

Postgraduate Scholarship Program Guidelines

The Child Safety Officer (CSO) Postgraduate Scholarships

The Department of Child Safety (DChS) is offering 30 scholarships to:

- **Category A** - People who are currently working for the department as a relatively new Child Safety Officer (CSO).
- **Category B** - People currently working for the department and aspiring to work as a CSO.
- **Category C** - People external to the department who aspire to work for the department as a CSO.

Applicants in the last two categories that have a relevant undergraduate degree (for example teaching, nursing, social science, behavioural studies and Indigenous primary health care), but do not meet the current mandatory qualification requirements for the CSO position, can apply.

DChS is seeking to meet critical staffing needs in regional, rural and remote locations by developing practitioners for professional child protection practice in these locations. This includes the delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in a culturally appropriate and responsive manner across the state.

The department is seeking to improve its capacity to meet identified critical service delivery needs. All individuals are encouraged to apply; however, if the number of applications exceeds the number of available scholarships, priority will be given to (in no particular order):

- applicants currently located or seeking employment in regional, rural and remote locations, outside the south-east corridor of the state
- current departmental employees that have recently commenced working with the department in a CSO role, in the last two years (Category A)
- current departmental employees aspiring to work as a CSO (Category B)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants
- applicants experienced in working with children, young people and their families.

The scholarship program will provide financial assistance to undertake the part-time Postgraduate Certificate in Children Protection, offered at the University of Queensland (UQ) and James Cook University (JCU) for the duration of 2008 academic year.

Scholarship entitlements

Successful scholarship recipients will:

- Receive an offer of one Department of Child Safety sponsored place in the Graduate Certificate in Human Services (Child Protection Practice) offered at University of Queensland (St Lucia) **OR** the Graduate Certificate in Child Protection at James Cook University (Townsville). There will be 15 scholarships offered at each university. Both courses will commence in first semester 2008 and will be for the duration of one academic year.

- Be compensated for expenses incurred to travel to the compulsory workshops at the universities and, if applicable, to attend a work placement as per the department's Travel Policy (17-3), Expenses – Travel-Travel Claims (210-1) and Domestic Travelling and Relieving Expenses (Directive No. 8/05)¹.
- Not be covered for any other costs incurred that are not covered in the travel policy and domestic travelling and relieving expenses directive. These additional expenses will be the scholarship holder's responsibility.

Successful applicants that fall into Category C will be asked to complete two field placements. The work placements will take place at a child safety service centre under professional supervision to assure a quality experience. The placement ensures every student has the opportunity to experience the role of a CSO and ensure the position is a good job fit. Work placement will also consolidate the university learning and allow practical application.

Scholarship conditions

The scholarship is subject to conditions outlined in the Scholarship Agreement, which is signed by the successful applicant and a representative of the DChS.

The Scholarship Agreement outlines the obligations of the scholarship holder to:

- undertake the course in the university offered and in the semesters offered
- if applicable, attend the work experience program in a child safety service centre
- if applicable, successfully undertake CSO selection process prior to receiving a scholarship place
- if assessed as suitable, successfully complete the course and then accept an offer of employment with the department in a location identified with recruitment needs
- if applicable, continue in employment with the department for a minimum of 18 months from the date of completing the course or remain in employment with the department for a minimum of 18 months from date of appointment.

Failure to comply with the conditions of the contract may attract a financial penalty and an obligation to repay the financial assistance provided.

Employment as a CSO with the Department of Child Safety

The department offers a competitive pay based on your skills and experience, generous allowances and financial incentives for working in rural and remote locations.

Information on the CSO role and the rural and remote incentives scheme can be found at www.childsafety.qld.gov.au

¹ Internal applicants can review both the policy and directive via the Intranet. External applicants will receive copies with their application information kit. For further information regarding entitlements, refer to the 2008 entitlements and conditions information sheet.

If you are unable to access this information via the Internet, please call the enquiry line on 07 3224 8310 and ask for an information pack to be posted to you.

Background to Postgraduate Certificate in Child Protection

A unique collaboration between James Cook University (JCU) School of Social Work and Community Welfare and the University of Queensland (UQ) School of Social Work and Applied Human Sciences led to a new postgraduate qualification in child protection, introduced in 2005. There are:

- The Graduate Certificate in Human Services (Child Protection Practice) offered at UQ.
- The Postgraduate Certificate of Child Protection Practice offered at JCU.

This course was developed collaboratively in response to an identified need in Queensland for specialist postgraduate education in child protection, in addition to undergraduate qualifications in social work and human services.

