



## Information for RAMUS Mentors 2010

**Thank you for participating in the Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS) Scheme as the mentor for a RAMUS scholar in 2010.**

An important feature of the RAMUS Scheme is that all scholarship holders are required to have a rural doctor as a mentor. The mentor's primary role is to assist the scholar to develop ties to rural and regional Australia. RAMUS mentors are able to provide scholars with exposure to rural medical practice and with support and guidance outside the university and formal study environment.

Since the Scheme began in 2000, hundreds of rural doctors throughout Australia have mentored RAMUS scholars and have helped to build a strong commitment to rural medical practice among current and former RAMUS scholars.

For many RAMUS scholars the mentoring component of RAMUS is the highlight of their scholarship. Various scholars have described their mentor as 'an inspirational doctor', 'an example of what I might become in the future' and 'a professional role model'. The mentor program has been described as providing 'a great opportunity that I otherwise would not have had' and revealing 'the positive aspects of choosing rural general practice as a profession'.

### Keeping you informed

The RAMUS Scheme is administered for the Australian Government by the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA). The RAMUS team at the NRHA provides support and assistance to RAMUS scholars and mentors. You are welcome to contact the RAMUS team at any time.

The RAMUS team at the NRHA will contact you by email and/or mail from time to time about the requirements of the scholarship, including the annual Mentor Report.

The RAMUS ***Gone fishin'*** newsletter is published three times each year and is distributed via email to RAMUS scholars, mentors and RAMUS Alumnus members.

Information for RAMUS scholars and mentors is available on the **RAMUS website** at [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au)

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## **RAMUS scholarships**

The RAMUS Scheme assists selected students with a rural background; demonstrated financial need; and a commitment to practicing in a rural area in the future, to study medicine at university.

To be eligible for RAMUS, students must be Australian citizens or permanent residents; must have lived in an Australian rural area for a minimum of five consecutive years, or eight cumulative years from the age of five; must be studying full-time in an accredited Australian medical degree; and must be a member or agree to join their university's student rural health club.

RAMUS scholarship holders receive \$10,000 each year during the completion of a standard medical degree at their chosen university. RAMUS scholarships are not bonded.

The Scheme supports a total of 550 scholarships and about 100 RAMUS scholarship places are available each year.

Since 2000, when the Scheme began, over 1,600 scholarships have been awarded and more than 1,000 RAMUS scholars have graduated from medicine. Many former RAMUS scholars are now working or training in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia. There is strong evidence that the RAMUS Scheme contributes to the capacity of scholarship holders to complete their medical studies and increases their intention to practise medicine in rural Australia.

## **Selection of RAMUS mentors**

RAMUS scholars select their own mentor. The RAMUS team at the NRHA will assist the scholar in finding a mentor, if necessary.

Mentors should be medical practitioners currently practising in a defined rural or remote location; that is, a RA 2-5 location as defined by the ASGC-RA (Remoteness Areas) Classification scheme.

Scholars are encouraged to choose a mentor from their home district. Scholars who already have a mentoring relationship with a local medical practitioner or with a doctor with whom they undertake rural placements may nominate that doctor as their RAMUS mentor.

RAMUS scholar Alumni are also eligible to take on a mentoring role once they have commenced vocational training (usually PGY3) and are working and/or training in a rural or remote location. The RAMUS team at the NRHA maintains a register of scholar Alumni who are interested in mentoring a RAMUS scholar at an appropriate stage in their post-graduate career.

New scholars are asked to select their mentor and to provide his/her contact details to the RAMUS team within two months of commencing their scholarship.

## **Your role as a RAMUS mentor**

As a RAMUS mentor, your main responsibilities are to maintain contact with your scholar, to provide support and advice and to encourage their interest in and exposure to rural medical practice.

The specific requirements of the RAMUS Scheme are that you assist your scholar to prepare an annual plan for rural activities and you provide a brief report each year on the contact you have had.

### **Maintaining contact**

Scholarship holders are expected to take responsibility for instigating and maintaining contact with their mentors. However, we do ask you to facilitate this contact.

The method of contact (e.g. email, telephone and face-to face sessions) and the timing and duration, will be negotiated between you and your scholar. Ideally, scholars and mentors should aim to have quarterly contact and to meet face-to-face at least once each year.

### **Annual Scholar–Mentor Plan**

You will assist your scholar each year to plan realistic and meaningful goals and activities relating to rural practice. These are documented using the RAMUS *Scholar-Mentor Plan* form (sample attached) at the beginning of each year.

