

# Voluntary Bonding Scheme Terms and Conditions for Sonographers 2015

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| 1. Introduction |
| 1.1. | The Voluntary Bonding Scheme (the Scheme) is an incentive based payment scheme that has been introduced by the Government to reward sonographers who remain in and work in New Zealand for three to five years after graduation. |
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| 1.2. | Graduates who are part of the Scheme are eligible for their first incentive payment after they have completed three years working in New Zealand. Funding is intended to help graduates repay their student loans (if they have them) within five years of graduating.  |
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| 1.3 | To be eligible for the Scheme, you must:* be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident at the time you register your interest in joining the Scheme
* have completed your final year of study in 2014 for your qualification for your profession at an accredited New Zealand Training Institution (clauses 1.7 to 1.10)
* be registered, or be eligible to be registered with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board
* be working, or intending to work, in the profession for which you have trained, for three to five years
* comply with all other terms and conditions of the Scheme.
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| 1.4. | Participation on the Scheme involves four phases: Registration of Interestconfirmation on the Scheme participation (employment)application for payment. |
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| 1.5. | In order to be eligible for payment, you must have had your Registration of Interest for the Scheme confirmed and have met the Scheme’s Terms and Conditions during the Participation phase (clause 4). |
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| 1.6. | You will not be eligible for any payment from the Scheme if you do not complete at least three full years (36 months) on the Scheme, in accordance with these Terms and Conditions. |
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| 1.7. |  The Scheme is a voluntary process and you, not the Ministry of Health (the Ministry), are responsible for any employment decisions you may make based on your intended participation in the Scheme. |
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| 1.8. | You are responsible for notifying the Ministry (or its nominated agent) of any change of address, email address or other contact details on an annual basis. |
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| Education Prerequisites |
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| 1.9. | You must:* have completed an undergraduate degree in medical imaging and/or a relevant health science qualification as accredited by the Medical Radiation Technologists Board AND
* in 2014, completed a postgraduate diploma in ultrasound from an accredited New Zealand tertiary institution AND
* be eligible to be registered as a sonographer with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board.
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| 1.10. | New Zealand citizens and permanent residents who gained their base professional qualifications from an overseas training institution in 2014 and who meet the registration requirements of the relevant Authority may be considered for the Scheme on a case-by-case basis, if they meet all other eligibility criteria and other Terms and Conditions of the Scheme. |
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| Definition of a Graduate |
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| 1.11. | Eligible graduates are those who completed their postgraduate diploma in ultrasound in 2014 and can provide evidence of having done so, irrespective of the date of their graduation ceremony. |
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| 2. Registration of Interest |
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| 2.1. | In order to be a participant on the Scheme, you must successfully register your interest and be confirmed on the Scheme (subject to approval of your application). |
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| 2.2. | To register your interest you must complete the online Registration of Interest application form. This involves providing information to show that you meet, or intend to meet, the eligibility criteria of the Scheme. |
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| 2.3. | A Registration of Interest is not an application for a place on the Scheme. The purpose of the Registration of Interest process is to provide information about your future work plans so that you can be considered for one of the places on the Scheme. See below for information on confirmation on the Scheme. |
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| 3. Confirmation on the Scheme |
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| 3.1. | There are limited places on the Scheme. Successfully registering your interest for the Scheme does not guarantee you will be confirmed on the Scheme. |
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| 3.2. | A separate process (following consideration of your application) to formally confirm you on the Scheme will follow your Registration of Interest. You will be advised in writing whether your Registration of Interest is confirmed. |
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| 4. Participation |
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| 4.1. | Once you are confirmed on the Scheme, your participation is influenced by your: * commencement date
* minimum employment requirements
* breaks and pauses
* parental leave and
* work you may undertake as a locum.