Deficiencies in professional training were identified at both the state and national levels through various inquiries (for example, the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) Inquiry into the Abuse of Children in Foster Care and the State Government Audit of Foster Carers). Practitioners working in the field have expressed a need for continuing professional development.

This postgraduate qualification fills a gap in current programs. The collaboration enables a combining of resources and expertise.

In developing this qualification, the universities were aiming at a range of markets including:

- relatively new practitioners within statutory and non-government child protection services who recognise the increasingly complex nature of this type of work and wish to upgrade their skills and knowledge
- graduates from a range of undergraduate degree programs (for example, social work, human services, psychology, social science, behavioural studies) wishing to upgrade their qualifications in order to specialise in child protection work
- professionals in related disciplines (for example, education and health) who have been identified in the CMC inquiry as having a future role in child protection work as part of the whole-of-government approach to child welfare.

University course information

There are four courses to complete as part of the University of Queensland and James Cook University's postgraduate qualification. For specific information on each of the four courses, please refer to the relevant university's website or the additional information provided in the application kit.

Academic entry requirements

Each university determines prerequisite entry requirements for their courses. Generally, applicants must have completed a relevant undergraduate degree program. Applicants without a relevant degree may be eligible to apply on the basis of their academic record and work experience.

Applicants who have completed a relevant undergraduate degree (see University of Queensland course brochure for eligible undergraduate degrees) are not required to submit an application to the university until a formal scholarship offer is made.

However, applicants who have not completed a relevant undergraduate degree may apply for a scholarship, but they will be required to make application directly to one of the universities (refer to the relevant university's brochures) for determination of their eligibility before their application for a scholarship will be considered.

Applicants who wish to seek advice about their eligibility prior to submitting an application should contact one of the participating universities.

Departmental applicants who are ineligible for admission to this postgraduate qualification could consider other study options that may be supported under SARAS.

Scholarship eligibility

DChS staff that satisfy the academic entry requirements for this postgraduate qualification and meet the eligibility requirements for the department's Study and Research Assistance Scheme (SARAS) are invited to apply for a scholarship in the 2008 academic year.

External applicants who satisfy the academic requirements for this postgraduate qualification, as well as meet further selection criteria described below, are invited to apply for a scholarship in the 2008 academic year.

Please read the eligibility information which applies to your situation:

Category A – Currently employed as a CSO with the DChS

To be eligible to apply for a graduate scholarship, applicants should:

- demonstrate a commitment to continuing employment with DChS
- be a permanent employee or a temporary officer appointed for 12 months or more
- have begun working with the department in the past 2 years
- be eligible for admission to the university postgraduate course
- be available for part-time study and, in particular, be available to attend all of the compulsory workshops.

Category B – Currently employed with DChS and aspires to progress to a CSO position

To be eligible to apply for the scholarship program, applicants should:

- successfully undertake the selection process to become a CSO as part of the scholarship application
- be a permanent employee or a temporary officer appointed for 12 months or more
- provide certified evidence of an undergraduate degree from a recognised tertiary institution and provide a certified copy of the relevant academic record
- be eligible for admission to the university postgraduate course
- be available for part-time study and, in particular, be available to attend all of the compulsory workshops
- successfully complete and pass the skills workshop module of the graduate course to be eligible to continue with the proceeding four modules.

- **Category C – Individuals external to the department who aspire to work for the Department of Child Safety as a CSO.**

To be eligible to apply for the scholarship program, applicants should:

- successfully undertake the selection process to become a CSO as part of the scholarship application
- provide certified evidence of an undergraduate degree from a recognised tertiary institution and provide a certified copy of the relevant academic record
- be eligible for admission to the university postgraduate course
- be available for part-time study and, in particular, be available to attend all of the compulsory workshops
- be available to attend two work placements. These placements will take place at two different child safety service centres under professional supervision of a child protection practitioner, to assure a quality learning experience, giving every student the opportunity to experience the role of a CSO and ensure the position is a good job fit for each student
- successfully complete and pass the skills workshop module of the graduate course to be eligible to continue with the proceeding four modules
- have a positive return of Criminal History checks, which is a requirement of all child safety staff.

Scholarship details

Course program

Students must successfully complete the four subjects to be awarded the postgraduate qualification.

Though the preferred study program is two subjects per semester with completion in one year, consideration will be given to applicants wishing to complete the course over two years. It should be noted that the entitlements of this scholarship program only apply to study in 2008. At this stage, any subject/s undertaken in 2009 will need to be applied for under the Department's Study Research and Assistance Scheme (SARAS).

