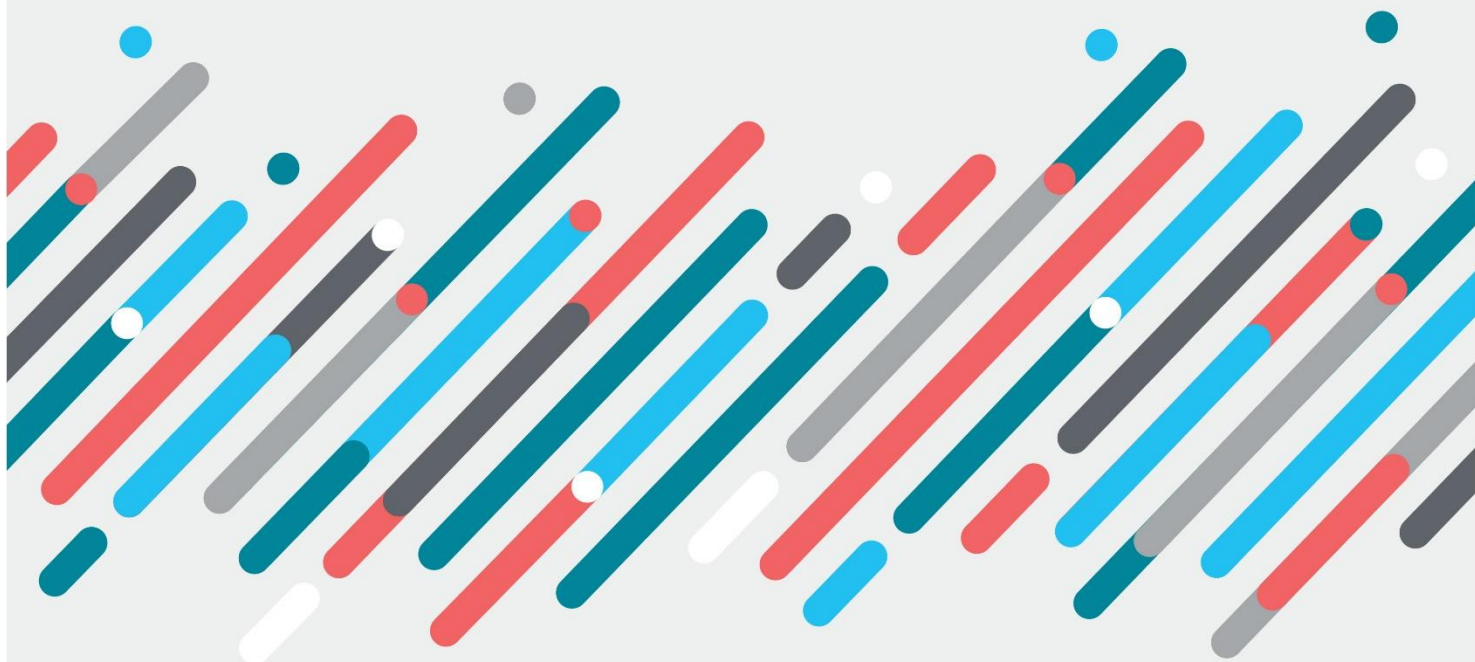




**Australian Government**  
**Department of Education**

# Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Workforce

Paid Practicum Grant Opportunity Guidelines  
(2026-2027)



## ECEC Workforce

### Paid Practicum Guidelines

<b>Opening dates:</b>	<b>28/04/2026 for Round 1 of applications</b> <b>12/10/2026 for Round 2 of applications (subject to funding availability)</b>
<b>Closing dates:</b>	<b>03/07/2026 for Round 1 of applications</b> <b>11/12/2026 for Round 2 of Applications (subject to funding availability)</b>
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	Department of Education
<b>Administering entity:</b>	Department of Education
<b>Enquiries:</b>	If you have any enquiries, please contact <a href="mailto:ececgrants@deloitte.com.au">ececgrants@deloitte.com.au</a>
<b>Date guidelines released:</b>	<b>02/04/2026</b>
<b>Type of Grant opportunity:</b>	Demand-driven (Eligibility-based)

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## Paid Practicum Grant processes

### **The Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Workforce measures are designed to achieve the Australian Government's objectives**

The ECEC Workforce measures, including the grant opportunity for the Paid Practicum Grant program, contribute to the Department of Education's Outcome 1. The Department of Education (the **department**) works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grant Rules and Principles](#).



