFPP, funded by the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA), is an important part of the Australian Government's strategy to attract more doctors to rural and remote areas where there is a current workforce shortage. The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) administers and coordinates all aspects of the program on behalf of the Government.

In 2011 there will be 300 new placements available for enrolled medical students.

The placement program provides financial support to enable medical students to:

- form a long-term relationship with a rural community; and
- gain a better understanding of rural medical practice and health care services.

The cost of travel and accommodation to and from placement is covered by the program. An amount of \$500.00 per week is also paid to students to cover food, living and leisure expenses while on placement.

By undertaking a placement in the same community for a minimum of two full weeks per year, normally over a four-year period, students gain first hand experience of living in rural Australia. Students may undertake their placement in a variety of health facilities.

Each student is matched with a medical practice in a rural or remote area. A qualified medical practitioner acts as their "mentor" while on placement. The mentor acts as a role model for the student, introduces them to rural/remote medical practice and offers guidance and support while on placement.

The local community is a vital part of JFPP.

"Community contacts" assist students with social and cultural introductions in the local area which encourages involvement with the

community. Interacting socially with the local community helps students establish friendships and a strong bond with their placement community. Your stay will also include a "community host" if you choose home stay accommodation.

2. Allocation of Placements

Placements are distributed across 20 university medical schools. Each year, the number of new placements allocated to universities is determined by DoHA, which sets a quota based on the number of Commonwealth supported medical places allocated at each university.

3. Eligibility for the JFPP

Students applying for the JFPP will be assessed against the following eligibility criteria.

Applicants must be:

- an Australian citizen or a permanent resident; (Please note that New Zealand citizens residing permanently in Australia are also eligible to apply under the reciprocal immigration agreement between Australia and New Zealand for the JFPP);
- enrolled in an accredited medical program at one of the 20 participating universities;
- able to complete eight weeks of placements in the same community within four years; and
- able to complete placements in university breaks.

You will be ineligible for the JFPP if you are:

- unable to complete eight weeks of placements in the same community within three or four years.
- in receipt of a grant/scholarship which includes funding for community bonding or other community placement experiences;
- unable to provide supporting documentation; or
- unable to undertake the necessary cultural awareness training.

4. Other Scholarship Schemes

Medical students who currently hold a vacation scholarship to encourage community bonding may apply for the JFPP but will be required to forfeit their existing scholarship to receive a John Flynn Placement.

Students who hold scholarships that provide financial support for living and other expenses during their medical studies for example: Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS), Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRB), Bonded Medical Places (BMP) or Puggy Hunter Scholarship may also be eligible for a JFPP.

5. Selection of Students

Selection Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate:

- willingness to participate in and learn about rural and remote communities and medical practices;
- willingness to undertake cultural awareness training;
- ability to be open minded, adaptable and pro-active;
- willingness to expand personal boundaries and move out of personal comfort zones; and
- how they will work through personal challenges.

Students need to demonstrate how they meet the selection criteria. Some ways in which they may do this are to:

- have general membership and a commitment to their university's Rural Health Club (where there is one);
- demonstrate previous experience or have an interest in rural practice;
- provide reasons why they want to experience rural and remote medicine and its communities;
- provide examples of how they have demonstrated their ability to be open minded, adaptable and pro-active;

- describe ways they believe they will contribute to a rural and remote community and its medical practice.

All applicants will be required to submit an online application via the ACRRM website and provide the names of two character referees.

Selection of successful applicants will involve a two step process:

1. All applications are assessed against eligibility criteria by qualified external markers employed by JFPP. The top 80% of written applications for quota places at each university will automatically be selected into the program.

2. The remaining 20% of JFPP places at each university will be decided by interview with at least two students being interviewed for each available place.

Typically the panel consists of a rural representative from:

- the Rural Clinical School, University Department of Rural Health or Rural Undergraduate Support and Co-ordination Program from medical or health programs;
- a rural medical practitioner; and
- the university's Rural Health Club or a previous JFPP student.

Interviewed applicants from each medical school will be ranked against the selection criteria to determine those who are successful. The top interviewees at each university will be offered a place according to the remaining quota for that university.

All applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application.

If a student declines the offer of a place the applicant ranked next highest at that university will be offered the placement.

6. Appeals Process

Applicants may appeal on the grounds that they believe their application was incorrectly or unfairly assessed. Applicants must write to

ACRRM within 14 days of the date of notification that they were unsuccessful and outline the reasons they consider the decision to be unfair. ACRRM will organise for the appeals to be processed.

