



Application Guidelines

2025

Allison Milner Memorial PhD Scholarship

For Research into Suicide prevention

About the Allison Milner Memorial PhD Scholarship

This scholarship was established by MATES in Construction to honour the significant legacy of Associate Professor Allison Milner. Allison served as the National Academic Director of MATES in Construction from 2013, until her untimely passing in 2019. She was a prolific researcher who cared deeply about supporting health-promoting work environments for employees of physically and psychologically demanding industries. Allison was an enthusiastic champion of efforts to curtail the high suicide rate among workers – predominantly men – in blue collar industries, particularly construction. This scholarship is an important avenue through which talented and dedicated PhD candidates can be supported to continue the kind of research so highly valued by Allison.

The Allison Milner Memorial PhD Scholarship is a funding agreement between MATES in Construction Australia and the applicant's administering institution (a university in Australia) with the aim to:

1. Support excellent clinical and applied research within the suicide prevention field;
2. Advance promising early career researchers and promote enhanced opportunities for diverse career pathways;
3. Enable research and research training in high quality and supportive environments;
4. Expand Australia's knowledge base and research capability

Criteria

The PhD Scholarship aims to support outstanding graduates who are at the early part of their research career. Specifically, the scholarship funds PhD research that address the goal of suicide prevention initiatives in male dominated industries. Research subject to this PhD scholarship within male dominated industries can include both male and female employees, their families, or broader communities. Preference will be given to those proposals incorporating construction, mining, energy, or manufacturing industries.

Research should address at least one of the following relating to male dominated industries:

- Suicidality or psychological distress
- Cultural and psychosocial determinants of mental health within the workplace
- Reducing psychosocial hazards within the workplace

Award value

The total Scholarship value is up to \$108,000 over three years fulltime, with the option for equivalent part-time to be negotiated with MATES.

Key dates

Application period	Open Friday 3rd October	Close Friday 28th November	Outcomes Announced 18th December
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How to apply

Applications are to be submitted via the submission portal located on the MATES website mates.org.au/PHD

Selection Criteria

Quality of Research Design	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research directly address the relevant topics • Innovative research design • Methodology rigorous and appropriate • Expected translational outcomes • Engages relevant stakeholders in the design/refinement of the research project • Lived experience informs research design 	
Feasibility	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasible timeline for successful completion • Administering institution to provide a supportive research environment and infrastructure • Strong academic supervision • If a partner organisation is involved project partner letter of involvement • Capacity of the research to be undertaken in adherence to COVID19 official public health guidance 	
Benefit and Collaboration	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant new knowledge and/or innovative social and/or cultural benefit to the Australian community • Significant new knowledge and/or innovative social and/or cultural benefit to the MATES programs • Incorporation of lived experience through collaborative research design or personal experience • Collaboration between industry, academic institutions, and/or multidisciplinary 	
Applicant	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of past academic performance • Demonstrated time and capacity to undertake the proposed research • Driving motivation underpins research topic 	

Lived Experience

MATES values lived experience in informing everything we do. Although not mandatory, applicants are welcomed to provide information on how lived experience influences their research proposal, through either personal experience, or through collaboration with community groups, organisations, or by other means.

Review panel

The review panel consists of experienced researchers, individuals with lived experience, and individuals with service provision expertise who assist at various stages of assessment. The review panel is appointed by the MATES National Research Reference Group.

Application Process

Stage	Actions
1	Applications submitted to MATES in Construction Australia, via submission portal by 28 November 2025
3	Applications assessed by a MATES-appointed review committee
4	Assessed applications shortlisted by the review committee, using a standardised process
5	The shortlisted application is submitted to the MATES National Board for a final decision

Feedback/Appeals Process

The decision of the MATES National Board is final and any appeals about the merits of a decision will only be considered in terms of whether due process was followed. Complaints about administrative process must be made in writing, signed by the complainant, and addressed to the Chair, MATES National Research Reference Group, specifying the nature of and grounds for the complaint.

Funding requirements

Commencement

The funding commencement date for scholarship recipients must occur within 3 months of execution of the funding agreement.

Duration

The scholarship is a three year full-time equivalent position. Part-time enrollments will be considered on a case by case basis with the scholarship to be awarded pro-rata for up to a total of six years to accommodate flexible working arrangements. Award of scholarship for part-time PhD students or due to career disruption will require agreement with MATES Australia.

