

Disability Scholarship Program

Guidelines

Department of Justice and Community Safety



To receive this publication in an alternative format [email the Inclusion and Intersectionality branch](mailto:inclusion&intersectionality@justice.vic.gov.au) <inclusion&intersectionality@justice.vic.gov.au>.

Available from the [Disability Scholarship Program webpage](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/careers/disability-scholarship-program) <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/careers/disability-scholarship-program>.



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Introduction

I am proud to support the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) Disability Scholarship Program, an initiative our department has led since 2007.

Here at DJCS, we recognise that students with disability can encounter barriers to achieving their academic and professional goals. We also acknowledge that our capabilities – both at DJCS and across the justice sector broadly – are strengthened and enriched through the participation of people who bring to the table lived experience and varied perspectives.

The DJCS Disability Scholarship Program provides the opportunity for Victorians with disability to keep working towards achieving their academic potential, gaining employment and participating in the Victorian justice sector. It also represents a further step towards the department achieving its vision of building a safer, fairer and stronger Victoria.

Embracing and championing diversity and inclusion in our own workplaces ensures that we are better positioned to deliver accessible, meaningful, well-designed services to the community we serve.

The DJCS Disability Scholarship Program will support Victorian students with disability to achieve their aspirations. I encourage all eligible students from tertiary institutions undertaking justice-related courses to apply for this program.

Kate Houghton PSM

Secretary
Department of Justice and Community Safety



About the Program

The Department of Justice and Community Safety is committed to play a leading role in helping shift attitudes and drive positive change around employment outcomes for people with disability.

A key initiative to support employment pathways for people with disability across all areas of justice and community safety is through our annual Disability Scholarship Program (the Program).

This initiative aims to support employment pathways for people with disability across all areas of justice.

Annual scholarships are awarded to Victorian students with disability studying at the diploma, advanced diploma, undergraduate or postgraduate level. Scholarships are offered in the following areas of study:

- Law
- Criminology
- Paralegal work
- Psychology
- Social work
- Other justice and community safety-related fields

Scholarships will only be offered for study at approved institutions within Victoria, or to Victorian residents who are engaged in accredited distance or online learning.

Scholarships will be awarded on merit, taking into account an applicant's eligibility, academic performance, career goals and aspirations, and the impact of the scholarship to achieve study and career goals.

Scholarships will be provided to eligible students in the form of a fortnightly study allowance to support full-time study for a maximum of two years. Where part-time study is undertaken support will be provided for a maximum period equivalent to two years full-time study.

For more information about the Disability Scholarship Program [email the Inclusion and Intersectionality branch](mailto:inclusion&intersectionality@justice.vic.gov.au) <inclusion&intersectionality@justice.vic.gov.au>.

Scholarships on offer

The Program will provide scholarships totalling \$60,000, distributed as follows:

- One major scholarship valued at \$20,000 per annum for two years or pro-rata payment where the recipient completes the course in under two years. The value of the scholarship over two years is \$40,000.
- Two minor scholarships valued at \$5,000 per annum for two years or pro rata payment where the recipient completes the course in under two years. The value of each of these scholarships over two years is \$10,000.

DJCS reserves the right to vary the number and value of scholarship awards.



Eligibility

To be eligible for a scholarship, an applicant must:

- Identify as a person with disability.
Disability includes physical, mental health, intellectual, neurological or sensory impairments which, when combined with other barriers (such as negative attitudes or inaccessible environments) may limit participation in society on an equal basis with others.
- Have been living in Victoria on a full-time basis for a minimum of two years before lodging your application.
- Can demonstrate financial hardship – this can include: bank statements or other proof of income, evidence of medical or disability related costs, a signed statement from a relevant social worker, counsellor, doctor or other party, or any other evidence you are comfortable providing to explain your circumstances.
- Declare, and provide details of, any scholarships currently awarded by the Victorian state government or non-Victorian government entities.
- If a current undergraduate student, demonstrate a minimum pass grade in all subjects undertaken in the last full semester completed before lodging your application.
- Be seeking a scholarship for an accredited course. All registered higher education providers and their courses are listed on the [National Register for tertiary education providers and courses](https://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register) <<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>>.

Undergraduate applicants

Undergraduate students are eligible to apply for a scholarship if they have successfully completed all units for:

- One year of a three-year full-time course (or part-time equivalent)
- Two years of a four-year full-time course (or part-time equivalent)
- Have not withdrawn from the course of study for which they are seeking the scholarship.

Postgraduate applicants

For postgraduate applicants to be eligible for a scholarship they will need to have successfully gained entry into a postgraduate course.

People ineligible for a scholarship

People are ineligible to receive a scholarship if they are currently:

- Completing a sentence through non-custodial means (for example parole)
- On bail
- Remanded in custody
- In lawful custody for committing an offence (in a Youth Justice Centre as defined under the **Children, Youth and Families Act 2005** or imprisoned in an adult correctional facility within Australia).



Cessation of the scholarship

Scholarship payments under this program shall cease:

- Should the recipient withdraw from the approved course of study
- If during the scholarship period, a recipient has a significant increase in their financial circumstances, and no longer experiences financial hardship.