As the completion of at least one first semester subject is a prerequisite for second semester subjects, applications for less than 12 months study cannot be considered.

Study mode

In 2008, the course will be offered part-time and delivered via on-campus workshops and online teaching technologies.

For department staff: as participation in the course will be linked to the learning objectives outlined in the applicant's Performance Learning Plan, it is anticipated that workplace online access will be available for study purposes and that some study release time will be negotiated.

Financial support

Scholarship holders will be provided with financial support in the form of upfront payment of course and student union fees, as well as payment of the costs incurred for travel to compulsory workshops and, if relevant, to work placements prior to the successful completion of the course of study.

For department staff: in comparison under the SARAS, financial support does not cover all course costs or costs incurred for workshop attendance and reimbursement occurs only when the subject has been successfully completed and satisfies the course requirements of the institution that the course of study is undertaken.

Leave assistance

Study leave on full salary will be granted to departmental employees for attendance at the compulsory three day workshop for each subject. Scholarship holders that will need to be away from home will be granted additional leave for travel (as required).

Under this scholarship program, and as required, part-time employees will also be granted full salaried leave for compulsory workshop attendance.

Line management support

Departmental applicants are required to consult with supervisors/team leaders/managers about the relevance of the new postgraduate qualification to their identified learning and development needs. Applications that do not have line management support cannot be considered.

Where there are a number of applications from a workgroup/service centre or zone, the Zonal/Executive Director will consider the approved priority criteria in making a determination on which applications will progress. Where applicants do not gain a place under this scholarship program because of the high level of demand, and it is operationally convenient, managers may consider applications to undertake this course under the current departmental SARAS (before proceeding with an application for SARAS applicants should note the differences in entitlements).

Where the Zonal Director or Manager/Supervisor does not support an application, feedback on the reason for this decision will be provided.

Employee obligations

In applying for the scholarship, departmental employees and managers have a joint responsibility to ensure that:

- the attainment of this qualification will directly assist the employee in the performance of his/her duties, as well as improve the employee's career path and opportunities
- the employee has the capacity, both personally and professionally, to successfully complete this course of study in the stated timeframe.

Employees and their managers will be required to sign the application form to meeting this joint responsibility.

In addition, scholarship holders will be required to commit to undertaking some form of workplace activity that will share some of the knowledge and skills gained with the workgroup (for example oral presentation, discussion group, research and literature overview, special project etc).

Scholarship options

Scholarships are to be equally distributed between James Cook University and the University of Queensland. The course has been developed collaboratively and, although there are differences in the award title, the subjects, learning outcomes and mode of teaching are identical.

The department will fund costs incurred for compulsory three day workshop attendance. Therefore, applicants may be offered a scholarship at either university, thus requiring attendance at a workshop in Townsville, Cairns or Brisbane. Rural and remote applicants, other than those from the south-west part of the state, will be offered a scholarship at James Cook University, as well as some Brisbane-based applicants.

If requested, special consideration will be given to personal circumstances in determining which university placement is to be offered.

Employment changes

When a scholarship holder is transferred in a temporary or permanent capacity to a new workgroup or position during the academic year, prior to taking up the new appointment, they are required to:

- contact the Human Resources Branch to discuss any implications the change may have on the scholarship conditions.
- advise the new manager/supervisor of the scholarship holder's obligations and commitments agreed to in the current workgroup. As the statement of commitment is considered a joint responsibility, a new document must be negotiated and signed.

Scholarship application and selection process

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available sponsored places in the course, the department will offer scholarships to eligible employees and external applicants, across all Zones, who have an ongoing commitment to working in the department, with consideration against the following criteria:

- The extent that the provision of specialist child protection knowledge and skills will enable the employee to meet definable service delivery needs, now or in the near future, as outlined in the employee's Learning and Development Plan.
- Applicants who are Aboriginal applicants and Torres Strait Islander, from regional, rural and remote locations or relatively new practitioners and whose primary degrees have not offered specialist knowledge and skill in child protection practice.
- Applicants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- The ability of the applicant to successfully complete the proposed study program within the stated timeframe.
- There demonstrated commitment of the applicant to a career in the department.

The Human Resources Branch will coordinate the processing of scholarship applications and facilitates the university application process.

