

HMBS Remuneration Guide for Consumer Involvement in Health Research

Purpose:

This guide is developed to assist UQ researchers to remunerate health consumers involved in health and medical research. The University of Queensland (UQ) recognises the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research, and its requirement to appropriately remunerate health consumers and community.

Definitions:

UQ Financial and Business Services division (FBS) TAX define 'genuine' Health Consumers are people with lived experience of health issues, including family members, friends or a carer (not in formal employment as a support worker) who have experience of providing ongoing care and support to someone experiencing health issues. They may use, or are potential users, of health organisations. This does not include health care professionals (refer to honorarium declaration 2025).

Development Guide:

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical research: [Statement Consumer and Community Involvement](#) And the Health Consumers Queensland's (HCQ) position statement on the remuneration of health consumers: [HCQ Remuneration Effective 1 July 2024](#)

STEP 1: Obtain budget approval for Health Consumer remuneration payments

Communicate with your supervisor, project lead, professional research staff and/or finance team of your plans for consumer involvement. Prepare a health consumer involvement plan of the activities required for your project with a budget for their review.

STEP 2: Honorarium declaration is **NOT** required for 'genuine' Health Consumer

UQ Financial and Business Services division (FBS) TAX team have advised the honorarium declaration is not required for payments to volunteers where (refer to honorarium declaration 2025):

- Total payment to the volunteer/health consumer is \$75 or less; or if
- UQ can reasonably determine an exception to withhold applies without the need for written confirmation from the volunteer. This is applicable in the following circumstances:
 - A 'genuine' health consumer** – where we have adhered to state or national guidelines, including recommended payment rates (refer to Table 1: HCQ Position Statement).
 - Health Consumers are people with lived experience of health issues, including family members, friends or a carer (not in formal employment as a support worker) who have experience of providing ongoing care and support to someone experiencing health issues. They may use, or are potential users, of health organisations.
 - This does not include health care professionals.

For more information on preferred payment methods and the supporting documentation requirements for payments where an honorarium declaration is not necessary, please refer to the [Outgoing Payments Overview](#)

If the payments exceed HCQ guidelines, you will need FBS Tax approval to ensure the payment is to a genuine health consumer. Payments to other types of volunteers (that are not health consumers) will also need tax approval.

- If you are unsure, please email UQ FBS TAX: fbs-tax@uq.edu.au prior to health consumer activity or the health consumer payments may be declined.

Table 1: HCQ Consumer remuneration and reimbursement rates effective 1 July 2024

<p>Consumer representatives engaged for ongoing, regular, high-level committees e.g. Safety and Quality Executive Committees, Consumer Advisory Committees etc.</p>	<p>\$234 per meeting 4 hours and under. \$469 per meeting over 4 hours. <i>These two rates incorporate pre-reading and travel time.</i></p>
<p>Consumers engaged in operational level committees and meetings or less formal ways e.g. participation in operational level committees and meetings, advisory groups, single focus groups, training and coaching sessions or a one-off review of patient brochures or letters etc.</p>	<p>\$50 per hour. <i>If health service requires face to face attendance for operational level committees and meeting and less formal consumer representation/participation, then ATO travel rates should be paid in addition to the hourly rate.</i></p>

STEP 3: Discuss Health Consumer/s Preferred Payment Option

Prior to beginning 'genuine' health consumer involvement, it is best practice to discuss payment methods with your health consumer/s. Ensure you have up-to-date information on the correct UQ payment methods available, and any necessary approvals have been obtained.

It is recommended researchers:

- Formally thank health consumer/s as a valued member of your research team.
- Discuss with health consumer/s the best way to make payment e.g., direct payment to their bank account or digital gift card.
- Put payment information in writing to the health consumer (via email or involvement agreement) with details of the research team UQ consumer contact person who will be processing the payment/s.
- Organise to reimburse the health consumer/s for any out-of-pocket expenses.
- If the health consumer declines payment, acknowledge the gesture and advise the health consumer that if they change their mind, speak to the UQ contact person.
- UQ researchers **DO NOT** to provide personal tax advice to health consumers and it is recommended to include a disclaimer in your health consumer payment documentation.