Students who have been unsuccessful in obtaining a place in the program are also entitled to receive feedback on their application. To obtain feedback a request must be sent to the JFPP team within one month of being notified of their application outcome.

7. Placements

JFPP students will normally undertake four annual placements of two weeks each in the same community. However, subject to approval by ACRRM and the mentor, students may undertake their eight weeks of placements over a three year period, if this will assist them to complete the program. Placement arrangements must be agreed to by the mentor and ACRRM.

Placements must occur in a community classified as ASGC-RA 2 to 5 under the Australian Standard Geographical Classification system (see Section 22 for more information on ASGC-RA classifications).

Students may be placed in a variety of medical settings including general practice, Aboriginal Medical Service, community health care centre, hospital or a combination of these in all states and the Northern Territory. If students desire an Indigenous experience they are advised to complete the additional questions for Northern Territory and Broken Hill on the JFPP application form.

Students may only initiate arrangements to go on their placement after first contacting their mentor and agreeing on a time that is mutually convenient.

Please note that some placements undertaken in the Northern Territory and Broken Hill may have a high turnover of mentors because of the isolated location of these placements. As a result, whilst every endeavour is made, it cannot

be guaranteed that students placed in these locations for an Indigenous experience will return to the same community and/or mentor for each of their subsequent placements over the four year period. Students may also have more than one mentor over the placement years.

Nevertheless, a Northern Territory or Broken Hill placement can be a rewarding and a challenging experience, both personally and logistically.

As a result, students should be mindful that placements undertaken in the Northern Territory and Broken Hill require participants to be flexible, open minded, creative and adaptable to ensure a positive placement experience. Please note that placements in these locations require six months' notice to ACRRM in order for the necessary arrangements to be processed. For placements in the Northern Territory, you will be required to commit to a minimum of four weeks for your first placement.

Approval will not be given for split placements into two one-week blocks, as this does not provide sufficient time for students to establish relationships with their community.

Students who are studying at a university that provides opportunities for rural clinical or elective attachments as part of their medical program and are undertaking the attachment in their JFPP community, may apply to ACRRM to:

- credit a maximum of two weeks per year of their university placement as a JFPP placement, providing approval has been granted by their university; or
 - arrange for the JFPP placement to occur immediately before or after the university placement. If approved, ACRRM will require confirmation that transport and accommodation costs are not being met by the university.
- As entitlements and arrangements vary between universities, applications must be made on a case by case basis by each student.

Students may undertake extended placements for up to four weeks a year in an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander health service or community, provided this is supported by the health service, the community and approved in advance by ACRRM. However, students should aim to complete their eight weeks over at least three years.

The minimum eight weeks of placement for all students must be completed by February following the final academic year of their medical program.

8. Student Travel and Accommodation

The cost of travel and accommodation from the students university home state to and from the placement, via the most direct and economical means available, is covered by the program. Travel plans must be made by first consulting with the mentor and agreeing on a convenient placement date and then notifying ACRRM using the online travel booking form. All necessary travel and accommodation will then be arranged by ACRRM and their travel management agent.

Students are encouraged to stay in local hospital/nursing quarters, in accommodation provided by Rural Clinical Schools or with local host families as it has been found that these accommodation options reduce isolation and allow for a more integrated rural experience. Students are guaranteed a private room however some facilities eg kitchen and bathroom may be shared. Students should be aware that if this style of accommodation is not preferred, alternative accommodation options may be limited or even unavailable, particularly in tourist areas during peak season.

Students are required to provide a minimum of six weeks notice to ACRRM in order for the necessary arrangements and payments to be processed. Students who are placed in the Northern Territory or Broken Hill need to provide a minimum of six months notice prior to submitting a placement request. A Travel Request Form, available on the JFPP web page, must be submitted. It is not possible for

arrangements to be put in place if this timeframe is not followed or if the Travel Request Form is not completed. Once travel arrangements are confirmed students are responsible for all costs associated with changes in booked travel arrangements.

No student will be permitted to undertake their placement unless they have arranged indemnity insurance for the period of their placement. A copy of the policy must be provided to the JFPP team before going on placement and a copy should also be taken with you.

On occasions placements may need to be rescheduled owing to adverse conditions such as flood, bushfire, cyclone or transport disruptions. Such situations are determined by ACRRM and, if cancellations are made in the interest of student safety, the rescheduled placement may need to be taken at another time during the year.

9. Evaluation Survey and Placement Report

Students are required to complete an electronic placement evaluation survey within six weeks of completion of each placement. This is available online via the JFPP web page.

