

# RMIT Graduate Diploma in Child & Family Health Nursing

2024 Frequently Asked Questions – GD159 Program



## Do I have to be both a registered nurse and midwife to undertake this program?

Yes, you must hold current registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) as **both a Nurse and a Midwife in Australia**.

## Do I have to have practised as both a nurse and a midwife before commencing MCH studies?

- **Path 1** - Yes, a minimum of 12 months EFT post registration experience in each of nursing and midwifery is usually required (2 years total)
- **Path 2** – Yes, a minimum of 12 months EFT post registration experience as a registered nurse and a Graduate Year program in midwifery, OR
- **Path 3** – Completed a minimum of 5 years EFT post registration clinical experience as a registered nurse or a minimum of 5 years EFT post registration clinical experience as a registered midwife.

You also need to demonstrate recent clinical experience (1 year EFT in the past 5 years) as a registered nurse or registered midwife.

## How do I find the program overview?

The Program overview including: Study modes, Fees, Program Structure and Electives is available on [the RMIT website](#).

## What courses (subjects) will I study?\*

Semester 1	Semester 2
NURS1023 Child and Family Health Assessment	NURS1019 Child & Family Nursing in the Community
NURS2202 Families in Contemporary Society	NURS2182 Foundational Parent-Infant Mental Health
NURS2181 Child and Family Nutrition	NURS2183 Clinical Practice: MCH 2
NURS2203 Clinical Practice: MCH 1	Elective: NURS2184 Complex Parent-Infant Mental Health
Only one (1) elective required, others also available	Elective: PUBH1427 Elective: Indigenous Health (new)

**Other Electives include:** Context of Mental Health Nursing, Therapeutic Initiatives in Mental Health, Health Inquiry Critique (Research) or other courses approved by the Program Manager.

Full time study requires 7 months (Feb to Sept 2024).

Part time students usually complete 2 courses per semester over 19 months (Feb 2024 to Sept 2025).



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## Can I apply for credit or RPL for previous postgraduate studies?

Yes. There are 8 courses each worth 12 credit points. Students may apply for credit for equivalent courses they have already completed at a postgraduate level within the past 5 years (specialty courses) or 10 years (non-specialty courses).

**Applications for credit** are individually assessed by the Program Manager and Course Coordinators. Notification of the outcome of this assessment is sent by the Central University Administrative Office in writing. External courses that may possibly be recognised for credit in 2024 include: Research studies, Mental Health, approved Breastfeeding courses and Infant Mental Health. Students are encouraged to discuss these and other potential credits with the Program Manager prior to enrolment.

### When can I apply for Credit? How is this done?

You may apply for credit once you have enrolled in the program. Please forward a copy of your certified transcript and course description/study guide and the appropriate completed RMIT application form. It is recommended that enrolled students apply for credit early so that the CSP places allocated to the university can best be utilised.

### When can I apply for RPL? How is this done?

You may also apply for recognition of prior learning (RPL) once you have enrolled in the program. Please forward a copy of your certified transcript and course description/study guide or other education completed and the appropriate completed RMIT application form. Your application should also include documentation of how you have met the Course Learning Outcomes of the course for which you are applying for RPL, and relevant professional practice. This must be linked to an existing RMIT course at Graduate Diploma level or higher. It is recommended that enrolled students apply for RPL early so that the CSP places allocated to the university can best be utilised. There is an additional form required for RPL applications. Contact the Program Manager for information about an application for RPL and this additional form. To be eligible to receive an RMIT University award (ie Grad Dip), at least 50 per cent must be completed at RMIT University.

[Click here to apply for Credit/RPL](#)

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## How much Clinical Placement is required? How is this organised?

This MCH program requires a minimum of 300 hours of clinical experience. Students are assessed against the Victorian MCH Nurse Competency Standards (VAMCHN, 2010/2023). Approx **230 hours** are undertaken in a Council MCH service. Applicants are required to arrange a clinical place with a local MCH service and submit confirmation of this as part of the application process. Student Information Packs are available at the [Municipal Association of Victoria website](#) under 'Aspiring MCH Nurses'. There is also a list of Councils and available places.