Example: ***"This content is of a general nature only and should not be relied upon as personal tax advice for the health consumer. If a health consumer has concerns related to their personal tax affairs, we recommend they seek further advice from their own tax accountant."***

ATO website links: [Paying volunteers | Australian Taxation Office \(ato.gov.au\)](#)

There is also a free TAX HELP program that helps people earning \$60,000 or less per year:
<https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Your-tax-return/Help-and-support-to-lodge-your-tax-return/Tax-Help-program/>

STEP 4: Health Consumer Remuneration Payment Process

4.1 Direct Payments

4.1.1 Consumer:

- Health Consumer to provide:
 - Name
 - Email address
 - Residential address
 - Account details

Important: Please ensure all health consumer personal details, especially bank details, are stored securely.

4.1.2 Researcher/Administrator:

- The 'EFT Payment Request – Domestic' form (please ensure you have the latest version).
- To locate the current form, see link below from Operational areas > Finance > Forms and resources > **Accounts payable** > Resource (table of contents) > **EFT Payment Request-Domestic:**

[Finance forms and resources - Chief Operating Officer Portfolio - University of Queensland \(uq.edu.au\)](https://www.uq.edu.au/finance/forms-and-resources)

On the EFT Payment Request cover sheet complete:

- Request area – *Faculties (Pst) if applicable*: **Medicine or Health and Behavioural Science**
- Enter payment information, example below:

EXAMPLE:

Purpose of payment <i>(E.g. Commission, Grant, Hardship, Refund, Scholarship)</i>	Volunteer consumer remuneration	Expense type <i>(Optional field)</i>	
Recipient of payment <i>(Student, Staff, Supplier, Participant, Honorarium, Other)</i>	Honorarium	Currency	AUD
If 'Other' more detail			
Vendor Name (compulsory) <i>Note, name may vary to your specific payment purpose</i>	Honorarium AUD	Vendor Number <i>(Auto populated)</i>	0000004486

- Complete the "Prepared by" section with your name and role title details.
- The "Authorised by" section can be left blank unless the total amount of payments on the sheet are greater than \$50,000.
- The EFT payment request 'Verified by Finance PST' from your Organisational Unit/School Finance representative.

On the Excel Data Input sheet complete:

- Enter either invoice number or health consumer name (must be unique identifier, use First Initial, Surname, Date e.g., J SMITH 01012023).
- Voucher Line number will always be 01 for each payment (unless it is being split across two chartstrings, then 01 and 02).
- Enter the chartstring details for your research project.
- Free Form Tag (FFT) is health consumer name e.g., SMITHJ or project name.

NB. Read 'Instructions' tab on the EFT payment request form. When you submit the form make sure you make a **PDF copy** and **submit both the PDF file and Excel spreadsheet to Finance**.

EXAMPLE:

3. Complete the 'Coversheet' tab	<p>> Follow the field descriptions to enter your data. > Save the excel spreadsheet. > Convert the 'Coversheet' and 'Data Input' tab sheets as single PDF file to enable the addition of digital signatures on the coversheet.</p> <p>How to create a multiple page PDF</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Right Click on the worksheet tab 'Coversheet', hold the {CTRL} button together with the left mouse button and <click> on the 'Data Input' tab. 2. Select {File}, {Print} and "Print Active Sheets" to PDF.
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4.1.3 Send Payment Information to Finance:

Email Finance i.e., hmbs.finance@uq.edu.au with below documentation:

- Direct Payment = 'EFT Payment request – Domestic' form plus a PDF copy of the excel sheets.
- If required, attached a copy of confirmation email from FBS TAX (i.e. amount is above HCQ rates).

