



# Program Guidelines

## Innovative Places

### 1. Program overview and objectives

The Department of Education invites applications for a further round of Innovative Places funding for courses in areas of national priority with strong industry linkages. This funding will support high-quality bachelor level qualifications in areas of skills and workforce need.

This allocation process will provide up to 300 commencing Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) in 2023 only (including appropriate pipeline funding) in line with the current 2021-2023 Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) funding agreement period.

Innovative Places are a flexible funding pool designed to respond to national priority and emerging skills needs. These places will specifically focus on courses that can demonstrate strong integration, and innovation in course content, structure or delivery.

Places are allocated to providers for the duration of their CGS funding agreement period only and will be re-allocated for the next funding agreement period (2024-2026).

Providers who currently receive Innovative Places funding, or are successful in receiving an allocation of funding in this current round, are not eligible to retain this funding ongoing. However, providers are eligible to re-apply for allocations as part of the 2024-2026 funding agreement period. For 2024, around 900 commencing CSPs will be available under the program.

### 2. Grant amount and grant period

Funding is provided under section 30-1 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and Chapter 3 – National Priorities of the *Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines 2020*.

Funding is provided through the CGS and will be allocated to providers for a specified number of commencing places in approved courses for 2023 only. This funding will be pipelined for the duration of the course based on the standard 75 per cent costing methodology.

The use of a 75 per cent pipeline is consistent with the long-term provision of additional Commonwealth supported places. This provides for a consistent methodology for all providers and courses (with the exception for CSPs for courses of study in medicine). Funding for these places will terminate by 2027.

### 3. Eligibility

The following higher education providers meet the eligibility criteria to be invited to apply for an allocation of these Innovative Place CSPs:

- Australian universities listed at Table A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA); or
- University colleges as registered by Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.

Higher education providers who do not meet these criteria are not eligible to apply.

Courses for inclusion among Innovative Places funding must be in an area of national priority or skills needs, and lead to an award of a bachelor level qualification. Places will not be provided for postgraduate level courses.

### 4. Selection process

Allocation of places will be determined based on the outcomes of a competitive selection process for eligible providers.

Applications will be assessed against selection criteria by the Department of Education.

The Department of Education will make recommendations to the Minister for Education on proposed allocations of places for approved courses for individual providers. The final decision on the allocation of places will be determined by the Minister for Education.

### 5. Selection criteria

In applying for Innovative Places, providers will be required to submit information in relation to the requested number of commencing CSPs for delivery, and a written statement of up to 500 words against the following criteria:

- evidence that places will be delivered in areas of national priority, skills needs and workforce shortage
- how proposed course(s) will bolster industry collaboration and linkages, support labour market needs, and advance the National Priorities Industry Linkage Fund's (NPILF) purpose
- innovation in course content, structure or delivery.

#### 5.1 Delivery of places in areas of national priority, skills needs and workforce shortage

Places will only be allocated to courses which meet areas of national priority, skills needs and workforce shortage.

These areas include those outlined in the Government's [Secure Australian Jobs](#) plan and the National Skills Commission's [Skills Priority List](#).

This includes, but is not limited to, courses in:

- Nursing
- Engineering
- Health and aged care
- Teaching (including early childhood)
- Disability care
- Digital and cybersecurity
- Advanced manufacturing
- Clean energy

Places may also be allocated to courses aligned to relevant local industry needs or shortages, however applicants must provide evidence to support these claims.

Including evidence such as links to the areas of shortage (National Skills Commission or State and Territory Government skills priority list) and examples of how all or some courses have been designed with industry in the written statement is encouraged.

### 5.2 Supporting the National Priorities and Industry Linkage Fund (NPILF)

The NPILF allocates grants to universities to help engage industry to produce work-ready graduates. It focuses on the following three priorities:

- Increase the number of internships, practicums, and other innovative approaches to work-integrated learning
- Increase the number of STEM-skilled graduates and improve their employment outcomes
- Support universities to develop and strengthen partnerships with industry

Places will be allocated to providers that demonstrate in the written statement that courses will be informed by industry engagement, specifically addressing the NPILF's priorities, and will deliver work-ready graduates.

### 5.3 Innovation in course content, structure or delivery

Places will be allocated to providers that can, in the supplied written statement, demonstrate innovative course content or an innovative approach to how the course is delivered or structured. Providers should elaborate on the role that these innovative methods will play in supporting the skills needs of our future workforce.