Mentors and community contacts are also provided with an evaluation form which they are encouraged to complete. This enables ACRRM to monitor the placements and identify opportunities for improvement.

Students are also required to submit an electronic journal or short report about their placement experience. It is a mandatory requirement of the program that students complete an evaluation survey and placement report for each placement.

10. Placement Community Selection

An evaluation of each community is undertaken to determine its suitability to host students.

Successful applicants are involved in a placement process that allows for a choice in the size of town, health service/GP placement

type and specific healthcare settings the student would like to experience. While every effort is made to ensure that the placement is of mutual benefit to the student, mentor and community, due to the large numbers of students being placed, it is not possible to specify a particular town. Placement priority is given to students who wish to undertake their placement in their university home state.

If a student does not wish to accept the allocated placement community, the student will be required to forfeit the Program and their place will go to the next ranked student from their university.

Once a student is matched to a particular community they cannot change, unless there are extenuating circumstances and approval is granted by ACRRM.

11. Ongoing Eligibility

In order to remain eligible for the JFPP, each student must continue to:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident;
- be enrolled in an accredited medical program;
- undertake the agreed placement (of at least two weeks duration) every 12 months;
- participate in activities arranged by the community contact;
- submit an evaluation form and placement report after each placement; and
- contribute to any evaluation surveys that are conducted for the JFPP.

Accepting another rural experience grant or scholarship while a JFPP recipient, may affect your eligibility to continue in the program.

Students who cease to meet the ongoing eligibility criteria will be withdrawn from the program. Students must inform ACRRM of any changes to their circumstances that may affect eligibility to remain in the program.

Students who are unable to fulfil the requirements of the Program due to unforeseen

circumstances (eg due to personal illness) will be allowed to withdraw from the program without penalty. Students will be able to retain any previous payments.

12. Inappropriate Conduct

Whilst on placement students are expected to comply with the standards of behaviour (clinical and non-clinical) that have been set by their medical schools.

If ACRRM receives a report or becomes aware that a student's conduct or behaviour is inappropriate it may, depending on the severity, take any or all of the following actions:

- obtain feedback from relevant parties including the mentor, student and community contact regarding the behaviour;
- counsel the student regarding the behaviour;
- change the student's placement location;
- inform the student's university.

In the first instance a written warning will be sent to the student as a caution regarding their conduct. This could result in a temporary suspension from the program.

If there is a continuation of the unacceptable behaviour already indicated, this could result in the permanent suspension of the student from the program.

Should the initial behaviour be deemed sufficiently serious, the student's place on the JFPP will be terminated immediately, regardless of whether any of the actions listed above are taken.

13. Complaints Management

Formal complaints need to be sent to ACRRM in writing within 14 days of the incident occurring.

The John Flynn Program Coordinator will investigate the matter by contacting all relevant parties, identify what action is to be taken and clarify the process if a formal complaint is to proceed. The Program Coordinator will then

adjudicate the situation and make recommendations. The Coordinator may seek the support of the Manager, Operations or other central office staff.

14. Deferred Studies

Students may defer their placement for up to one year, if they are granted a deferral of their studies by their university. Students must notify ACRRM in writing, accompanied by a letter from their university as confirmation. Requests for deferrals for other reasons may be considered by ACRRM. Students are not permitted to undertake any placements while deferred.

15. Withdrawing from the Program

If a student decides they are unable to complete the program (eg unable to complete their full eight weeks of placement in the allocated timeframe) they will be required to withdraw from the program. ACRRM will require written correspondence from the student stating that they are unable to complete the program and the reason they wish to withdraw. There are no financial penalties incurred for withdrawing from the JFPP.

Students will be withdrawn from the program if they do not comply with the ongoing eligibility requirements.

Students who decide to defer or withdraw from the program will not be penalised for their decision. As a matter of courtesy however, they are required to notify their mentor and community contact of their decision once they have informed the JFPP.

16. Student Transfer

Students who transfer to another medical school must notify ACRRM in writing as soon as possible and will be required to provide their new enrolment details. The JFPP and all associated arrangements will normally follow the student to their new university.

17. Additional Requirements

Students may be required to undertake a range of activities to encourage other students to consider rural practice as a career, as well as promoting the benefits of the JFPP to communities. These include:

- completing a yearly placement report that will be distributed to other students, mentors and community contacts;
- attending university presentations or careers days at secondary schools; and
- contributing to the JFPP Newsletter by providing extracts from the placement report or photographs of the placement experience.

After completing the program, students may be required to contribute information on a voluntary basis for use in longitudinal studies. This information is used to assess the long term effectiveness of the program. The information will also be used to report how many JFPP students subsequently take up practice in a rural area.