Approximately **70 hours** is completed as community visits or placement in a range of community child health settings. These include: Childcare, Early Parenting Centres, MCH Line and Victorian Children's Court. Most of these are organised by RMIT, and some are arranged by RMIT University and the student, during semester 1. Clinical visits are subject to availability.



## What is the cost of the program?

Type of place	Fees for a fulltime student in 2023	
Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP)	\$ 4,124	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Please contact RMIT Connect for further information at <a href="https://rmit.edu.au/students/contact-and-help/connect">rmit.edu.au/students/contact-and-help/connect</a></li><li>■ Information about Commonwealth Assistance with fees can be found at <a href="https://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-payingmyfees">studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-payingmyfees</a></li></ul>
Full Fee	\$24,960	

**Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs)** are available on a competitive basis according to government funding. Generally at RMIT most students receive a CSP place. A CSP is a type of university enrolment where the total cost of your study is split into two parts. The Government pays one part - this is a subsidy, and you pay the other part - this is called your student contribution. In 2023 the cost to students awarded a CSP was \$4,124 for a standard full time year of study. In 2023 the cost for standard part time study over two years is anticipated to be approximately \$4,124. A Commonwealth Government initiative HECS-HELP is also available to help CSP students pay their fees. Information about HECS and HELP can be found at: [studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-payingmyfees](https://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-payingmyfees)

2024 CSP fees can be confirmed on the RMIT website once released, or by contacting RMIT Connect on [rmit.edu.au/students/contact-and-help/connect](https://rmit.edu.au/students/contact-and-help/connect)

**Full fee-paying places** are also available. In 2023 the total cost for a standard full-time year of study for the full 8 course program was as \$24,960 (Part time study is the same cost, spread over 2 years.). The 2024 full fee cost can be confirmed by contacting RMIT Connect as above. Fees are paid on a semester by semester basis as you progress through the course. A Commonwealth Government initiative, FEE-HELP, is available for all fee-paying students. See the following link: [studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-payingmyfees](https://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-payingmyfees)

## How is this program delivered?

The program is offered over 1 year full time (FT) or 2 years part time (PT).

Courses are offered by blended learning ie a combination of face to face, online and intensive modes. Some courses have early start intensives. In 2024 over **30% of courses (subjects)** will be available online.

Learning is promoted by multiple strategies including lectures, tutorials, workshops, online packages, group work, class demonstrations, laboratory sessions, simulation sessions and self-directed learning.

Face-to-face (F2F) classes are offered in full day study mode to reduce the need to travel to and from campus. Apart from the intensives full time students generally only need to attend campus one day per week on average.

## How do I apply for the Graduate Diploma of Child & Family Health Nursing program?

Since this is a postgraduate program, applications are submitted directly online on the RMIT website from early August each year. Applicants need to register before creating an online application. [Click here for Direct Application.](#)

Once you are registered you can log in at any time to check the progress of your application. You can begin your application and add documents at any time, as available. **Your application will be assessed once it is completed.**

Successful applicants are encouraged to discuss their enrolment with the Program Manager prior to enrolling to optimise the sequence of studies as some courses have prerequisites.





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## When do applications close?

Timely applications for the February 2024 intake are expected to close in **early November 2023**. You have a better chance of being offered a Clinical and CSP place (subject to availability) if you apply early. Late applicants may be considered if you meet all requirements and places are still available.

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## When will I know if my application has been successful?

Successful applicants will be notified by late November. Please enrol promptly so you can receive information about submitting clinical preferences and details for early starting courses. Orientation will be arranged for early December 2023 in readiness for the early start courses.

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## When do classes start?

Semester 1 and 2 courses run from Feb to September 2024.

