

## Frequently Asked Questions

**CHC43515**

***Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work Scholarship***



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**These questions have been raised by past applicants, or have been included as information that current students would like you to know, before applying to study.**

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*This scholarship is generously funded by the Mental Health Commission of Western Australia and administered by CoMHWA*

## **Q1. What is Peer Work?**

Mental Health Peer Work is a specialist area in which a person must have lived experience of mental health distress and recovery to be able to undertake their role and utilise this experience in their work.

Peer Workers use their lived experience and learnt skills to support others to achieve recovery and wellbeing. They may do this through peer support (directly supporting others through individual or group support), education, advocacy or advisory roles. Peer Work requires a variety of skills and abilities as well as knowledge of the mental health sector.

A Peer Worker who supports family members or significant others may also have a lived experience of being a carer or family member of an individual who experiences mental health distress or mental illness.

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## **Q2. What do you mean by 'lived experience'?**

Lived experience is the knowledge and understanding you get when you have lived through something. When we talk about people with mental health lived experience, we mean people living with mental illness or mental health distress (sometimes called consumers) and family or friends supporting someone living with mental illness or mental health distress (sometimes called carers).

*Source:*

[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+services/mental+health+services/mental+health+lived+experience+register](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+services/mental+health+services/mental+health+lived+experience+register)

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## **Q3. What can I achieve from this qualification?**

The qualification is the nationally recognised qualification for paid Peer Work and equips people to work in paid roles using their lived experience of mental health distress to support others.

Examples of paid roles include Peer Support Workers, Peer Educators, Consumer and Carer Consultants, Representatives and Advisors. The course provides graduates with an equivalent employable skill level to other Cert IV qualifications and has some units in common with the Cert IV Mental Health.

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## **Q4. Can I enrol in the course without applying for a scholarship?**

No, all places in the course available at North Metro TAFE are reserved for scholarship recipients.

The Cert IV Mental Health Peer Work is offered by other providers, however the scholarship is only available for the course at North Metro TAFE. For other providers go to <https://www.myskills.gov.au/>

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## **Q5. What is the cost of the course?**

This course is part of the government *Lower fees, local skills initiative*, and the course fees have been halved. These scholarships will cover the full or partial costs of the Cert IV Mental Health Peer Work qualification.

Students will need to pay for some items themselves, including:

- Notepads, pens etc.

- Working with Children Check (for work placement), \$11.00 for students
- Police clearance (for work placement), approx. \$60.00
- NDIS clearance (for work placement), \$11 for students
- Student ID card for TAFE, \$10.00
- Any associated costs to get to and from your work placement

**It is advised that you check with Centrelink before applying for this scholarship, if you are receiving any pensions or monetary payments on a regular basis. Receiving a scholarship may affect these benefits.**

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## **Q6. Are there other study options apart from attending campus?**

Please note the scholarships are **only for campus-based study**. For prospective student and employer enquiries about the Recognition of Prior Learning or Traineeship options please contact TAFE via the contact details provided.

For regional Peers, the option of studying the online Peer Work Skill Set is available through a CoMHWA scholarship, delivered with NM TAFE. More information on this option can be provided upon request via [admin@comhwa.org.au](mailto:admin@comhwa.org.au)

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## **Q7. If there are some units I could receive RPL for, but I would still need to attend the course for other units, can I apply for a scholarship?**

The scholarships are for enrolment in face-to-face delivery, but you can still apply if you are eligible for RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) for some of the course units. You must present proof of completion of any units prior to commencement of this course.

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## **Q8. How much work is involved with a Certificate IV level course?**

**A Certificate IV level course is a much higher standard and amount of work than high school studies with some similarities to first year Undergraduate University Courses.**

This course is classed as full-time due to the assessment commitments you will be required to undertake.

While you are on campus for only 2 days per week, you will be required to complete at least an **additional 2 extra days per week for study time and assignments**. This is a real estimate provided by students who have studied the course in previous years.

Current students have said that at some points in the course, the additional workload equates to **4 days per week, on top of the 2 days of class time**.

“The initial information about having two days of class and two full assessment days, as mentioned by TAFE/CoMHWA, was understated. Future students should view this as a bare minimum and be prepared for the demanding workload.”

During the course you will be expected to **take part in role play scenarios**. These will form part of the assessments. There is additional workload around role plays; corresponding with classmates and setting time to meet and practice, on top of your normal workload.

The work placement component of this course is **80 hours**, which equates to approximately 12 full working days. Please note that this placement cannot be with a service that you have previously been engaged with (within the past two years) as part of your recovery journey.

## **Q9. What happens if I am struggling with the work?**

Current students have recommended seeking support before they start the course, if they think they will struggle with some of the learning.

TAFE has support available through student services including accessibility and learning support, Koolark Centre for Aboriginal Students, and “Read Write Now” for basic computer and literacy skills.

Support networks and strategies highlighted by students include:

- CoMHWA co-reflection sessions
- WA Peer Supporters’ Network (WAPSN) bi-monthly meetings
- Peer support from other students
- Wellbeing apps and support groups

Feedback given to CoMHWA shows that the strength and support of Peer connections with other students in the course has always been the most beneficial means of support.

One student said:

“Don’t be afraid to reach out to others and make connections with your Peers!”

