

ACHSM NSW Branch

Health Leadership Accelerator Program

**2027 Recruitment
Candidate Guide**

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1. Introduction

What is Health Management?

Traditionally, health management work was undertaken in a hospital however as the health and aged care sector has grown into a diverse, complex and multi-layered industry, this work now takes place in a multitude of different settings. Settings include community health Centre's, hospitals, aged care facilities, surgeries, government departments, peak bodies, homes and workplaces. Health services can be metropolitan, regional or rural, large or small, public, not-for-profit or privately run.

Not surprisingly, a number of different types of health management roles have developed because of these changes to the health system. Health managers have had to develop, evolve and adapt their skills and competencies to operate successfully in these new areas of health service delivery.

In the past, a history of working in health and health management led to senior roles within the industry, however this is no longer the case. There is increasing recognition that good managers can and do move between health and other industries and have a variety of different backgrounds.

The Australasian College of Health Service Management (ACHSM) is the peak professional body for health managers in Australasia and brings together health leaders to learn, network and share ideas. The quality of management and leadership in the health sector has a substantial and tangible effect on patient outcomes and experiences, health care costs and the satisfaction of the health workforce. The College plays an integral role in creating, developing and supporting the leaders and managers of the health sector with a view to create better health for all.

People entering the field of health management come from many different areas, including those who trained as doctors, nurses or allied health professionals before specialising in management. Others who enter the field of health management may come from other industries with a business, finance or operational background.

Health Leadership Accelerator Program (HLAP)

The new ACHSM Health Leadership Accelerator Program (HLAP) is being introduced in NSW for the first time in 2027. The transition to this new program builds on a proud history of the College running the previous Health Management Internship Program (HMIP) for over 50 years in NSW.

This two-year program will equip you to advance your career in health management across the health sector.

2. HLAP Structure in NSW

Structured Professional Development Program

Each participant takes part in a structured professional series in each year of the two-year program. This includes;

- A two hour virtual Orientation session (Feb 2027).
- 4x full day face-to-face professional development workshops to develop management and leadership competencies.
- 8 x 90-minute virtual learning sets to build targeted capabilities.
- 4 ACHSM events (forums, workshops, webinars).

- Attendance at the ACHSM Asia-Pacific Health Leadership Congress (the program fee covers registration and three nights accommodation costs). The Congress will include a stream targeted specifically towards early to mid-career Health Managers.
- Working with an experienced mentor from within the health system.
- Completion of a Strengths assessment to build better self awareness of how to utilise individual strengths as a Health Manager and Leader.
- 4 x coaching sessions to develop strategies that build health management and leadership capabilities.
- 1 x Facilitated Learning Group delivered by subject matter experts – review our current courses [here](#).
- 1 x Online Learning Program developed by subject matter experts - review our current courses [here](#).
- Supervision and support from experienced Health Managers in your placement organization.
- Biannual meetings to review goals and progress against the ACHSM Health Service Management Framework.
- Regular meetings and program support from the ACHSM Program Manager.
- Full College membership during the 2-year program.

Experiential Workplace Learning Placements

The HLAP participants may be new external candidates or internal current employees who will either be seconded from their substantive roles for two years, or they will stay in their substantive positions. Each participant is employed either to a specific Placement Organisation for the duration of the program (for two years) or with specialty Placement Organisations for one year of the program.

Placement rotations are organised by ACHSM and the Placement Organisation's to ensure participants have exposure to a range of health service delivery components. During each placement, participants work closely with an assigned supervisor who assists in developing identified management competencies from the [ACHSM Health Service Management Competency Framework](#) throughout the various placement rotations in the organisation.

The Placement Organisations offer a range of workplace learning experiences. Depending on the requirements of each workplace, participants may work from the office, from home or a mix of the two with flexible arrangements. You will be required to be contactable and at work from 9.00am to 5.00pm as a minimum regardless of the workplace location on any given workday. Most, but not all positions are located in Sydney metropolitan health services. Applicants must be willing to relocate if necessary to secure a placement.

Each Placement Organisation and placement rotation is unique. The NSW Health system is large and complex, and there are so many opportunities to contribute to the coordination and service delivery of health care. Each health organisation also has a unique operating structure. Every Placement Organisation nominates a Placement Coordinator to manage the program within their organisation and to liaise with their employee to discuss the possible placements, based on the experience, interests and aptitude of each individual. Each placement rotation is usually four or six months duration, so that you have the opportunity to learn about the work function and actively contribute to achieving agreed objectives and deliverables during each rotation.