4.2 Gift Cards

4.2.1 Consumer:

Consumers may prefer not to receive cash payments and Finance can arrange for genuine health consumers to receive a Gift Card. Finance provides three gift card options:

- i. Coles Gift card – no fees and is redeemable at Coles Supermarkets and Coles Central stores nationwide, they are NOT redeemable on Coles Online or at Coles Express or Liquorland.

This card will expire 4 years from the date of issue.

- ii. Wish Gift Card - no fees and redeemable at multiple retail outlets i.e., Woolworths, BIG W, BWS, Dan Murphy's and participating EG Ampol fuel sites.

This card has no expiry date.

- iii. Prezzy Smart eGift Card <https://www.prezzy.com.au/> - UQ has an agreement with Prezzy which provides discounts and much lower fees for their online gift cards. The UQ discount is applied at checkout. Read Finance [overview](#) listing the benefits and instructions in [Advance payments](#) section.

Prezzy cards - redeemable at over 300 retail brands. Digital cards only, delivered by email or SMS and can be kept in a digital wallet. Health consumers go into the website and choose their preferred card.

N.B. read the Prezzy terms & conditions each retail brand has limitations e.g., set \$ amount or minimum spend amounts. Also, there is a "swapping" system with limits e.g., swap a \$45 voucher for another retail brand but the min spend is \$50 or amounts only go up in multiples of \$10.

This card is valid for 3 years from the date of issue.

NB. For Prezzy gift cards please round up in \$5 to \$10 increments as this site has value restrictions and finance is aware of this anomaly.

4.2.2 Send Payment Information to Finance:

To organise email your payment request to hmbbs.finance@uq.edu.au with:

- Email request the number of cards/e-gift cards required, and specific amount of the gift card/s.
- Confirm your preference for digital-gift card or physical gift card.
- If required, attach the project confirmation/approval letter i.e., the conditions of your funding.
- Include chartstring details.

NB. Gift Cards will be issued to the researcher/organiser who will then distributed to the health consumer.

STEP 5: Out of Pocket Expenses

The reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses are to be process differently via the non-staff domestic expense reimbursement form. To make payment email hmbbs.finance@uq.edu.au with the below documentation:

- Non-staff domestic expense reimbursement (please ensure you have the latest version). <https://staff.uq.edu.au/files/36843/non-staff-domestic-expense-reimbursement-form.pdf>
- Complete details in the non-staff domestic expense reimbursement form and attach a copy of the receipt for the out-of-pocket expenses.

STEP 6: Health Consumer Travel Claim

If research project requires face to face attendance for less formal health consumer representation/participation, then ATO travel rates should be paid in addition to the hourly rate. Travel per kilometre can be claimed via the ATO cents per kilometre method.

ATO Resource: <https://www.ato.gov.au/Business/Income-and-deductions-for-business/Deductions/Deductions-for-motor-vehicle-expenses/Cents-per-kilometre-method/>

Finance advise that researchers can pay mileage reimbursement payments to Health Consumers, using the attached letter (Appendix 2) as supporting documentation. From a transactional perspective, the mileage allowance amount can be added to the total amount payable for the Health Consumer via the EFT payment spreadsheet (or gift cards if that is the preferred option).

Email Finance, hmbbs.finance@uq.edu.au with the below documentation:

- Complete details of health consumers travel milage in the 'Health Consumer Travel Claim letter' (see Appendix 2: Health Consumer Travel Claim letter_2024).
- Send the 'Health Consumer Travel Claim letter' and approvals to HMBS Finance for payment.

For assistance and further information please contact:

- Jo Maxwell - jo.maxwell@uq.edu.au
Manager, Consumer and Community Engagement
HMBS Research Office

Prepared by:

- Jo Maxwell, Manager, Consumer and Community Engagement, HMBS
- A/Prof Nadeeka Dissanayaka, Principal Research Fellow, UQCCR
- With advice from UQ HMBS Faculty Financial Services and the Corporate Finance, Tax and Group Accounting Management team.