

OFFICIAL

CLINICAL SPECIALISATION PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions



Government
of South Australia
SA Health



University of
South Australia

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About

The Clinical Specialisation Program provides opportunities for Registered Nurses and Midwives to undertake study in a 9-unit course in one of the following specialties:

- > Comprehensive Care of the Older Person
- > Best Practice in Adolescent Mental Health
- > Best Practice in Older People's Mental Health
- > Perspectives in Mental Health Practice
- > Palliative Care Nursing
- > Perioperative Nursing
- > Nephrology Nursing (Renal)
- > Introduction to High Acuity Nursing and Midwifery, with the option to choose one of the following streams*:
 - Emergency Nursing
 - Intensive Care Nursing
 - Cardiac Care Nursing
 - High Dependency Nursing and Midwifery
 - For Registered Nurses only
 - For Midwives only
 - Neonatal Nursing (for Registered Nurses and Midwives)

*Refer to the [Introduction to High Acuity Nursing and Midwifery](#) course page for entry requirements.

Where course demand is low, courses may be deferred by the University of South Australia (UniSA) and applicants rescheduled to the next available offering.

Who can apply?

Registered Nurses and Midwives employed by SA Health within metropolitan, regional, and rural South Australia can apply for the Clinical Specialisation Program.

Enrolled Nurses employed by SA Health and Enrolled and Registered Nurses and Midwives who are not employed by SA Health are ineligible.

Who is delivering the Clinical Specialisation Program?

The Clinical Specialisation Program has been co-designed in partnership with UniSA and SA Health. UniSA will deliver each of the Clinical Specialisation courses.

How much does it cost?

Successful applicants will receive a scholarship from SA Health to cover the cost of the tuition fees for one 9-unit course.

Any travel and/or accommodation expenses that may be incurred to facilitate experiential learning activities are not included in the SA Health scholarship.

Successful applicants are also responsible for purchasing any required learning materials and/or recommended textbooks for their chosen course.

Do I need approval from my line manager to apply for the Clinical Specialisation Program?

Yes, you will need to provide written support from your line manager and Director of Nursing /

Midwifery (or Nursing / Midwifery Director) to apply for one of the 9-unit clinical specialty courses. The required endorsement form will be available on the Clinical Specialisation Program and UniSA websites.

Do I need to currently be working in or have experience in the clinical specialty area to apply?

No *, you do not need to be working in or have experience working in the clinical specialty area to apply.

Please discuss with your line manager if they would be supportive of you undertaking study in a clinical specialisation outside your usual area of work.

*Some specialty streams of the Introduction to High Acuity Nursing and Midwifery course do require applicants to be working in the area. See the [Introduction to High Acuity Nursing and Midwifery](#) course page for more information.

Do I need to work full time to apply?

No, you do not need to be working full time. You can be working on a full-time, part-time or casual basis.

How do I apply for SA Health scholarship support to undertake the Clinical Specialisation Program courses?

Before you apply:

1. Review the UniSA Course overview for your preferred area of study located on the [Clinical Specialisation Program](#) website and linked UniSA course page.
2. Speak with your line manager about the Clinical Specialisation Program course you wish to pursue, and ensure you have their support to apply for SA Health scholarship support.
3. Ensure that your PR&D and Mandatory Training requirements are up to date.

Once you have completed steps 1- 3:

4. Submit your SA Health scholarship application form via the UniSA application form linked on the [Clinical Specialisation Program](#) course page on the SA Health Nursing and Midwifery Skills and Training Package 2022-2025 website. Ensure you upload a copy of your completed and signed endorsement form with your application.

Please ensure that all details in your application are correct before submitting so your application is not delayed.

What if the Clinical Specialisation Program course I wish to study is not yet accepting SA Health scholarship applications?

If the Clinical Specialisation Program course you wish to study is not yet accepting SA Health scholarship applications, you may complete the Expression of Interest (EOI) on the individual clinical specialty course page on the [Clinical Specialisation Program](#) to be notified once the SA Health scholarship applications open.

When will I know the outcome of my SA Health scholarship application?

You will receive a response to your SA Health scholarship application prior to the course commencement date.

If you do not receive an email, please ensure you check your junk email folder.

What if my application is successful?

If you are successful, you will receive a SA Health Nursing and Midwifery Office *Letter of Offer* recognising your success in obtaining a SA Health scholarship.

UniSA will contact you directly to progress your UniSA admission and enrolment into the relevant clinical specialty course.

Will I be eligible for study leave if I am accepted into the Clinical Specialisation Program?

You may be eligible for study leave. Please speak with your line manager about the options available to you.

Why do I need to provide financial information when I am a scholarship student?

The University system requires all students, including those studying under a Scholarship, to provide their financial details as part of the enrolment process. Once you have enrolled in your course, the system will generate an invoice based on your enrolment. The system will then identify that you are a scholarship recipient and your fees have been paid. No further action is required.

How long will the course take?

Each Clinical Specialisation Program course is 9-units and runs for 13 weeks with a 2-week mid-course break.

The specific teaching and assessment requirements differ for each course, and some may require weekly attendance at online teaching sessions, or face to face simulation. Please refer to the individual clinical specialty course pages on the [Clinical Specialisation Program](#) website and the linked UniSA course pages for more information.