### **The grant opportunity opens**

The department will publish the grant guidelines on [GrantConnect](#).



### **ECEC Providers submit a grant application electronically on behalf of ECEC Employees**



### **Grant applications are checked**

Deloitte will check the application against the eligibility criteria.



### **Grant decisions are made**

The decision maker (being a departmental delegate) makes a decision about the grant(s).



### **Notification of grant decisions**

The department notifies each ECEC Provider of the outcome of its application.



### **The department and successful ECEC Providers enter into a grant agreement**

A simplified grant agreement setting out the terms and conditions for the grant will be provided to successful grant applicants.



### **Delivery of the grant**

Each successful ECEC Provider undertakes the grant activity as set out in its grant agreement. The department manages the grant by working with each ECEC Provider, monitoring progress and making payments.

Providers are required to acquit the grant funding by 14 July 2027 and demonstrate that the activity has been undertaken and keep accurate records.



### **Evaluation of the Paid Practicum Grant program**

The department may evaluate the specific grant activity and program. The evaluation may be based on the information provided by ECEC Providers and information the department collects from various sources.

## 1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information in relation to the Paid Practicum Grant program for the 2026-27 financial year.

You must read these guidelines before applying for a grant under this program.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity
- the eligibility criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity will be administered by the department. Grant payments for successful applicants will be processed by Services Australia and paid to ECEC Services. Each ECEC Provider's service will pass on the funding in full to the participating ECEC Employees directly, where applicable.

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

**All enquiries regarding this grant program must be sent to [eccegrants@deloitte.com.au](mailto:eccegrants@deloitte.com.au) and should contain the unique Provider CRN (also known as CCS Provider ID) in the subject line and address block of your inquiry (for example: 19000000X). This is used for identification matching and program record keeping of your application.**

## 2. About the Paid Practicum grant program

### Background

On 3 May 2023, the Australian Government announced a package of pilot workforce measures to deliver \$72.4 million over five years to support the skills and training of ECEC employees in the ECEC sector. These pilot measures contribute to the Australian Government Department of Education's Outcome 1<sup>1</sup>.

This workforce measures package also complements the [government's broader ECEC reforms](#) and workforce actions being undertaken across state and territory governments.

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<sup>1</sup> The Australian Government Department of Education Outcome 1: Improved early learning, schooling, student educational outcomes and transitions to and from school through access to quality early childhood education and care, support, parent engagement, quality teaching and learning environments.

The Paid Practicum and the Professional Development Grant Programs are two of the three pilot measures in this package which are designed to help build a sustainable, skilled ECEC workforce that delivers high quality early childhood education. The third pilot measure, the Practicum Exchange Living Allowance, supported by the Practicum Exchange Network, has now closed.

Further information on the Professional Development – Mandatory Child Safety Grant program can be found here: [Professional development subsidy - Department of Education, Australian Government](#).

The combined objectives of these three pilot programs are to:

- strengthen skills and professional experience;
- improve retention of educators and early childhood teachers in the ECEC sector; and
- strengthen workforce capability and service quality as part of broader urgent ECEC safety and quality reforms.

The Paid Practicum Grant program runs over four years from July 2023 to 30 June 2027. These guidelines apply to the 2026-27 financial year only.

This grant opportunity will be undertaken in accordance with the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles](#) (CGRPs).

The Paid Practicum Grant program provides Services with a wage subsidy to give ECEC Employees paid leave while they are undertaking their practicum.

The intended objectives of the Paid Practicum program are to help:

- Services support ECEC Employees to complete qualifications, particularly for Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs) and Diploma level qualifications as recognised by the Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA); and
- support Services to provide paid leave to ECEC Employees while they are undertaking their practicums.

The intended outcomes of the Paid Practicum subsidy are to:

- support teachers and educators in training gain practical, workplace experience in an early childhood educational setting; and
- provide further career development for ECEC Employees.

Further information can be found here: [Paid practicum subsidy - Department of Education, Australian Government](#).

### 3. Grant amount and grant period

The Australian Government will provide a total of \$1.413 million in administered funding in the 2026-27 financial year for the Paid Practicum Grant program.

Funding provided for the Paid Practicum Grant program in 2026-27 must be used to undertake a paid practicum in the 2026-27 financial year only. If funding is exhausted in Round 1:

- the planned Round 2 of applications will not proceed; and
- during the Grant period, updated information will be published on the department's website and GrantConnect.