- **NURS1023 Child & Family Health Assessment** will have a 3 day early start intensive from Wed to Friday Feb 14, 15, 16, 2024.
- **NURS2202 Families in Contemporary Society** will have a 3 day early start intensive from Wed to Friday Feb 21, 22, 23, 2024.
- All other classes begin the week commencing Monday 27 February 2024.

There is a 4 week break between semester 1 and 2, (but 2 weeks are reserved for clinical if needed). There are also mid-semester breaks of one week in each of Semester 1 and Semester 2.

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## Are scholarships available?

Yes. Scholarships have been provided in the past.

The Victorian state government has previously offered scholarships and bursaries for MCH studies. The MCH program is now located in the Department of Health and it is anticipated they will offer some scholarships to registered nurses and midwives to study MCH nursing in 2024. (These were valued at approximately \$2,000 to \$7,000 in 2023). Scholarship details will be available later in Semester 2 2023 for the 2024 student intake. Details about the Dept Health scholarships managed by RMIT University can be found [here](#).

A few councils offer annual scholarships to registered nurses and midwives going on to study MCH nursing, generally if a geographical area is short staffed. Preference may be given to applicants living in the local area, but not necessarily. For more information about scholarships, check the Council list where placements are listed on the MAV site or contact your local council MCH Coordinator. Scholarships are often advertised on councils' employment pages. These scholarships range from \$2,000 to around \$4,000.







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## How are the Community Placements/Visits organised?

Placements for community visits will be facilitated by the university for groups of students (approx 10 days, mostly intermittent days in semester one). For example, Child care, Early Parenting Centre.

You will generally be able to nominate a preferred placement from a range of dates, but this does depend on the availability of placements which may sometimes be limited. Community placements include visits / observations at Childcare, Breastfeeding Support, Sleep and Settling Support, the Enhanced MCH service and MCH Line. You may be required to travel to some placements.

### Note for Regional and Rural Applicants:

The required Melbourne clinical placements are the MCH Line (4 hours) and a residential Early Parenting Centre (3 days). This is because these services are not available outside of Melbourne. An introduction to the Victorian Children's Court is provided in the NURS1019 class and the visit to the Victorian Children's Court (4 hours) is encouraged but optional.

RMIT aims to have students co-located at designated community agencies to optimise placement contracts and OH&S assessments. You may sometimes be required to **travel to a specific community agency**.

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## How is the MCH Service Placement organised?

You will need to arrange placement for your MCH clinical experience with a MCH Service (**approximately total 30 days or 6 weeks**).

Applicants are encouraged to consider where they would like to complete their specific MCH experience. For most applicants this will be a local municipality. It is important that applicants understand that Councils provide clinical experience to students as a service to the profession, and to facilitate and support the development of new MCH nurse graduates. Councils receive no payment for this role. Obtaining a clinical place is a privilege. Municipalities have different capacities to accept students for placement, for a variety of reasons, including the number of MCH Nurses available to act as preceptors and other projects underway in the municipality or MCH service.

Visit the Municipal Association of Victoria website and download the MCH Applicant Information Pack available there for those interested in MCH studies. This gives step by step details of applying for a clinical place There is also a list of Councils offering placement. This is updated periodically. You can inquire at other Councils not listed if you wish.

- To download the Pack, visit [Maternal and Child Health Resources | MAV website](#) . Scroll down to find the link for **Aspiring MCH Students**. This will take you to a series of links to documents. Click on the link to **2024 MCH Applicant Information Pack and EOI updated** to download the Expression of Interest (EOI) form for MCH applicants. Some individual Council scholarships are also listed here.
- Complete this form and forward it with your Curriculum vitae to the MCH Manager of the Municipality you would like to approach about possible clinical placement. Type into the Word version of the EOI form.
- Include a statement (paragraph) about why you want to study MCH nursing.
- Submit your application via email or mail.
- Send a copy of the EOI form to Leanne Sheeran Program Manager, RMIT University.