A range of Placement Organisations participate in the program, representing public, private and not-for-profit health care providers, Commonwealth Health organisation's and for-profit providers who assist in the coordination and delivery of health care services.

A comprehensive Intern Program Manual is supplied to successful candidates at the Orientation in February which outlines the obligations and expectations of the Program.

3. Recruitment and Selection

It is expected that entry into this new program will be very competitive. Our culturally diverse community is reflected in our health services and ACHSM is committed to building a diverse workforce through this recruitment process.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- i. Have an undergraduate degree in any field (preferably health related). Examples include (and are not limited to); Health Management, a Clinical degree, Public Health, Health Promotion, Population Health, Health Information Management, or Health Service Management. You must provide your undergraduate transcript as part of the application process.
- ii. Have completed a relevant Master's level postgraduate qualification in **Health Management and Leadership** at the time of making your application (ie, health service management, health management, health administration or international health management). Please note that a Master's qualification in Public Health is NOT an equivalent qualification. ACHSM accredits both undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications – you can refer to this list of accredited [tertiary providers](#), to review examples of the subjects we are looking for in your qualification. You must provide your postgraduate transcript as part of the application process.
- iii. Applicants must have at least 3 years of relevant full-time work experience before applying for this program. The HLA is not equivalent to a graduate program, this is a demanding and rigorous program that is suited to those with industry experience.
- iv. Applicants who can demonstrate a history of excellence in individual performance and a commitment to delivering service excellence are encouraged to apply. References will be sought to verify your performance.
- v. Possess Australian citizenship or be a permanent resident or have the permanent right to work in Australia when applying. Proof of citizenship, permanent residency or the right to work will be required if you progress to interviews.
- vi. We value the individual and collective knowledge, skills and leadership capabilities of all First Nations people in our workforce. ACHSM seeks to support Aboriginal people to participate in the HLA and will arrange appropriate cultural and organisational supports to enable the success of participants who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. For more information on the available First Nations support please contact Leticia.whelan@achsm.org.au.

Applicants will be required to consent to all pre-employment checks required for employment which include but may not be limited to: Criminal Record Checks; Working with Children Checks and Health Clearances including vaccinations such as COVID and flu vaccinations.

The annual recruitment and selection process includes both written and face-to-face selection components and commences with an online application and completion of comprehensive application questions, followed by shortlisting of suitable applicants who then participate in virtual individual interviews, group assessment activities, and panel interviews.

Preliminary offers are made in October, and employment contracts will be completed by the end of November. If you accept the placement in the program, a one-off Program fee of \$1200+ GST is applicable to cover the recruitment and selection expenses.

The College reserves the right not to appoint to the program, and the annual number of placement offers is dictated by the number of participating Placement Organisations.

4. Employment Arrangements

4.1. Salaries and conditions

NSW participants recruited through the external recruitment process will generally be employed under the [NSW Health Employee Administration Staff \(State Award\)](#) or equivalent. The Award outlines the leave and other conditions of employment. The suggested rates below are the **minimum rates payable** in the Program. The current NSW Health Award (2026/2027) pay rates* are:

Participants with no management experience:

- 1st year (Admin Officer, Level 4, Year 1) \$77,917.00pa+super
- 2nd year (Admin Officer, Level 5, Year 1) \$82,056.00pa +super

Participants with three or more years' management experience:

- 1st Year (Admin Officer, Level 6, Year 1) \$86,600.00pa +super
- 2nd year (Admin Officer, Level 6, Year 2) \$88,647.00pa +super

Other salary benefits (such as salary packaging) may be agreed upon but should not reduce this base salary value.

*these rates are subject to change (with CPI and negotiated salary increases) and vary for some organisations.

4.2 Employment Contracts

Participants are either permanent employees (if nominated internally by the Placement Organisation to complete the program) or temporary employees of the Placement Organisation (if offered a placement from the 2027 Intake process). Therefore, each individual is required to abide by the ethics and conditions of employment in each Placement Organisation. Placement Organisations will issue employment contracts to individual participants.

4.3 ACHSM HLAP Participant Agreement

Participants will be issued with a Program Agreement from ACHSM outlining the mutual obligations and agreements during the two years of the program. This agreement will outline the participants' responsibilities if they leave the program prior to the completion of the two years.

4.4 ACHSM HLAP Costs to participants

Placement Organisations cover all costs of the program for successful applicants except for:

- Travel costs to PD events and the annual Congress.
- Administration fee. On successful admission to the program and before commencement, Participants recruited through the external recruitment process are required to pay an administration fee of \$1,320 (\$1200 plus GST) to cover recruitment costs.

