



Our patients, Our practice - Excellent Care Every Day



Northern NSW Local Health District GradStart Nursing and Midwifery Honours Scholarship Program

2024 Program Guidelines

Background

Research is fundamental to the delivery of quality, patient-centred care. The Northern NSW LHD Nursing and Midwifery Service is continually developing, building, and supporting research capacity across the District.

Building research capacity is a strategic priority for the NNSWLHD Nursing and Midwifery Service with a particular focus on the following key areas:

- Advance research capability and promote research engagement within the service.
- Improve research capacity and research outputs within the service
- Build collaborative and strategic partnerships with research networks, organisations and institutions that are both internal and external to the service and district.
- Improve the standard and quality of patient care through the translation of knowledge gained from Nursing and Midwifery research and practice development.
- Continue to lead the development and translation of Nursing and Midwifery leadership and development research within the service.

Objective

The NNSW LHD Graduate Nursing and Midwifery Research Honours Scholarship program aims to support Bachelor of Nursing or Midwifery Graduates, who are interested in making research a part of their career, by providing them with part-time employment as a new graduate whilst they undertake the Research Honours program.

The goal of the program is to promote research in nursing and midwifery and support a successful transition from undergraduate student to Registered Nurse / Midwife. Together with the Faculty of Health, Southern Cross University, research opportunities with the NNSWLHD will explore patient centred care within the following domains:

- Our People (Workforce and Leadership)
- Our Clinical Practice
- Our Information Technology

The scholarship program aligns with the NNSW LHD Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Priorities and the NNSW LHD Nursing and Midwifery Research Plan by promoting research engagement and capability for innovative practice; increasing research capacity; increasing research outputs and supporting the translation of research into practice; developing a body of innovative research and celebrating Nursing and Midwifery research and novice research nurses and midwives.

Program Overview

1. 2-year Part Time Research Honours Program (including a Research Project) at Southern Cross University (1 unit per Term; 20 hrs per week)
2. 2-year Part Time GradStart Program within NNSW LHD (0.53 FTE /40 hours per fortnight, rotating roster, placement/s to be determined based on discipline)

NNSW LHD Commitments:

- Four-week block of full-time work at the beginning of the first placement in February 2024, which will include:
 - Ward Orientation and documentation
 - Identification and implementation of a preceptorship model to enhance support in the clinical area.
- The block is intended to support transition into the clinical environment, routine and team as well as begin the process of the consolidation of clinical skills and knowledge gained to date.
- The first 4 weeks will consist of Monday to Friday morning and afternoon shifts to facilitate increased support from the Clinical Nurse/Midwifery Educator and Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager.
- At the completion of the 4-week block, rostering will be week on and week off (40 hours per fortnight) to allow for ongoing transition and socialisation into the clinical environment.
- The week off will allow time to undertake required course work and research activities with the University.
- It is recommended that no night shifts are rostered for the first 12 – 16 weeks.
- During the first 12 months of the Program, the Research Honours graduates will attend study days in addition to clinical hours.

University Commitments

Bachelor of Health & Human Sciences (Honours) at the Southern Cross University:

The Bachelor Health & Human Sciences (Honours) Degree combines a research project with course work that is undertaken simultaneously. The online program comprises of six units of study (including two double-weighted units) focusing on literature reviews, research design, data analysis, research communication, and thesis preparation. **Please note: this undergraduate level degree has associated course fees that are not covered by the scholarship.**

Units of Study Overview

Students complete three units of study in their first year, commencing in Term 2. Students have Term 1 off to provide them with time to settle into their workplace unit at the hospital. Students will complete the 'missed' Term 1 unit in their second year.

First year

Students commence their coursework.

Literature Review: Develops students' literature review knowledge and skills in searching, critiquing, and synthesising scientific research. Students will learn to navigate electronic databases, create search strategies, and organise research using reference management systems. Students will also learn to evaluate the strengths and limitations of scientific research. Finally, students will learn to establish a knowledge gap based on the available scientific evidence.

Research Design: Develops students' knowledge and skills of health and human sciences research methodology. Students will gain an appreciation of research ontology, epistemology, and theory. Students will also learn about designing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research. Finally, students learn about the principles of research integrity.

Data Analysis: Develops students' data and statistical analysis knowledge and skills in health and human sciences. Students will conduct quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods analyses on relevant simulated datasets. Students will learn about inferential analyses using standard statistical software, inductive and deductive analyses, and how research can integrate quantitative and qualitative data using mixed methods approaches.

Research Communication: Develops the skills necessary to communicate scientific research in health and human sciences. Students will learn to write scientific manuscripts for publication and about the peer-review process. Students also learn about ways they can translate their research findings in academic and practical settings. Finally, students will create research profiles to promote research translation and increase their visibility within the scientific community.

Second year

Students commence their research project under the supervision of academic supervisors.

Health and Human Sciences Thesis Project I*: Supports students during the project development phase of the research process. Students will comprehensively review the scientific literature to identify an evidence gap and design a suitable research project. Students will also progress their thesis towards completion under the supervision of expert academics.

Health and Human Sciences Thesis Project II *: Supports students during the project execution phase of the research process. Students will write a scientific manuscript and present their research findings to an academic audience. Students will also finalise their thesis under the supervision of expert academics.

This is an exciting opportunity to conduct research that has significant impact on the local healthcare service. Completing an Honours degree also significantly enhances your career prospects and provides a stepping stone to undertaking a Master of Research or Doctor of Philosophy.

*Double weighted (24 credit points)

Further information on this degree can be located on the SCU website course page: <https://www.scu.edu.au/study-at-scu/courses/bachelor-of-health-and-human-sciences-honours-3507040/>

Participant Support

- **University Principal Supervisor**
An academic staff member at Southern Cross University will supervise research projects
- **NNSW LHD /University Conjoint Nursing Research Academic**
This position will provide research mentorship and methodological support
- **Honours Course Coordinator**
The course coordinator oversees the degree, providing support to supervisors and students.
- **Clinical Mentor**
A clinical mentor for each of the participants will be identified by the Director of Nursing and Midwifery in their local facilities/service. The mentor role is best suited to a senior professional such as a Clinical Nurse Consultant with research experience. The role of the mentor is to share knowledge and expertise to support the professional development of the mentee.
(For further information regarding Mentorship roles and responsibilities, please refer to the Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) The Superguide: A Supervision Continuum for Nurses and Midwives).
- **Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager (NUM/MUM)**
The NUM will provide support to the participant and manage requirements of the program within the clinical unit. It is the role of the NUM/ MUM to roster according to the NNSW LHD commitments and the Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' (State) Award.
- **Clinical Nurse/Midwifery Educator (CNE/CME)**
The CNE will provide education support to the participant within the clinical unit.

- **Graduate Coordinators**
The participants are part of the GradStart Program in each facility/service.
- **NNSW LHD Nurse Manager Education**
This position is responsible for the coordination of the Program. The position is the contact person for the participants, facilities/services and Southern Cross University.

Scholarship details

\$20 000 This will be paid by Northern NSW LHD fortnightly as a stipend for two years.

Students who do not complete the Honours program will be required to repay any scholarship funding. The Bachelor of Health & Human Sciences (Honours) program has associated course fees that are not covered by the scholarship. Please see letter of offer for full conditions.