18. Student Payments

Prior to undertaking their placement, students will be paid \$500 per week to cover incidental expenses such as food and entertainment incurred while undertaking their placement. This allowance is generally paid four weeks prior to the placement date.

When a JFPP student wants to credit a university rural clinical (or elective) placement as a JFPP placement, they will require a letter from the university stating that the student is not receiving any funding for their placement (refer to Section 7). Students will receive their stipend payment if their placement is not funded by the university.

If ACRRM approves a request by a student to undertake a placement either side of their university rural clinical or elective placement (refer to Section 7), payments and honoraria for mentors and community contacts will be paid as normal. However these payments will not be made if the student is being funded through

their university placement.

ACRRM will arrange travel to and from the placement when the cost is not being met by the university.

19. Student payments – Tax, Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, AUSTUDY and Other Benefits

Although the payments awarded under the JFPP are exempt for the purposes of income tax assessment, they may be considered income for the purpose of assessing eligibility for Youth Allowance and other benefits. Students should seek advice from Centrelink on how the receipt of a John Flynn payment will impact their benefits.

The JFPP team is able to provide students with a statement of earnings letter upon request.

20. Role of Community Contacts and Community Hosts

Community Contacts and Hosts are an integral part of the program.

Community contacts are organisations or individuals who provide orientation and ongoing support to students and assist them with the social and cultural aspects of the community.

Community Hosts provide students with local 'home stay' accommodation. An application form is completed to ensure suitability to host students.

JFPP Community Hosts are paid \$100.00 (GST exc) per student per placement week for accommodation only. An additional amount of \$100.00 per week for food (breakfast & dinner only) is payable by the student from his/her allowance, directly to the host.

When staying in host accommodation students are required to:

- pay host \$200.00 per fortnight, in advance, as a contribution towards food;

- request usage and pay host for telephone and/or internet access;
- advise host with reasonable notice when breakfast and dinner are required; and
- enter and leave the host accommodation quietly, and with consideration for host security.

Community contacts will:

- be located in a region with an ASGC-RA 2 – 5. Categories can be found on websites such as the DoctorConnect site: www.doctorconnect.gov.au;
- have a good knowledge of the local region;
- recommend suitable rural doctors who may be interested in acting as JFPP mentors;
- organise student's participation in social and community events while on their placement;
- provide support with cultural awareness, student safety and advise on suitable, safe, local accommodation;
- be available to support the student throughout their placement; and
- liaise with other community contacts or mentors within the local community.

21. Community Contact Honorarium

In recognition of the supporting role that community contacts undertake, an honorarium of \$175.00 (GST exc) per placement week will be paid. To claim the honorarium the community contact is required to submit an invoice at the end the student's placement. This invoice must be submitted within one month of each placement.

22. Role of Mentors

Students are assigned to a mentor for each placement. The mentor acts as a role model and introduces students to rural/remote practice and the local health facilities in their region. The mentor is responsible for supervising and supporting the student by:

- providing work experience during the JFPP placements that are appropriate to the student's year of study; and

- creating opportunities for the student to interact with other health providers in the community.

Where the mentor is also acting as a community support/contact they adopt the role as outlined above (refer to section 20).

Mentors must be qualified medical practitioners who are located in an ASGC-RA 2 to 5 region and are required to complete an application process. ASGC-RA categories can be found on websites such as DoctorConnect*:

www.doctorconnect.gov.au

23. Change of Mentor

If, due to unforeseen reasons, a nominated mentor is unable to continue supervising a student, the placement practice or hospital should identify a replacement where possible and notify relevant parties, including the JFPP, as soon as possible. In the instance where a replacement mentor isn't available at the same practice or hospital, the student will be allocated, by ACRRM, to an available mentor at another location.

24. Mentor Honorarium

In recognition of the mentor's supervisory and supporting role, an honorarium of \$300.00 (GST exc) per placement week will be paid. To claim the honorarium the mentor is required to submit an invoice at the end the student's placement. This invoice must be submitted within one month of each placement.

The payment will not be applicable in the instance where a student has approval to credit their university clinical (or elective) placement as a JFPP placement and the cost is being covered by the university.

Further information about the John Flynn Placement Program may be obtained via the John Flynn page on the ACRRM website at www.acrrm.org.au or contacting the JFPP team on freecall 1800 231 231.

* No guarantee is given over the accuracy of websites with details of the ASGC-RA

Classification System. Where doubt exists over a location's classification, ACRRM will consult DoHA.