Paid Practicum Grants are not designed to cover the exact cost of an ECEC Employee's wages. ECEC Providers are responsible for covering any additional on-costs, payable above the Grant amount provided. Paid Practicum Grants will be calculated as a flat weekly rate, as practicums are generally completed in multiples of five working days. Applications can be made for up to a total of eight weeks of paid practicum, undertaken across one or more practicum periods, in the 2026-27 financial year.

In the event that the Grant amount provided does not equal the ECEC Employee's relevant pay and entitlements that apply to their circumstances:

- Where an ECEC Employee's agreed wages or salary is less than the Paid Practicum Grant amount, the full Grant amount for that ECEC Employee must be passed on to the relevant ECEC Employee.
- Where an ECEC Employee's agreed wages or salary is higher than the Paid Practicum Grant amount, the ECEC Provider must pay the ECEC Employee the difference between the ECEC Employee's agreed wages or salary and the Grant amount received for that ECEC Employee.

The weekly Grant amount for ECEC Employees has been calculated based on Level 3.4 (Diploma) of the Children's Services Award (2010).

	Early Childhood Employees
Payment rate per week*	\$1,246.50 <sup>2</sup>

\*Note: a week is defined as five days and each day is a maximum of 7.5 hours

*Please note, ECEC Providers will be advised of any changes in Grant amounts at the time of issuance of a Grant Agreement.*

Paid practicums must start between 29 June 2026 and 25 June 2027. All paid practicums must be completed by 29 August 2027. Paid Practicum funding is available for up to a total of eight weeks, undertaken across one or more practicum periods, for each ECEC Employee in the 2026-27 financial year.

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<sup>2</sup>reflects the current rate however if any revision is made to the award this rate may be updated and an addendum will be published on the department's website and on GrantConnect.

ECEC Providers can apply for up to a total of eight weeks of paid practicum for each eligible ECEC Employee in the 2026-27 financial year.

## 4. Eligibility criteria

Applications that do not satisfy all the eligibility criteria will not be considered.

### 4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

ECEC Providers that are currently approved for and receiving the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) under the Family Assistance Law are eligible to apply for this Grant on behalf of their eligible ECEC Employees. This includes Family Day Care (FDC), In Home Care (IHC), Centre-Based Day Care (CBDC) and Outside School Hours Care Services (OSHC).

Eligible ECEC Providers can apply for a Paid Practicum Grant for eligible ECEC Employees who are undertaking a practicum that complies with the eligible Grant activities set out in Section 6.1.

Eligible ECEC Employees must be:

1. an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia or hold a valid work visa (including student visa) allowing employment in the ECEC sector; and
2. a contact worker - an educator who is part of the adult to child ratio at a Service or who provides direct early childhood education and care, or supervision for children in other care types, such as IHC or FDC; or  
a non-contact worker – a director or educational leader who provides direct support, early childhood education and care, or supervision for children; and
3. a full-time, part-time, or casual employee who has worked more than 40 hours overall in the preceding three months with that Service<sup>3</sup>.

***ECEC Employees are not eligible to apply for or receive Grant payments directly and must apply through the approved ECEC Provider which employs them.***

### 4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

ECEC Providers are not eligible to apply if they are:

- a stand-alone kindergarten service that is not approved for and receiving CCS
- a stand-alone pre-school service that is not approved for and receiving CCS
- an individual

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<sup>3</sup> Some IHC educators may be exempt from this requirement, pending prior approval from the Department.

- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' ([www.nationalredress.gov.au](http://www.nationalredress.gov.au))
- any entity that does not meet the eligibility criteria in Section 4.1
- any entity which has any outstanding invoices for previous Paid Practicum or Professional Development grant funding
- any entity that is already receiving the maximum amount of funding (i.e. 8 weeks) for a paid practicum for the same ECEC Employee for the same period from the Commonwealth or a state or territory government<sup>4</sup>. *Please note, if an ECEC Employee's paid practicum is longer than the maximum number of weeks covered by this Paid Practicum Grant, the relevant ECEC Provider may seek state/territory funds to cover the difference.*

### 4.3 Other requirements in relation to ECEC Employees

The department acknowledges that an ECEC Employee may leave or be unavailable before a paid practicum has commenced. In these cases, the department will allow a 'like for like' exchange of another ECEC Employee as a replacement for the original ECEC Employee. If this occurs, the ECEC Provider must notify the department of this 'like for like' exchange via their grant acquittal.