### 5.4 Examples of highly suitable, suitable and not suitable applications

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|------------------------|---|
| <i>Highly suitable</i> | <p>Courses are explicitly linked to areas of national priorities and skills needs in areas currently assessed to be in shortage that are indicated to have strong future demand.</p> <p>Written statement provides strong claims to demonstrate courses will address NPILF's priorities, are informed by industry engagement and will deliver work-ready graduates. This may include examples of how some courses may have been designed with industry partners, include opportunities for work-integrated learning and placement and support labour market needs.</p> <p>Course shows innovative and flexible approaches to course content and delivery designed to increase student interaction and engagement with industry.</p> |
| <i>Suitable</i>        | <p>Courses are explicitly linked to areas of national priorities and skills needs in areas of medium to low shortage.</p> <p>Written statement provides claims to show courses are informed by industry engagement and will deliver work-ready graduates. Statement provides limited detail to describe level of industry engagement.</p> <p>Statement provides limited detail to describe the innovative nature of course content or an innovative approach to course structure of delivery.</p>   |

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|---------------------|---|
| <i>Not suitable</i> | Courses are not in areas of national priorities or skills need.<br>No written statement provided. |
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## 6. Application submission

Applications will open on 17 August 2022 and close on 19 September 2022.

Applications must be submitted to [CGS@education.gov.au](mailto:CGS@education.gov.au)

The Department of Education, at its discretion, may seek additional information, or allow applicants to remedy minor errors, but will not accept responsibility for any misunderstanding arising from the failure by an applicant to comply with the requirements set out in these guidelines, or arising from any ambiguity, discrepancy, inconsistency, error or omission contained in the application.

Late applications will not be considered.

## 7. Selection process

The Department of Education will assess the information with recommendations reviewed by relevant officials.

Recommendations will then be made to the Minister for Education on which providers should receive funding for approved courses and the proposed number of places. Advice will consider the objectives of the program and total available funding.

While a provider's application may be rated highly suitable or suitable, it does not guarantee that the provider will receive the full allocation of places requested. After providers have been ranked in the competitive process, the allocation of places will consider the following factors:

- High level of interest – if the total number of course requests exceeds available funding then providers who best address selection criteria will be granted a higher proportion of their requested places compared to lower scoring providers.
- Course priority, as ranked by the provider in their application. If funding is significantly oversubscribed, funding to providers may be based on the 'Course Priority' rank that the provider has given each course. In this instance, more places may be allocated to courses which the provider has ranked highly, and they may receive a lower allocation for the courses they have ranked lower.

## 8. Successful providers

Funding is provided through the CGS and will be allocated to providers for each respective commencing place in approved course(s), pipelined for the duration of the course based on the standard 75 per cent costing methodology. The use of a 75 per cent pipeline is consistent with the long-term provision of additional Commonwealth supported places. This provides for a consistent methodology for all providers and courses.

Funding will be reflected in providers' CGS funding agreements. For Table A universities, this will list the approved courses and combined total funding provided for courses for 2023. CGS funding agreements for university colleges will be required to reflect the specific allocation of places for each approved course.

CGS funding agreements will be required to be established with providers who do not currently have an agreement in place with the Commonwealth.

If a cost-neutral reallocation of funding (to another approved course) is required, the provider will need to contact the Department of Education who will assess the reallocation accordingly.

## **9. Reconciliation of funding**

Funding will be provided for commencing students in 2023 only for the delivery of CSPs in approved courses.

Funding will be subject to reconciliation processes in future years. Providers will not be permitted to roll-over unspent funding to the following year.

This funding will not be subject to the Higher Education Continuity Guarantee in 2023.

Providers will be required to submit estimates of utilisation of these places as per usual CGS estimates collection processes.

## **10. Roles and responsibilities**

The Minister for Education has overall responsibility for the program and will make decisions including which provider will receive an allocation of funding and the level of funding provided.

The Department of Education will assess applications and provide advice to the Minister on which proposals from providers (including courses and number of CSPs) should receive funding.

The Department of Education will also develop conditions of grant for each successful provider, to be reflected in the provider's CGS funding agreement.

## **11. Additional information**

In general, the information contained in applications will reflect publicly available information regarding the provider's strategies and courses, or publicly available as part of the Department of Education suite of provider and student enrolment data. Successful providers will have details of allocated places and funding included in their CGS funding agreement, which is published on the department's website.

## **12. Contact information**

Questions on the program and application process can be submitted via email to [CGS@education.gov.au](mailto:CGS@education.gov.au).