

POLICY DOCUMENT

BONDED MEDICAL PLACES (BMP) SCHEME POLICY

Background

The Bonded Medical Places (BMP) Scheme is intended to provide more doctors for areas experiencing doctor shortages.

Twenty five percent of all first year students entering medical school with a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) are allocated to the Scheme. Students accepting a BMP commit to working in a District of Workforce Shortage of their choice (outer metropolitan, rural or remote areas) for a period of time, equal to the length of their medical degree, less any credit obtained through scaling.

Students allocated to the Scheme are required to sign a Commonwealth Deed of Agreement before commencing their studies which outlines the service that they will need to complete after graduation.

Position Statement

AMSA believes that:

The Bonded Medical Places scheme is exploitative of prospective medical students and takes advantage of their desire to study medicine.

Policy

AMSA believes that:

1. The Bonded Medical Places Scheme will prove an ineffective way of addressing workforce shortages in the long term and should be abandoned.
2. The Bonded Medical Places Scheme potentiates stigma around rural and outer metropolitan practice, undermining the attractiveness of practice in these areas.
3. Other means of attracting doctors to areas of workforce need, which have been received positively by students, should be prioritised ahead of the Bonded Medical Places Scheme.
4. Prospective Medical Students are under-informed about the Bonded Medical Places when they sign the relevant Commonwealth deed of agreement.

5. Constant changes in the classification of Districts of Workforce Shortage make it inappropriately unfair for new Bonded Medical Places Scheme students to predict where they may work in the future.

Failing abolition of this scheme the existing Bonded Medical Places Scheme could be improved by:

1. Providing, at the time of application for a BMP place and again at time of signing as a BMP student:
 - a. standardised advice regarding the placement, obligations and legal implications; and
 - b. clear indications of what specialties can be pursued as a BMP graduate.
2. Providing all BMP students with:
 - a. appropriate funding that reflects the dramatic increase in BMP students to 25 percent of all Commonwealth Supported Places;
 - b. more incentives including educational, social and professional;
 - c. longitudinal support through networking and mentoring; and
 - d. increased opportunities for exposure to rural health prior to completing their return of service.

**This policy refers to the Australian Government's (non-scholarship) Bonded Medical Places (BMP) scheme and should be differentiated from the Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS) program.

*Policy adopted July 2011
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