## 5. Grant allocation preferences

If this grant opportunity receives strong interest and funding is likely to be exhausted, the department reserves the right to organise applications in the following preferential order based on the attributes identified in this section.

### 5.1 General allocation preferences

In the event that the Paid Practicum program is over-subscribed, the department reserves the right to apply the following prioritisation according to remoteness categories and numerical ordering below:

1. Regional<sup>5</sup>, remote, very remote and/or First Nations educators employed by ECEC Provider size and in order i.e. small, medium and large, studying ECT qualifications (including post-graduate qualifications).
2. Regional, remote, very remote and/or First Nations educators employed by ECEC Provider size and in order i.e. small, medium and large studying Diploma-level qualifications.

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<sup>4</sup> In line with the above circumstance, all other applications from this entity will continue to be considered.

<sup>5</sup> ECEC Providers that undertake service delivery in Inner regional, Outer regional, Remote or Very remote Australia may be prioritised if program is over subscribed. Remoteness categories are determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). More details can be found at: [Remoteness Structure | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/remoteness-structure).

3. All other educators employed by ECEC Provider size and in the order of small, medium and large, studying ECT qualifications (including post-graduate qualifications).
4. All other educators employed by ECEC Provider size and in order i.e. small, medium and large, studying Diploma-level qualifications.

If an ECEC Employee has already been supported for one paid practicum, an application on behalf of an ECEC Employee that has not yet completed a paid practicum may be prioritised, depending on funding availability.

In accordance with the provisions of a demand-driven grant opportunity, applications will be considered on a first come first served basis within each priority group as specified above until available funding is exhausted.

## 5.2 First Nations ECEC Providers and/or ECEC Employees

First Nations ECEC Providers and/or ECEC Employees will be given grant preference if demand for the Paid Practicum program is likely to exceed available funding.

First Nations-owned and controlled ECEC Providers are eligible regardless of location, as defined in Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Further information is available at [Priority Reforms | Closing the Gap](#).

First Nations ECEC Employees are encouraged to directly contact their ECEC Provider, regardless of that ECEC Provider/Service's location, if they would like a Grant application submitted to the department.

## 6. What the Grant money can be used for

The Grant must only be expended on supplementing the wages for eligible ECEC Employees undertaking the eligible paid practicum grant activities specified below. However, this does not include on-costs. ECEC Providers are responsible for meeting all ECEC Employee on-costs.

### 6.1 Eligible Grant activities

Eligible Services must use the Grant to:

- provide ECEC Employees leave with pay to undertake practicum requirements as part of their studies for one of the below qualifications:
    - a relevant Diploma-level qualification as recognised by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Levels 5 and 6, for example:
      - a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care or Equivalent ECEC diploma-level qualification.
- OR**
- a relevant Early Childhood Teaching (ECT) degree-level qualification as recognised by ACECQA at AQF Level 7, for example:

- a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and Care or Equivalent ECEC degree level qualification.

**OR**

- a relevant post-graduate ECT qualification as recognised by ACECQA at AQF Levels 8 and 9, for example:
  - a Graduate Certificate in Education (Early Childhood)
  - a Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Teaching
  - a Master's Degree of Early Childhood Education.

The qualification requirements can be checked on the ACECQA website: [Check your qualification is NQF approved | ACECQA](#).

Please note that ECEC Employees undertaking **doctoral-level degrees (AQF Level 10) are not eligible**.

Eligible Providers will be responsible for:

- the costs associated with backfilling ECEC Employees while they are undertaking their paid practicum; and
- any costs for an ECEC Employee's wage that is not covered by this Grant.

**Please note: The department does not regard scholarships paid by the states and territories as covering the same activities as the Paid Practicum Grant. Scholarships are typically not intended to cover wages.**

Paid practicums must start between 29 June 2026 and 25 June 2027 to be eligible for the Paid Practicum Grant program. These paid practicums may continue beyond 25 June 2027 but must conclude by 29 August 2027. ECEC Providers can apply retrospectively for paid practicums which started prior to the submission of their application as long as the relevant paid practicum started on or after 29 June 2026.

If an ECEC Employee has two semesters of practicums starting between 29 June 2026 and 25 June 2027, the ECEC Provider can apply for a total of eight weeks of paid practicum, either across one or more blocks, for this ECEC Employee.

In the application, ECEC Providers must indicate when the paid practicum is being undertaken (including the starting and finishing dates). If exact dates are unknown, an approximate range can be provided.

Some examples are provided below.