In preparing the annual plan your scholar should discuss with you the opportunities he or she will have for rural activities and his/her expectations related to learning about rural and remote practice. Planned activities are summarised on the scholar's *Scholar–Mentor Plan*.

Both you and your scholar sign the *Scholar–Mentor Plan* to demonstrate that you both believe that the planned activities are realistic, achievable and relevant to the scholar's level of study.

New scholars are asked to prepare their *Scholar-Mentor Plan*, with the help of their mentor, and submit it to the RAMUS team within two months of commencing their scholarship. The *Scholar-Mentor Plans* of

continuing scholars should be completed and submitted by 30 April each year.

Scholars write an annual report relating their activities and achievements for the year to the goals and activities identified in their *Scholar-Mentor Plan*.

### **Annual Mentor Report**

You will be asked to prepare a brief report each year about the rural activities undertaken by the scholar you mentor. You will be sent a *Mentor Report* pro-forma (sample attached) in November each year to be completed and returned to the RAMUS team by the end of the year.

### **Annual mentor payment**

You are entitled to an honorarium of \$300 (or \$330 including GST) each year for each scholar you mentor. The NRHA will send you a payment claim form in November each year and will pay the honorarium within 30 days of receipt of a completed *Mentor Report* and a tax invoice or payment claim. Payment is by direct deposit into your nominated bank account or by cheque, if you prefer.

### **Scholar responsibilities**

As noted above, your scholar is responsible for instigating contact with you and for developing his/her annual *Scholar-Mentor Plan* with your help and advice.

Scholars are expected to undertake rural activities in each year of their scholarship, including spending time with their mentors, to develop understanding of rural health practice. Other activities may include:

- participating in activities that promote health sector careers to rural secondary school students;

- participating in university rural health club activities;
- attending conferences relevant to rural practice; and
- participating in professional organisations.

### **Unsatisfactory participation by Scholar**

If you believe that the mentoring relationship is not proving to be effective and satisfying, or if you have concerns about your scholar's participation in the mentoring program, please contact the RAMUS team to discuss the issue.

### **Unable to continue as a Mentor**

If your circumstances change so that you cannot continue as a RAMUS mentor (for example, through retirement or relocation) please inform both your scholar and the RAMUS team. We would appreciate any help you can give your former scholar in arranging a new mentor.

### **RAMUS Mentor Awards**

The inspiring and outstanding support provided by mentors is acknowledged through the annual RAMUS Mentor Awards. Each year, scholars are invited to nominate exceptional mentors for the Awards.

### **RAMUS Alumnus**

Mentors are invited to join the RAMUS Alumnus program - is network which supports former RAMUS scholars to 'go rural' and allows them to maintain contact with RAMUS. Membership is free.



**SAMPLE**

**Mentor Report 2009**

Mentor's name .....

Mentor's address .....

Scholar's name .....

As mentor to a RAMUS scholar, we ask to you to report each year on the contact you have had with the scholar. This report is one of the acquittal requirements that guarantees your RAMUS scholar's continuing scholarship payments.

***You are welcome to provide a copy of your report to your RAMUS scholar.***

**1. Contact with your mentored Scholar:**

Face-to-face       Email       Telephone

**2. Scholar input:**

Highly satisfactory     Satisfactory     Unsatisfactory

**3. Mentored activities by the scholar included:**

- Prepared annual RAMUS Scholar-Mentor Plan
- Observed you at work
- Spent time at your practice
- Spent time at a hospital, nursing home
- Spent supervised time with patients
- Demonstrated increased understanding of implications of rural practice

Comments / Other (please specify): .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

**Please complete this form and return it by 31 January 2009 to:**  
**NRHA (RAMUS)**  
**PO Box 280**  
**DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600                      Fax: 02 6285 4670**



# 2010 RAMUS Scholar - Mentor Plan

**SAMPLE**

**Scholar Name:**

**Date:**

**Mentor Name:**

The RAMUS Scholar-Mentor Plan is a tool to assist RAMUS scholars to document the rural activities they plan to undertake this year which are relevant to their decisions about working in rural or remote areas.

**Completing this Plan is a requirement of the scholarship.**

Steps to prepare your Plan:

1. discuss with your mentor the opportunities you have for rural activity and your expectations related to learning about rural and remote practice;
2. summarise your planned activities on this form; and
3. once your mentor has signed, submit this Plan by post, fax or as an email attachment.

**What activities do you plan to do in rural health this year?** For example, independent research, visiting rural high schools, clinical placements, activities with your mentor, participating in your rural health club, attending conferences.

List up to five activities:

**What will you gain from these rural health activities?**

**Mentor's Signature:**

**Date:**