Prior to making an application for a scholarship, it is recommended that applicants read the following information as it applies to their situation:

Category A – Currently employed as a CSO with the DChS

Applications submitted by CSO employees will be required to provide:

- a completed Postgraduate Certificate in Child Protection scholarship program for 2008 academic year application form, signed by their Manager/Supervisor and their Zonal/Executive Director
- a copy of their resume
- a cover letter, including a statement detailing their reasons for applying for a scholarship.

The package is to be sent to:

Human Resources Branch
Department of Child Safety
Scholarship Applications
GPO Box 806,
Brisbane QLD 4001
By Friday 7th December 2007

Interested departmental staff must ensure they have a current Performance Learning Plan that demonstrates the relevance of undertaking the postgraduate qualification to meeting specified learning objectives as outlined in the plan. Applicants must consult with their Team Leader or Manager if they have any questions about this.

Category B – Currently Employed with the Department and aspires to progress in to a CSO position

Applicants who are departmental staff wishing to bridge their qualifications to help them to meet current mandatory qualification requirements to become a CSO are required to provide:

- a completed Postgraduate Qualification in Child Protection scholarship program for 2008 academic year application form, signed by their Manager/Supervisor and their Zonal/Executive Director
- complete CSO application requirements as detailed on the website www.childsafety.qld.gov.au under Becoming a Child Safety Officer
- a cover letter including a statement detailing their reasons for applying for a scholarship.

The package is to be sent to:

Human Resources Branch
Department of Child Safety
Scholarship Applications
GPO Box 806,
Brisbane QLD 4001
By Friday 7th December 2007

Short listed applicants will be interviewed either telephone or face-to-face.

Successful applicants from the interviews will need to be preliminarily deemed suitable for a CSO position, before they can be offered a scholarship.

Interested departmental staff must ensure they have a current Performance Learning Plan that demonstrates the relevance of undertaking the postgraduate qualification to meeting specified learning objectives as outlined in the plan. Applicants must consult with their Team Leader or Manager if they have any questions about this.

Applicants not employed in a Professional Officer position or with the department will be required to provide certified copies of their Tertiary Qualification and academic record.

- **Category C – Individuals external to the department who aspire to work for the Department as a CSO.**

Individuals external to the department wishing to bridge their qualifications to enable them to meet current mandatory qualification requirements to apply for a CSO position will be required to provide:

- a completed Postgraduate Qualification in Child Protection scholarship program for 2008 academic year application form, signed by their Manager/Supervisor and their Zonal/Executive Director
- complete the CSO application requirements as detailed on the website www.childsafety.qld.gov.au under Becoming a Child Safety Officer
- a cover letter including a statement detailing their reasons for applying for a scholarship
- a supporting written statement from a referee.

The package is to be sent to:
Human Resources Branch
Department of Child Safety
Scholarship Applications
GPO Box 806,
Brisbane QLD 4001
By Friday 7th December 2007

Short listed applicants will be interviewed either telephone or face-to-face.

Successful applicants from the interviews will need to be preliminarily deemed suitable for a CSO position, before they can be offered a scholarship.

Applicants will also need to submit a signed criminal history check. These checks are mandatory and will be undertaken by the department for applicants being considered for scholarship offers. You are required to disclose criminal history, including convictions which were not recorded or other charges, prior to accepting a scholarship offer from the department. A criminal conviction or charge will not automatically exclude you from being considered for a scholarship.

Successful applicants will also need to submit a tax declaration form.

Application forms and CSO selection criteria are available on the department's website

Applicants not employed with the department will be required to provide certified copies of their Tertiary Qualification and academic record.

Applicants who have not completed a relevant undergraduate degree will be required to make application directly to one of the universities for determination of their eligibility before their

application will be considered. The universities have confirmed they will provide a rapid response to applicants seeking departmental scholarships.

University of Queensland application forms are available from the School of Social Work and Applied Human Sciences.

Ph: (07) 3365 2507 or email socwork@social.uq.edu.au or

Online: www.uq.edu.au/swahs

James Cook University application forms are available from the Department of Social Work and Community Welfare

Tel: (07) 4781 4892

Email: Susan.Gair@jcu.edu.au

Online: www.faess.jcu.edu.au/swcw

Applicants wishing to seek advice on eligibility prior to making an application should contact:

Yvonne Darlington

UQ Postgraduate Co-ordinator

School of Social Work and Applied Human Sciences

PH: (07) 3365 2512

Dr. Debra Miles

JCU Head of Department

Social Work and Community Welfare

Ph: (07) 4781 5891

Granting of scholarships

A selection panel will be formed to consider the applications if the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places.

The Human Resources Branch will co-ordinate the approval of recommended scholarship offers, advice to applicants and the processes for the acceptance of scholarships.