### ***Example one***

Employee A needs to undertake a 30-day practicum as part of their studies towards a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood). They have completed all necessary pre-requisites and are enrolled to undertake their practicum in late 2026. Employee A intends to undertake the practicum in one block over a period of six weeks. Employee A's employer can apply for a Grant to contribute towards Employee A's paid leave (provided Employee A is being paid at their pay and entitlements that apply to their circumstances for the duration of their 30-day practicum). Employee A's Provider is encouraged to check the applicable industrial instrument and Fair Work Act to ensure they are complying with their workplace obligations.



### ***Example two***

Employee B needs to undertake a 10-day practicum as part of their studies towards a Bachelor of Education (Early Learning). They have completed all necessary pre-requisites and are enrolled to undertake their practicum in late 2026. Employee B intends to undertake the practicum over ten weeks, spending one day each week at their practicum site.

Employee B's employer can apply for a Grant to contribute towards Employee B's wages for each of the days Employee B is completing the practicum noting this is equal to two full-time weeks (provided Employee B is being paid at their pay and entitlements that apply to their circumstances for the duration of their 10-day practicum).

### ***Example three***

Employee C has three remaining practicums to complete their studies towards a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Teaching (Birth-12). They are enrolled to undertake a 10-day practicum in late 2026, and a 15-day practicum in early 2027. They intend to undertake their third practicum in late 2027. Employee C's employer can apply for a Grant to contribute towards Employee C's paid leave to complete the first two practicums (provided Employee C is being paid at their pay and entitlements that apply to their circumstances for the duration of those practicums). Employee C's employer cannot apply for the third practicum which commences in late 2027 because that practicum period falls in the 2027-2028 financial year.

### ***Example four***

Employee D is paid above the award rate specified in Section 3. They are enrolled to undertake a practicum in late 2026 as part of their studies towards a Master of Teaching (Early Childhood). Employee D's ECEC Provider can apply for a Grant to contribute towards the Employee D's paid leave to complete the practicum (provided Employee D is paid at their pay and entitlements that apply to their circumstances for the duration of their practicum). In accepting the Grant, the relevant ECEC Provider must meet the gap cost (if any) between the Grant amount and the pay and entitlements that apply to their circumstances that Employee D is paid.

### ***Example five***

Employee E is paid above the award rate specified in Section 3 as an IHC employee/contractor. They are enrolled to undertake a practicum in late 2026 as part of their studies towards a Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Teaching. Employee E's ECEC Provider can apply for a Grant to contribute towards Employee E's wages while undertaking the practicum (provided Employee E is paid at their pay and entitlements that apply to their circumstances for the duration of their practicum). In accepting the Grant, the relevant IHC ECEC Provider must meet the gap cost between the Grant amount and the pay and entitlements that apply to their circumstances that Employee E is paid.

### ***Example six***

Employee F is a part time OSHC employee and cannot undertake the paid practicum for their Diploma of Early Childhood on a full-time basis (they would be expected to complete five days of practicum over a mutually agreed period to complete the practicum i.e. 3 weeks – 2 day block, 1 day block, 4 half day blocks). In this case, Employee F may use the paid practicum funding paid in per week amounts to cover the equivalent number of days spread out over multiple weeks. Weeks do not need to be consecutive, but the number of weeks applied for should cover the intended number of practicum placement days **as closely as possible**.



For example:

- if an employee is completing 16 days of practicum placement, they should apply for 3 weeks, not 4;
- if an employee is completing 60 hours of practicum placement, they should apply for 2 weeks, not 1 week.

### **Example seven**

Employee G works at three different Services during a month, owned by multiple different ECEC Providers. They work 10 hours per week at Service 1, 15 hours per week at Service 2 and only works at Service 3 on a casual on-call basis. It is recommended that Employee G's ECEC Provider of Service 2 apply for this grant on behalf of Employee G, as this is the Service where Employee G works the most and where Employee G's hours are likely to make Employee eligible for the grant. The other ECEC Providers should not submit an application for Employee G.

### **Example eight**

Employee H is enrolled to undertake a 10-day practicum in late 2026 as part of their studies towards a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Teaching (Birth-12) but leaves their employment. Employee H's ECEC Provider has applied for and received a Paid Practicum Grant for Employee H. Employee H's ECEC Provider can replace Employee H with another ECEC Employee. If this occurs, the ECEC Provider must notify the department of this 'like for like' exchange via their grant acquittal.