Eligibility for payments from DJCS as part of this program shall cease from the date of employment commencement or withdrawal from the approved course of study.

Scholarship requirements

Scholarship recipients must provide proof in writing to the department of:

- Enrolment at the commencement of each academic year
- Continued enrolment at the educational institution and in the course of study throughout each semester
- Copies of results at the end of each semester
- Tax File Number
- Any change to their workload or contact details, address and telephone number (within 14 days of the change).

A scholarship will not be approved until the applicant is formally accepted into the course of study, as detailed in their scholarship application. Evidence of acceptance will be required in the form of written advice from the educational institution.

A scholarship recipient is required to complete the proposed course of study within the duration of the scholarship. Scholarship recipients will be required to demonstrate a satisfactory standard throughout the duration of the scholarship for both the academic and work placement, if undertaken. Failure in any subject in any semester may result in the scholarship being cancelled.

Additional documentation

Past academic results

An essential element in assessing an applicant's ability to complete their course of study for the duration of the scholarship is their past academic performance. Applicants will be assessed on their documented results from past studies, for example at the secondary or other academic level.

Academic reference

Each applicant is required to provide, as part of their application, an academic reference from a nominated referee who can provide an appraisal of their academic performance and ability.

Study load

The applicant is required to provide the department with written confirmation of the part-time or full-time workload status of their course of study from the educational institution at which they will be studying during the scholarship period.



Receipt of other scholarships

It is the responsibility of the applicant to immediately advise the department if they accept an offer of other financial assistance through a study scholarship after lodgement of their application.

Payments

Scholarship payments

The scholarship is paid fortnightly, with payments commencing at the start of the academic year. An initial payment will include any back payment of entitlements to the commencement of the academic year in the year during which the scholarship is awarded. Where part-time study is undertaken, payments will be made on a pro-rata basis.

Centrelink

It is the responsibility of each scholarship holder in receipt of Centrelink payments to advise Centrelink that they have been successful in securing a scholarship.

HECS or HELP Fees

Any Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) or Higher Education Loan Payment (HELP) fees associated with an applicant's study will be met by the applicant.

Taxation

Scholarship payments are not taxable. It is the responsibility of successful applicants to apply to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) for an individual private ruling for an exemption from income tax to the scholarship received through the Program.

Refer to the [ATO website for information on scholarship payments and tax](https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Income-and-deductions/In-detail/Income/Scholarship-payments-and-tax/)
<<https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Income-and-deductions/In-detail/Income/Scholarship-payments-and-tax/>>.

Application process

We will provide adjustments throughout the application process upon request. If you would like help understanding this process or would like to receive documents in another format [email the Inclusion and Intersectionality branch](mailto:inclusion&intersectionality@justice.vic.gov.au) <inclusion&intersectionality@justice.vic.gov.au>.

Completed application forms and all accompanying documentation need to be submitted by the closing date.

Every effort will be made to expedite the decision-making process promptly, and applicants will be notified of the result of their scholarship application in writing as soon as possible after the closing date.

The selection panel will make a comparative assessment of applications taking into account overall course relevance, previous academic performance, career aspirations and academic reference.



Key selection criteria

Applications will be assessed by the following criteria:

- Course of study and career aspirations are a logical trajectory for the student's skills, interests and goals.
- The potential of the scholarship to enhance ability to successfully complete the program of study.
- The applicant's previous academic performance indicates they will be able to successfully complete their studies to a high standard.
- The academic reference talks to the quality of the applicant's work.

Information collection

For information about how we collect and manage personal information, please see the [DJCS Information Privacy Policy](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/privacy/information-privacy-policy) <<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/privacy/information-privacy-policy>>.

The department branch collects personal information in this form for the purpose of enabling assessment of your Scholarship application. If you do not provide the information sought as part of the application process, your application may not be able to be assessed.

Personal information provided by you in applying for this scholarship will not be used for any other purpose beyond the assessment of your application for this Program.



Glossary of Terms

Accredited course	A course accredited through the educational institution or the Victorian Qualifications Authority and which complies with the Australian Qualifications Framework.
Approved Institution	An education institution as recognised under the Tertiary Education (Amendment) Act 1998 and/or the Vocational Education and Training Act 1990 .
Justice portfolio	<p>The Justice portfolio consists of business units and statutory entities aligned under key functions. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police and prosecution functions • Administration of the court system • Provision of the prison and community corrections services • Provision of youth justice services • Administration of various tribunals and agencies established to protect citizens' rights • Emergency management and provision of emergency services • Policy on gaming issues and the provision of legal advice to government. <p>Statutory entities within the Justice portfolio include such bodies as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) • Court Services Victoria (CSV) • Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) • Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) • Country Fire Authority (CFA) • Road Safety Camera Commissioner • Victoria Police (VicPol).
Victorian Public Sector (VPS)	The VPS comprises Departments and Administrative Offices of the Victorian Government as described in the Public Sector Management and Employment Act 1998 .