### Process for Expressing Interest (EOI) in a MCH Clinical Place.

Under the current process for Clinical Placements, some MCH Coordinators will assess Expressions of Interest and CV applications as they are received, and others will hold Expressions of Interest in MCH clinical places and review them collectively at two key times – Mid Sept and late October. Some municipalities will review the Expressions of Interest and CV only and some may conduct face to face or phone interviews, according to their preference. Each Council will have an individual style according to local preferences or needs.

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## When will I hear if I have a clinical place? & What if I am unsuccessful?

Applicants will be advised if they have been successful in their expression of interest for a clinical place approximately early October and mid-November. Applicants who are not successful can apply to further Councils in the final round of Expressions of Interest in a Clinical Place. Applicants are requested to only apply for a **maximum of 3 Councils** at a time with an Expressions of Interest.

It is essential once you have accepted a provisional clinical place that you immediately notify any other Councils you have applied to that you have a place and request to be removed from their list of applicants. This frees up places for applicants still seeking a clinical place and is a courtesy to Councils and MCH Coordinators that you may end up working for once you graduate.



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## How is the Clinical placement structured?

When you obtain a clinical place the amount of clinical time you will require in MCH practice will be: approximately 30 days clinical experience between April to August, which equates to 6 weeks of MCH placement. This is completed in the current year of study for full time students. Part time RMIT students complete most of their clinical in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or final year of their studies. (For 2024 part time applicants this would be 2025). However, part time year 1 students complete six (6) days of observational MCH/ clinical workshops in year one including Sleep and Settling support, Breastfeeding support and universal MCH, with the remaining days of clinical placement undertaken in Year 2.

Some Councils will require you to do blocks of placement, others will be satisfied with at least two or more days per weeks. Students are advised to complete 2-4 days of placement per week to optimise learning. All students are required to complete a consolidating five (5) day block at the end of their placement.

Always be very professional and respectful when you approach Councils or other clinical agencies.

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## What do I do once I have a MCH Clinical place?

When you have been advised in writing that a Council will offer you a provisional clinical place, you need to accept it in writing within 5 days. Once you have accepted your provisional clinical offer, upload a copy of the clinical offer to your online RMIT application. Please also email a copy to the Program Manager, Dr Leanne Sheeran at [leanne.sheeran@rmit.edu.au](mailto:leanne.sheeran@rmit.edu.au). Your application cannot proceed without a confirmed MCH clinical place as clinical is a core component required to complete the program.

Beginning MCH studies requires both a university offer and enrolment AND a confirmation of a provisional clinical place to undertake MCH clinical experience.

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## RMIT University MCH Clinical Requirements June, 2023

University	Load	Period for MCH Clinical	Semester	Year 1 hours	Year 2 hours
RMIT (Range due to flexibility with time spent in community placements)	Full time	March - May	1	100 (13 days)	
		June-Aug	2	134 (17 days)	
	Part time	March - May	1		100 (13 days)
		June-Aug	2	20 (3 days)	114 (14 days)

In addition to the above MCH Clinical Experience students complete an additional **10 days of Community Visits and Placements**.

The community visits begin in March, and MCH clinical experience begins from April.

Students are required to complete some prerequisite activities such as introduction to MCH Nursing, physical assessment, child development and child observation in childcare prior to beginning MCH clinical placement.

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### If I need more information, who do I contact?

You can contact the Program Manager, Child & Family Health Nursing at RMIT University:

**Dr Leanne Sheeran, RN, RM, MCHN, IBCLC**

BAppSci (Mid), Grad Dip MCH, MN, MA (Women's Studies), GradCertTertTeach, PhD

- Email: [leanne.sheeran@rmit.edu.au](mailto:leanne.sheeran@rmit.edu.au)
- Tel: 9925 7445
- Work Hours: Mon to Fri

Please make sure to include a contact telephone number if you email as sometimes it is easier to call. I am happy to answer further questions, discuss the application process and advise regarding placement and MCH scholarships.

I look forward to hearing from you.