How regularly are courses offered?

Courses offered in each Study Period will be determined by demand. Intakes for the clinical specialty courses will occur twice per year, commencing with a staggered approach in 2022. Teaching dates for 2024 and 2025 are as follows;

- > **Study Period 2 2024:**
 - Teaching commences on 26 February
 - Teaching concludes on 7 June 2024
- > **Study Period 5 2024:**
 - Teaching commences on 22 July
 - Teaching concludes on 1 November 2024
- > **Study Period 2 2025:**
 - Teaching commences: Monday 3 March 2025
 - Teaching concludes: Friday 13 June 2025
- > **Study Period 5 2025:**
 - Teaching commences: Monday 28 July 2025

- Teaching concludes: Friday 7 November 2025

Where course demand is low, courses may be deferred by UniSA and applicants rescheduled to the next available offering.

If you have leave booked during the Study Period, consider applying for a different intake. Planned leave bookings are not considered grounds for deferral.

Why am I being asked if I want to complete a Graduate Certificate in Nursing or Midwifery?

In the event you decide to continue your studies to be awarded a Graduate Certificate (one additional 9-unit topic), UniSA will need to know which stream (Nursing or Midwifery) to place you in. Your decision can be amended during your study, and you are not obliged to complete a further course.

What if I do not complete the course?

The SA Health scholarship is an investment in skills and training for nurses and midwives across SA Health.

As SA Health scholarships are offered to a limited number of applicants, SA Health may reserve the right to recover the SA Health scholarship fee if you do not complete all components of the 9-unit clinical specialty course.

If you need to defer your studies due to extenuating circumstances, please contact your UniSA course coordinator and the Clinical & Health Sciences team at chs-teachinglearning@unisa.edu.au to discuss your options.

Can I withdraw from the SA Health scholarship and Clinical Specialisation Program course I have enrolled in?

If you have been awarded a SA Health scholarship and have enrolled in the relevant Clinical Specialisation Program course, the last day to withdraw without penalty from both the SA Health scholarship offer and the Clinical Specialisation Program course is **11:59 pm of the Friday of the first week of teaching** (e.g. if Teaching commences on Monday 27 February, the last day to withdraw is 11:59 pm Friday 3 March). Please contact the [UniSA Clinical & Health Sciences](#) team to discuss your options.

Please be aware that SA Health reserves the right to recover the SA Health scholarship fee if you withdraw past this date, and you will be ineligible to apply for any further Skills and Training scholarship support.

Can I defer the SA Health scholarship offer and Clinical Specialisation Program course I have enrolled in?

Following a written application, [UniSA](#) will consider requests for deferrals in exceptional circumstances.

As long as you withdraw from the SA Health Scholarship offer and the Clinical Specialisation Program course **prior to 11:59 pm of the Friday of the first week of teaching** (last day to withdraw without penalty), you will be eligible to reapply for SA Health scholarship support for future Clinical Specialisation Program courses, by submitting a new SA Health scholarship application.

If you withdraw after this date you cannot reapply for any further Skills and Training scholarship

support.

Where can this study lead to?

Successful completion of a Clinical Specialisation Program course will provide a pathway to a Graduate Certificate qualification with UniSA. You may be eligible for recognition of prior learning (RPL). Please contact [UniSA Clinical & Health Sciences](#) for more information.

Am I eligible for a second SA Health scholarship?

To build on the foundations of the Clinical Specialisation Program, SA Health is providing additional scholarship funding to nurses and midwives who have demonstrated exemplary academic achievement in their studies.

The SA Health Recognising Academic Achievement Scholarships will provide additional scholarship funding for students completing a Clinical Specialisation Program Course to undertake a second 13-week, 9-unit Clinical Specialisation Program Course and be awarded a Graduate Certificate in Nursing/Midwifery (and where applicable Graduate Certificate in Nursing - Mental Health). Refer to the [Recognising Academic Achievement Fact Sheet](#) on the [Clinical Specialisation Program](#) website for more information.

Do I have to provide evidence of successful completion?

UniSA will provide the Nursing and Midwifery Office with the final grades from each Clinical Specialisation Program course. Please provide evidence of your successful completion to your Nurse/Midwifery Unit Manager.

Will I be eligible for an additional education allowance on completion of the Clinical Specialisation Program Course?

The completion of a Clinical Specialisation Program course or a Graduate Certificate (further 9-unit course) does not qualify you for an increase in salary. However, in accordance with the Nursing/Midwifery (South Australian Public Sector) Enterprise Agreement 2022, SA Health employees may be eligible for an additional qualification allowance. The eligibility criteria and conditions for additional qualifications are available in Appendix 12 of the Nursing/Midwifery (South Australian Public Sector) Enterprise Agreement 2022. Please note, an employee will only be eligible for payment of an allowance in respect of one qualification (the highest relevant qualification held).

For further information regarding eligibility criteria and conditions, please refer to the [Nursing and Midwifery Enterprise Bargaining Agreement](#).

Local Health Networks have an established local eligibility assessment and approval processes for the application of additional qualification allowance. Please refer to your line manager for further information.

For more information

Nursing and Midwifery Office
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