5. Recruitment Process and Timelines

Recruitment Step	Timelines	Recruitment process
1. Online Application	Tuesday 14th July- Friday 7th August 2026 (17.00 AEST)	Online applications received directly through the ACHSM website, or via the link in the SEEK advertisement. If applying via SEEK then a link to a further comprehensive online application will be sent to you for completion. All applicants must read this Candidate Guideline and attend one of the Information Sessions (if possible) before submitting an application.
2. Attend an Information Session	Available for you to learn about the program	Choose one session to attend, and click on the link to receive a calendar invitation to this virtual meeting; Wednesday 22nd July from 12.30 pm to 1.15 pm AEST Wednesday 22nd July from 4.00 pm to 4.45 pm Wednesday 29th July from 12.20 to 1.15 pm Wednesday 29th July from 4.00 pm to 4.45 pm
3. Review of applications by selection panel	Between Monday 10th Friday 21st August	The selection panel will review all written applications to determine which applications will proceed to the interview stage. Applicants will be advised by COB on Friday 21st August if their application is progressing to the next stage which is a virtual interview on Tuesday the 25th August. <i>Note – applicants will be advised if their application does not progress beyond this stage.</i>
4. Interviews	Tuesday 25th August 9.00 am to 6.00 pm	1 st Interview – Individual (virtual) interviews of 20 minutes duration with the NSW Program Manager, and a current 2 nd year Management Intern. These interviews will be recorded and shared with selection panels.
	Monday 31st August 9.00 am to 5.00 pm	2 nd Interview – Group Assessment Day (in person at a Sydney CBD location)
	Early October	3 rd Interview – Prospective 2027 participants may be invited to attend a final interview with their preferred Placement Organisation/s (who will have received your application and recorded interview)
5. Offers	End October/November	Placement offers are made and contracts are drawn up by the end of November

Please ensure you are able to attend interviews on these nominated dates.

6. Assessment Criteria

In addition to the selection criteria, applications will be assessed in the interview process against five competencies from the [ACHSM Health Service Management Competency Framework](#).

ENABLING DOMAIN A: Health Leadership and Ethical Behaviour

Health leadership has been defined in Australia to have five components: leads self, engages others, achieves outcomes, drives innovation, and shapes systems.

- Articulates and aligns mission, vision, objectives, values and priorities within leadership and management practice.
- Demonstrates ethical, collaborative, strategic leadership.
- Balances competing organisational priorities.
- Exhibits appropriate leadership attributes and styles: adapts leadership style to suit the situation.
- Encourages participatory decision making; encourages decision making through consultation, problem analysis, promotion of solutions and new ideas.
- Builds organisational and Systemic resilience.

ENABLING DOMAIN D: Self-awareness and self-confidence

The ability to have an accurate view of one's own strengths, limitations, values and attitudes including the impact that one has on others. A willingness to address development needs through reflective, self-directed learning, observing, seeking feedback and by trying new approaches.

- Demonstrates a commitment to advancing the profession and colleagues by sharing knowledge and experience.
- Balances professional and personal accountability.
- Knows own attributes i.e., strengths and limitations.
- Displays emotional intelligence. The ability to understand, use, and manage one's own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathise with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict.
- Seeks feedback regarding strengths and limitations (reflective practice).
- Demonstrates a commitment to well-being. Establishes habits supporting well-being and creates a work climate supportive of the total health of oneself.

ACTION DOMAIN A: Communication

Communication is more than just the sending and receiving of information. It is also about understanding intent and the degree to which a communicator's goals are achieved through effective and appropriate interactions.

- Demonstrates verbal communication skills in formal and informal situations to convey meaning, build shared understanding, and productively move agendas forward.
- Demonstrates effective writing skills.
- Listens with understanding and empathy and responds appropriately, both verbally and non-verbally.
- Demonstrates effective internal and external stakeholder communications.

ENABLING DOMAIN E: Professionalism

The ability to align personal and organisational conduct with ethical and professional standards that include a responsibility to the patient (individual) and the community, a service orientation, and a commitment to lifelong learning and improvement.

- Advocates for evidence informed policy that enhances outcomes for individuals and communities.
- Practices due diligence to meet management responsibilities.
- Uses evidence to inform decision making.
- Demonstrates a commitment to competence, integrity and altruism.
- Demonstrates a commitment to professional development.
- Fosters a culture of accountability - Creates a culture of strong accountability; Holds others accountable for setting and upholding high performance.

ACTION DOMAIN B: Relationship Management

The ability to use awareness of one's own emotions and those of others to manage interactions successfully. Relationship management involves clear communication and effective handling of conflicts: it is an essential emotional intelligence skill and enables you to create an environment that is spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe.