In order to be eligible to receive payment from the Scheme you must comply with the eligibility criteria for payment (clause 5). |
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| Eligibility Criteria |
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| 4.2. | To be eligible for the Scheme, you must:* have completed your postgraduate diploma in ultrasound
* be working or intend to work as a sonographer in any New Zealand community for the next three to five years.
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| Hard-to-Staff Communities and Hard-to-Staff Specialties/Professions |
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| 4.3. | As a sonographer you are working in a hard-to-staff profession. You may work in any community (region) in New Zealand. |
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| Commencement Date |
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| 4.4. | Your time on the Scheme is calculated from your Commencement Date of employment. Your Commencement Date is the date you begin working as a sonographer following graduation. |
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| 4.5. | If you have indicated in your Registration of Interest that you intend to gain employment as a sonographer, your Commencement Date is the date you begin employment as a sonographer. |
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| 4.6. | If you have not commenced employment in accordance with these requirements by **30 June 2016**, your confirmation on the Scheme will lapse and you will not be eligible for the Scheme in any later year. |
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|  Minimum Employment Requirements |
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| 4.7. | To be eligible for the Scheme sonographers must be employed for a minimum 0.6 FTE (Full Time Equivalent). This may be an average FTE during any 12 month period of employment if your hours of work fluctuate for any reason. |
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| 4.8. | You will not be eligible for payment from the Scheme if you undertake substantive or continuous locum work (see clauses 4.16 – 4.19). |
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| 4.9. | You are responsible for verifying that the FTE requirements have been met and will be required to make a declaration and provide a certificate of service from your employer(s) before each bonding payment is made (clause 5). |
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| Breaks and Pauses in the Term of Service |
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| 4.10. | You can take up to 14 weeks absence in a 12 month period from your position as a sonographer without affecting your eligibility for bonding payments. Such an absence is known as a “break”. |
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| 4.11. | A “pause” is any time beyond the 14 weeks break allowance that you spend away from your specialty. Time taken as pauses must be added to the term necessary to complete the bond, and no more than ten weeks may be added during the course of one year. This means that no more than 50 weeks in total can be added to the five year bonding term. |
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| 4.12. | Breaks and pauses are to include any leave from employment, with or without pay, including normal employment leave entitlements, such as annual leave and sick leave. |
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| Parental Leave |
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| 4.13. | You may take up to 52 weeks’ parental leave, in accordance with the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 and remain on the Scheme. |
| 4.14. | Time spent on parental leave does not accrue towards your bonding period and must be made up. The bonding period will automatically restart as soon as you return to your employment as a sonographer as specified by your registration on the Scheme. |
| 4.15. | Time spent on parental leave is separate to the break and pause provisions (clauses 4.10 to 4.12). |
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| Working as a Locum  |
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| 4.16. | If you undertake substantive or continuous locum work you will not be eligible for payment from the Scheme. |
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| 4.17. | The Ministry defines “substantive” locum work or agency nurse work as being a period of six weeks or more, but does not include undertaking additional duties for your employer. |
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| 4.18. | For the purposes of the Scheme, a locum is considered to be someone who provides the services in the stead of another sonographer registered within the same scope of practice during normal working hours. |
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| 4.19. | When you apply for payments from the Scheme, you will be asked to confirm that you have not engaged in “substantive” locum work. |
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| 5. Payment |
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| 5.1. | You are responsible for initiating the first claim for payment after you have completed three full years (36 months) on the Scheme. |
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| 5.2. | If you stay on the Scheme for a fourth and fifth year, you are responsible for initiating the second and third claims for payment. |
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| 5.3. | You must apply for payment within nine months of becoming eligible to apply. |
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| 5.4. | You will only be eligible for payments if you have:* been employed for three full years in accordance with these Terms and Conditions
* met the minimum FTE employment requirements (clauses 4.7 to 4.9)
* complied with the rules governing breaks and pauses (clauses 4.10 to 4.12), parental leave (clauses 4.13 and 4.14), and locum work for the Scheme (clauses 4.10 – 4.19).
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| 5.5. | No payments will be made until you have:* applied for payment in accordance with the application for payment process
* submitted a declaration confirming that you have met the terms and conditions of the Scheme.
* provided a certificate of service from your employer(s) confirming that your employment has complied with the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme during the bonding period.
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| 5.6. | Details of further information required from you in order to confirm that you have met the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme and to enable payment to be made (e.g. proof of identity) are outlined in the application for payment. |
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| 5.7. | If you have a student loan, the full Scheme payment will be made against your student loan. If the balance of your student loan is less than the Scheme payment, you will need to contact Inland Revenue once the payment has been made to enable the difference to be paid to you. |
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| 5.8. | If you do not have a student loan, the Scheme payment will be paid directly to you. |
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| 5.9. | Payment for sonographers for each period of 12 months completed on the Scheme is **$3,932** after tax. |
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| 5.11. | Scheme payments are subject to income tax and may affect your tax situation, for example, in relation to provisional tax, Working for Families and child support payments. |
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| 5.12. | The Ministry recommends that you seek independent advice on how the payment will affect your tax position. For further tax information, contact Inland Revenue. |
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| 6. Privacy Statement |
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| 6.1. | All of the information you provide in the Registration of Interest form will be treated as personal information and will be used, stored and disclosed in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993. |
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| 6.2. | By submitting the Registration of Interest form, you are authorising the Ministry of Health to collect personal information about you. This information will be stored and used by the Ministry for purposes associated with the Scheme, in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993. |
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| 6.3. | The information will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to any person except in connection with the purposes for which it is obtained, or by operation of law. |
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| 6.4. | You have the right to contact the Ministry of Health to request access to and correction of any personal information held about you. |
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| 6.5. | We suggest you print a copy of these Terms and Conditions for your records. |
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| 7. Review in special circumstances |
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| 7.1 | If your circumstances change and the break, or pause or parental leave clauses do not apply, you may apply for a review by the Review Panel. |
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| 7.2 | Applications to the Review Panel must be made to vbs@moh.govt.nz in accordance with its procedures. |