Limits on proposals

If an offer of a scholarship is made to a student who already holds an equivalent PhD scholarship (e.g. stipend of similar annual value), the student must forfeit their original scholarship to accept this scholarship.

The total scholarship amount offered will be adjusted to cover the time remaining on the PhD project (e.g. a successful applicant who has completed one full year FTE of their PhD candidature will be eligible to receive two years FTE scholarship funding through the memorial scholarship scheme).

Applicant requirements

Researcher eligibility

Applications can be made by those currently engaged in Bachelor Honors or Masters by Research who intend to enroll in a PhD. **Applications can also be made by students who are already enrolled in a PhD program.**

To be eligible for funding, successful applicants must be enrolled at their chosen Administering Institution. Those with pending applications are eligible, however successful enrollment is a condition of funding being awarded.

Applicants must notify MATES Australia of the outcome of current studies and as soon as enrollment in a PhD is confirmed. Applicants are advised to speak with the Research Grants Office at their Administering Institution about the Institution's enrollment process.

The recipient must be based at the Administering Institution for the duration of the PhD Scholarship period.

The research must be conducted in Australia for the benefit of Australians. If the applicant is not an Australian citizen, they are required to obtain a legal right to work and reside in Australia prior to the commencement of the PhD.

Resumes

Applicant and supervisor resumes must be submitted at the time of application, as per the template provided.

References

One written reference for the applicant must be submitted at the time of application. References supplied by referees who are external to the student's proposed PhD supervision panel are preferred. However, a written reference can be provided by a nominated supervisor. We ask that you justify your choice of referee in a brief written statement in your application (not more than one paragraph in length).

The written reference may include:

- The current position of the referee;
- How the referee knows the applicant and for how long;
- How the applicant is qualified to work on the project;
- Personal characteristics and specific skills of the applicant;
- Any additional information the referee believes to be relevant.

Ethics approvals

Applicants should be aware of any ethics approvals required for the commencement of their research.

Consent to provide information to International Assessors

In some situations, applications may be provided to overseas assessors for peer review.

In the case under Commonwealth privacy laws, MATES Australia will require permission from the applicant to disclose any information contained in the application.

Support from Administering Institution

The application should include a Letter of Support from their administering institution Head of School or Department.

The Letter of Support should include:

1. The supportive elements of the research environment provided by the Administering Institution;
2. Assessment of the viability of the research proposal;
3. Commitment to providing support to the researcher and their research.

Consulting with relevant industry stakeholders

Applicants are encouraged to consult with relevant stakeholders of their identified industry (or industries) as they refine the design of their research projects. Securing the insight of industry stakeholders is important for ensuring that the design of the project is feasible. A considered consultation process can help ensure that any possible pitfalls with the execution of the research project – including but not limited to data collection activities – are identified and addressed ahead of time. Industry stakeholders can also offer important suggestions on the dissemination of research results/findings in a way that is most useful and of greatest practical relevance for the industry, and for your research participants.

Involvement of Partner Organisation(s)

The application should include a Letter of Involvement if there will be a partnership with an organisation(s) for the duration of the research project. This should be signed by the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director of the organisation.

The Letter of Involvement should include:

1. Support for the research project, timelines and proposed involvement;
2. Commitment to providing support to the Lead Investigator and their research project;
3. A summary of the organisations's purpose, strategic goals, activities, organisational structure.

Grant conditions

Funding agreement

The successful applicant's administering institution will be required to enter into a funding agreement with MATES in Construction Australia. The funding agreement will be prepared by MATES in Construction Australia and is not open to negotiation.

Research reporting

Recipients are required to lodge completed milestone documents (i.e. confirmation, mid-candidature review, and final review documents, as per the stipulations set by the specific university) with MATES Australia, as a way of providing updates on their progress. Recipients are required to submit a brief final report on their key research findings.

Communication and promotion

By submitting an application, consent is being given for contact for (but not limited to) operational feedback, public relations opportunities (such as commentary and interviews) and for inclusion on websites, social media, media releases.

Communication of the findings of the research through conferences, forums and communication with the MATES National Research Reference Group will be expected (as appropriate). Successful candidates will be invited to attend MATES National Research Reference Group meetings, to discuss research progress and request advice and mentorship, as appropriate.

Enquiries

If you have enquiries please contact Chelsea Byrne at MATES in Construction Australia via email:
cbyrne@mates.org.au