## Q10. What units will I be studying?

The following units will be completed over the 12-month timeframe:

In class timeframe for unit	Unit Name and Basic Information
4 weeks	<p><b>CHCDIC001 - Work with diverse people</b></p> <p>This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to work respectfully with people from diverse social and cultural groups and situations, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.</p>
7 weeks	<p><b>CHCMHS007 - Work effectively in trauma informed care*</b></p> <p>Students studying this unit will work from a trauma informed care perspective and will develop a sound knowledge of trauma.</p>
10 weeks	<p><b>CHCMHS008 - Promote and facilitate self-advocacy</b></p> <p>This unit includes the requirements for students to encourage, support and promote self-advocacy when working with at least 3 people with mental health issues.</p>
10 weeks	<p><b>CHCMHS011 - Assess and promote social, emotional and physical wellbeing</b></p> <p>Students will be required to collaboratively deliver wellbeing support, reflecting recovery-oriented practice, responding to and supporting physical social emotional cultural/spiritual needs.</p>
9 weeks	<p><b>CHCPWK001 - Apply peer work practices in the mental health sector</b></p> <p>This unit covers the historical, social, political and economic contexts of mental health services and mental health consumer and carer movements, including impacts of mental health systems on consumers and carers.</p>
4 weeks	<p><b>CHCPWK002 - Contribute to the continuous improvement of mental health services</b></p> <p>This unit requires students to evaluate a Mental Health service by conducting a consultation process for maximising consumer and carer participation in all aspects of service review, evaluation and improvements.</p>
10 weeks	<p><b>CHCPWK003 - Apply lived experience in mental health peer work</b></p> <p>Students are required to complete work placement in a peer work role according to the values, ethics and philosophies of mental health peer work, articulating and extrapolating lived experience in at least 3 different contexts.</p>
4 weeks	<p><b>HLTWH001 - Participate in Workplace Health and Safety</b></p>

	<p>This unit covers WHS regulations, relevant codes of practice and workplace procedures relevant to WA workplaces.</p>
12 weeks	<p><b>CHCCCS003 - Increase safety of individuals at risk of suicide*</b></p> <p>Indicators of potential suicide risk, including risk of any type of self-harm and principles and practices of suicide intervention, including: assessment, suicide safety, facilitating emergency interventions, identifying safe actions to implement safety plans, facilitation of on-going support, referral options and procedures for accessing services and procedures for facilitating emergency interventions.</p>
5 weeks	<p><b>CHCCCS017 - Provide loss and grief support*</b></p> <p>This unit covers the spectrum of loss situations, including primary loss, secondary loss, cumulative loss, integration of loss, potential impacts at the individual, family and community level, of grief, bereavement and trauma.</p>
9 weeks	<p><b>CHCLEG001 - Work legally and ethically</b></p> <p>This unit covers the Legal and ethical considerations (international, national, state/territory, local) for peers working in the community services and health context, how they are applied in organisations, how these impact individual workers, and the consequences of breaches.</p>
10 weeks	<p><b>CHCMHS002 - Establish self-directed recovery relationships</b></p> <p>In studying this unit, students are required to establish and maintain self-directed recovery relationships with at least 3 people with mental illness &amp; perform the activities outlined in the performance criteria of this unit during a period of at least 80 hours of work in a mental health agency (sourced by NMTafe).</p>
10 weeks	<p><b>CHCMHS005 - Provide services to people with co-existing mental health and alcohol and other drug issues*</b></p> <p>This unit covers the values, philosophies and service delivery models of the AOD and mental health sectors, their similarities and differences.</p>
2 weeks	<p><b>HLTWH006 - Manage personal stressors in the work environment</b></p> <p>This unit covers the sources of stress and how they manifest in health and/or community services work environment.</p>
2 days during Term 2	<p><b>HLTAID003 - Provide first aid</b></p> <p>This can be completed as part of your course or can be completed with an external provider at your own expense.</p> <p>If you have completed a first aid course within the last 12 months you will not need to re-do this.</p>

**The course units marked with an asterisk will include heavy in-class discussions and you may find them to be emotionally demanding. Please consider the impact these units will have on you and what supports you have access to, should you require further self-care strategies for the duration of this course.**

Supervised fieldwork is the final requirement for this course (a minimum of 80 hours to be worked in a mental health service agency). NM TAFE sources field placement opportunities for students.

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## **Q11. How long does the course run for?**

**The course will run from January to December 2026**, however there is a possible extension period until July 2027 if extra time is required to complete the work placement component.

Successful students will have the options of:

- Completing class-based study and work placement hours within the 12-month timeframe;
- Completing class-based study in the 12-month timeframe and then completing the work placement in Semester 1, 2027 (January – June).

These details will be discussed further with successful scholarship recipients during orientation.

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## **Q12. What is Peer Group Co-reflection?**

Co-reflection is integral to Peer Work practice and involves exploring key learnings, reflecting on the impact of these and identifying strategies or implications for work practice. To set the groundwork for placement and Peer Work employment two external supervisors from CoMHWA conducts the group sessions in accordance with Peer Work principles and values.

These sessions are completely confidential between the students and the supervisor and TAFE lecturers do not attend these sessions or receive any information relating to discussions.