- Understands and champions individual and organisational responsibilities in relation to cultural respect and cultural safety for First Nations people.
- Values and promotes diversity, inclusion, and equity for all stakeholders.
- Builds the culture, systems, and processes for successful stakeholder engagement.
- Responds appropriately to the changing requirements and evolving healthcare needs of consumers.
- Demonstrates commitment to improving the health of the community.
- Balances organisational and social responsibility.

7. Interviews

Applicants who reach the interview stage will be notified by COB on Friday 21st August.



7.1 Individual Virtual Interviews

Your individual virtual interview will be with the NSW Program Manager, Leticia Whelan, and a second year Management intern. Your interview will be recorded so that it can be shared with selection panel members, and potential placement organisations. The interview will be for a maximum of 20 minutes. You will be asked motivational and behavioural questions.

The behavioural questions will require you to respond to questions by describing how you have responded to previous situations. In responding to these questions, draw on examples from all aspects of your life, including work, volunteer and community work experience.

Individual Interview Tips

- The interviewer wants you to do your best. During the interview you may be asked probing questions to help clarify your responses.
- Choose examples that highlight your strengths and focus on your own involvement in various situations (use 'I' rather than 'we'). Use the most recent examples possible.
- Before you attend the interview, consider past experiences where you have demonstrated the selection criteria to make it easier to provide an example.
- Candidates should refresh themselves on key topical issues affecting the delivery of Healthcare in NSW.
- Practice can be of real benefit. Engage in mock interviews with friends, colleagues, career advisers – anyone who is prepared to help.
- Walk the interviewer through your response in a logical, sequential fashion. Structure your responses according to the STAR approach outlined below.

Using the STAR approach

Situation: A brief outline of the situation or setting, who was involved and what was your role?

Task: What did you do?

Action: How did you do it?

Result: What was the outcome and what feedback did you receive?

Remember, the selection panel want you to do well. They have spent considerable time screening applicants and have identified you as a potential participant. They will be looking for confirmation that you have the skills and values to be successful within the program, so try to be enthusiastic and energised!



7.2 Group Assessment Centre Interview

You will be given a scenario where you will be asked to participate as part of a larger group of candidates who are also attending. Your group will be asked to present your observations and recommendations to the panel.

The assessors will observe how you work in a team to solve problems, your analytical and teamwork skills.

Group Exercise Tips

- Make sure you read and listen to all instructions carefully and keep in mind which selection criteria are being assessed.
- Speak in a clear and concise manner.
- Ensure you actively participate but also listen to others contributions.
- Take your role seriously and do your best to behave as you would if the situation were real.

Whilst attending the Group Assessment Centre, you will also complete two individual assessment tasks.

1. A written assessment to assess your written communication skills

The written task will require you to read through material and to prepare a written response that will be based on a current NSW health challenge or issue.

Note – you will need to bring your own laptop with you to complete this task within the required timeframe, and to email it to the selection panel.

2. A 5 minute individual “research pitch” to the selection panel.

You will be provided with an overview of this task if you are invited to attend an interview. You will be asked to present to the selection panel on an area of research interest for you as a prospective Health Manager for five minutes, and then the panel will ask you questions about your proposal.

Group Assessment Centre process tips

- The Interview process is not designed to catch you out. Try to relax, be yourself and enjoy the activities.
- Listen carefully to the instructions you are given. If you are unsure what to do, ask for clarification.
- Address all the issues and questions outlined in each activity.
- Know the time limit for each activity. These will be provided at the commencement of each activity.
- Consider the assessment criteria when framing your answers.
- Be punctual. Ensure you arrive at least 10 minutes early.
- Familiarise yourself with the location and things like parking, public transport.
- Ensure you have the right start time and date.
- Take the contact number in case of emergency.
- If something goes wrong, call the organiser to let them know.
- Be yourself and enjoy the day!



7.3 Placement Organisation Interviews

Following the individual interviews, the Selection Panel will review your performance in all stages of the application process and rank each applicant to make a final recommendation of the participants that are assessed as suitable for the program. We will then issue these applicants with an indicative offer of placement in the HLAP, pending being matched to a Placement Organisation.

If you receive this preliminary offer (**in the week of 21st September**), you will be given an opportunity to nominate your preferred placement from the list of available Placement Organisations, noting that ACHSM reserves the right to match you with any of the available placements.

