

The Monash Graduate Association welcomes the Federal Government's decision to extend the Commonwealth Prac Payment program to students across nine additional allied health fields. From 1 July 2027, Monash graduate students studying clinical psychology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and pharmacy will be entitled to financial support during mandatory placements.

Placement poverty remains a significant and well-documented challenge for graduate students at Monash and across Australia, and MGA's [research](#) shows that the situation is continuing to worsen. The Prac Payment of up to \$338.60 per week will provide meaningful compensation for students who are required to forgo paid employment in order to fulfil mandatory placement obligations. MGA thanks the Prime Minister and the Federal Government for recognising that adequate financial support is essential to student progression and workforce pipeline outcomes. This announcement reflects the kind of practical policy action MGA has called for, including through our advocacy for a higher HDR stipend and concession public transport fares for all full-time graduate students.

Notwithstanding this progress, significant gaps in the program's design remain. The eligibility criteria are unduly restrictive and will exclude many students who face genuine financial hardship during placements. Prac Payments are limited to domestic students enrolled in a Commonwealth Supported Place who already qualify for an Australian Government income support payment, such as Austudy or Youth Allowance, and who satisfy both a 'Need to Work' test, requiring demonstrated employment of at least 15 hours per week over the four weeks prior to placement, and an additional income test combining wages, government payments and scholarships.

Beyond these eligibility hurdles, substantial cohorts of students remain entirely excluded from the program. For instance, international students, including those studying in the very allied health fields the program is designed to support, will receive no benefit whatsoever, while medical students will not qualify for Prac Payments despite undertaking some of the most demanding clinical placement requirements in the sector.

MGA will continue to engage with government, parliamentarians and sector stakeholders to ensure that all graduate students, regardless of discipline, residency status or enrolment type, are supported to complete their studies and contribute to Australia's workforce and research capability.

Monash Graduate Association