Offer of scholarship

The Director-General will grant final approval for nominated scholarship applicants to be made an offer.

Advising applicants

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be advised in writing of the outcomes of their application.

On receipt of a scholarship offer to a particular university the scholarship nominee is required to submit an application for admission to the course to the relevant university, providing the university with a copy of the letter of offer.

If the scholarship nominee is not accepting the offer, written refusal of the offer must be sent to Human Resources Branch, to enable the place to be offered to another applicant.

Feedback to unsuccessful applicants will be provided on request. All efforts will be made to provide this advice to unsuccessful applicants in a timely manner to enable consideration of other options such as applying to undertake this or another course under the current departmental SARAS (prior to applying for SARAS applicants should note the difference in entitlements).

Acceptance of Scholarship

Successful applicants must notify their acceptance of the scholarship by providing the Human Resources Branch Director with the following information:

- a letter accepting the scholarship.
- confirmation of enrolment in the course at the nominated university.
- a copy of the signed Statement of Commitment and, if applicable, including details of the agreed workplace activity.
- a copy of the signed Scholarship Agreement
- a completed Declaration #12 Fringe Benefits Tax Expense Payment Declaration for 1st semester. A second copy of this form will need to be completed at the beginning of 2nd semester.

Should an employee who has accepted a scholarship and, due to unforeseen circumstances, is unable to take up the scholarship or wishes to change the proposed study program, the employee must notify Human Resources Branch. It is essential that such advice be provided before the commencement of 1st semester to enable the scholarship to be offered to another applicant.

Withdrawal from a subject after the commencement of the course or withdrawal from 2nd semester subjects, which have a pre-requisite of completion of either of the 1st semester subjects, significantly disadvantages unsuccessful applicants and will impact on the achievement of some of the critical outcomes of this scholarship program. Applicants who have any doubt about their capacity to complete a 12 month course of study should give this serious consideration before accepting the scholarship.

Course Enrolment

Following confirmation of enrolment applicants will receive relevant course information and resources from the relevant university. Fees will be billed directly to the department. Please note:

- enrolments for UQ course must be completed by the 14 January 2008
- enrolments for JCU course must be completed by the 8 February 2008

Compulsory workshop attendance

Departmental scholarship holders will be required to negotiate their leave with their managers to attend the workshops. Timely notification of managers is vital to organising backfill where considered necessary. Unfortunately, the scholarship program does not have provisions in the budget to cover back fill.

If there are further questions regarding leave, please contact Human Resources on 07 3224 8310.

All costs associated with workshop attendance will be borne by the department. Where possible, scholarship holders will be supported by their manager with assistance from administrative staff in their workgroup for booking travel and accommodation which would be charged to the Human Resources Branch cost centre. Prior to making arrangements, Human Resources Branch must be notified of the proposed travel and accommodation schedule.

Appeals

When applicants are dissatisfied with decisions related to the scholarship program, applicants should follow the department's grievance resolution process outlined in the Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure.

Study Assistance

Scholarship holders may be eligible for tutorial support and assistance from the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) under the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS). Scholarship holders wishing to access ATAS should contact either:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit
The University of Queensland
Telephone: (07) 3365 6699
Email: atsis@uq.edu.au

Or

School of Indigenous Australian Studies
James Cook University
Townsville QLD 4811
Phone: (07) 4781 4676
Email: schoolofindigenoustralianstudies@jcu.edu.au

Evaluation

Human Resources Branch will, in partnership with the universities, undertake an evaluation of the course at the conclusion of each semester. Managers/supervisors and scholarship holders will be asked to participate in the evaluation process.

For further information on the scholarship program please refer to other documentation available on the Internet or contact:

Maike van Beest
Senior Advisor
Ph: 3224 8310
Email: maike.vanbeest@childsafety.qld.gov.au

KEY DATES (Times are approximate and may be subject to change without notice)

Advertising Information kits dispatched to interested applicants - Applications close	Early November 2007 <u>Friday 7th December 2007</u>
Selection - Eligibility checks/screening - Shortlist of applicants - Interviews of bridging applicants to determine suitability for CSO - Criminal History check of external applicants	December 2007
Offers - Scholarship Offers for UQ and JCU places to be made - Successful recipients confirm acceptance of scholarship; If places become available: - Second round of offers for UQ and JCU places to be made	December 2007 December 22 nd 2007 January 2008
Enrolments finalised - UQ - JCU	January 14 th 2008 February 8 th 2008