Your ranking will be used to match all potential participants to the available placements. It is likely that the Placement Coordinators will want to arrange an interview with you so that they can discuss your background and interests, and to understand why you want to complete the program in their organisation. These interviews will be held in the first 3 weeks of October. Please note that some organisations may choose to complete this process using the resources from the selection process (your scores in the various stages of the selection process, including your individual recorded interview, and written application), rather than conducting separate matching interviews. This is the choice of each Placement Organisation.

Once ACHSM receives the final results from these interviews, final offers will be made to the successful 2027 HLAP participants, and both employment contracts and Placement Contracts will be completed by the end of November 2026.

8. Contact Details

Please contact the NSW Program Manager with any enquiries:

Email: leticia.whelan@achsm.org.au

Telephone: 0487 777 254

Please note that when contacting us you may need to leave a message for the team and your call/email will be returned as soon as possible.

Appendix A - Frequently Asked Questions
(to be read in conjunction with the 2027 Candidate Guide)**1. Can I apply if I am completing the final units of my postgraduate degree in 2026?**

Unfortunately not – you need to have completed the requirements to complete the qualification at the time of submitting your application. You must submit a transcript to verify this.

2. I obtained my qualifications overseas, will you accept these?

If you have obtained your qualifications overseas, it is preferred that you have had them assessed for equivalence by an Australian University. You also need to submit officially translated copies of your qualification and academic transcripts if they were not issued in English.

3. Does it matter if I do not have any management or leadership experience?

No. The recruitment process is aimed at identifying those with management and leadership potential and the program itself is designed to build on this capacity.

4. Do I need to find my own placements?

No, this is done by ACHSM in conjunction with the Placement Organisations.

5. What is my salary?

At the time of publication, the salary for the NSW participants is between \$77,000 to \$88,000 (plus super and leave entitlements) depending on your experience.

6. I am already paid above the salary for Participants as outlined in the Program Guidelines. Will this be matched by the Placement Organisation?

It is possible a Placement Organisation may pay a higher salary but this is unusual. Placement Organisation's also pay a program fee to ACHSM to provide the professional development opportunities throughout the program, in addition to your salary.

Participants appointed to the program internally with their existing employer will need to negotiate the salary for the two-year period, and are most often offered the above mentioned salary.

7. When does the Program start?

Participants will commence their employment and the program in the first week of February 2027.

8. Am I guaranteed a job at the completion of the Program?

No. In most cases towards the end of your second year you will need to begin looking for future employment. However, the prospects of participants who have completed the program will be extremely good, as you will be able to demonstrate the competencies you have developed over the two year program. Note that you cannot successfully complete the program if you leave before completing 22 months of the program (end of November in the second year of the program).

9. What documentation do I need to complete throughout the program?

When you attend the orientation session you will be provided with an overview of the program documentation requirements. Participants are required to prepare placement plans, provide regular capability checklists and updates and complete placement evaluations and performance reviews with supervisors throughout the two years of the program and to provide this documentation to ACHSM. Participants are assessed over the two years based on the ACHSM Health Service Management Competency Framework.

10. Is there an age limit?

No. People of all ages are encouraged to apply.

11. What support is available to Participants in the Program?

Participants are very well supported throughout the 2-year program. You will be allocated a Supervisor during each rotation to guide you through their respective placements, and there is a nominated Placement Coordinator who oversees the program in every organisation. You will be expected to take part in the ACHSM Mentor Program as a mentee, to support your professional development as a Health Manager. Support is also provided from the ACHSM Program Manager to assist participants, supervisors, and Placement Organisation's to maximise the learning of the program, including conducting two biannual placement visits (one virtual and one face to face) to discuss and review your progress and learning needs.

12. Can I apply if I have previously applied for the ACHSM Health Management Internship Program?

Candidates who have previously applied for other programs are encouraged to apply again, so long as you meet the selection criteria.

13. Where will I be based?

Most participants are placed within a specific organisation for the two years and change rotations and sites within that organisation. Other participants may be given a one-year contract at a specific organisation and will be allocated to a different placement organisation in their 2nd Year to complete the program*.

**While we will make every effort possible to secure a placement for the 2nd year of the program, it cannot be guaranteed as the College is not the employer.*

14. Do I need to complete any checks prior to applying?

No, not when applying, if you are successful with your application, you will be required to undergo any required checks required by each Placement Organisation prior to a formal offer of employment.

15. Are there any costs for the Intern?

Participants recruited through the external recruitment process who accept a 2027 placement offer will pay an **administration fee of \$1200 (+GST)** before commencing the program. Participants are also responsible for all travel costs. This includes travel to all PD events and flights to attend Congress in whichever capital city it is being held that year. Accommodation costs in Sydney for regional participants are covered by ACHSM as well as catering at PD events.