### **Example nine**

Employee I is a part-time employee and needs to undertake a 10-day practicum as part of their studies towards a Bachelor of Education (Early Learning). They have completed all necessary pre-requisites and are enrolled to undertake their practicum in late 2026. Employee I intends to undertake the practicum, on a full-time basis. Employee I's ECEC Provider can apply for a Grant to contribute towards the Employee I's paid leave to complete the practicum (provided Employee I is paid, on a full-time basis, their pay and entitlements that apply to their circumstances for the duration of their practicum). In accepting the Grant, the relevant ECEC Provider must meet the gap cost (if any) between the Grant amount and the full-time pay and entitlements that apply to their circumstances that Employee I is paid.

## **7. What the Grant money cannot be used for**

An ECEC Provider cannot use the Grant:

- for paid practicums which commence or conclude prior to 29 June 2026 or paid practicums which commence after 25 June 2027.
- to cover any gap between the award rates outlined in Section 3 and the rate of pay an ECEC Employee is being provided.
- to fund paid practicums for ECEC Employees where the relevant ECEC Employee or Service is already receiving another payment designed to cover that ECEC Employee's wages for the same exact period, such as a teaching bursary. *Please*



*note: If the paid practicum is longer than the maximum covered by this Grant, other funding can be sought from other sources.*

- to fund paid practicums for ECEC Employees where the relevant ECEC Employee or Service is already receiving another payment as outlined in Section 5.2.
- to pay for wages of an ECEC Employee completing a paid practicum as part of their normal employment arrangements at their Service. This means ECEC Employees must be taking leave with pay, in addition to their usual leave entitlements such as annual leave or long service leave, to be completing their practicum.

## 8. How to apply

Before applying, ECEC Providers must read and understand these guidelines which can also be found at [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations and addenda<sup>6</sup> will be published on GrantConnect and by registering on this website you will be automatically notified of any updates. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

All applications must be submitted online at [www.secure-portal.com.au/ececgrants](http://www.secure-portal.com.au/ececgrants), where there are step by step instructions to assist ECEC Providers to navigate the application process.

Enquiries can be emailed through to [ececgrants@deloitte.com.au](mailto:ececgrants@deloitte.com.au) or you can contact the Helpdesk on (03) 9917 7865 from 9am – 5pm AEST Monday to Friday (while applications are open).

### 8.1 The application

To be considered, submitted applications must include:

- confirmation that the ECEC Provider meets all eligibility criteria (these are declarations of eligibility by the ECEC Provider).
- details of the ECEC Employee for whom the Grant is sought, including a statement / declaration that the relevant ECEC Employee meets all eligibility criteria and the rate of Grant payable for each relevant ECEC Employee (based on Section 4).
- agreement to undertake the required grant acquittal of the expenditure of the Grant as specified in any resulting Grant Agreement.
- confirmation that the person submitting the application is registered as a Person with Management or Control (PMC) of the ECEC Provider (legal entity).

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<sup>6</sup> Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents

- any other details outlined in the Application Form which includes the ECEC Provider's unique Customer Reference Number (CRN) - also known as the CCS Provider ID (example 190000000S).

**Please note that submitting a completed application form does not guarantee a Grant.**

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you can amend it in the grants portal provided that applications have not closed. You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.

ECEC Providers are responsible for ensuring that their application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code 1995](#) and the department will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

The department will acknowledge receipt of your application within five business days of receipt.

## 8.2 Timing of Grant opportunity

ECEC Providers must submit their application between the published opening and closing dates for each round. Late applications cannot be accepted. The first round of grant applications opens in April 2026 and close in July 2026, with payments expected to be made in September 2026. The second round of grant applications (subject to available funding) open in October 2026 and close in December 2026, with payments expected to be made in February 2027.

Following closure of each round, assessment of applications will be undertaken to ensure applications are eligible for funding. This process will take approximately three weeks. Notification of Grant outcomes will be delivered to ECEC Providers in the following two weeks after applications are assessed. ECEC Providers with funded educators will be sent a Grant Agreement and will be required to sign and return it to the department within 7 calendar days of receipt.

All offers of Grants by the department remain **provisional** until the Grant Agreement is:

- signed by a correct PMC of the relevant ECEC Provider (this person must be registered and current in CCS system);
- returned and received by the department; and
- executed by a departmental delegate.

The grants take effect on the date when a Provider's Grant Agreement is executed by a departmental delegate prior to payments being made.

Further information on the timeframes for these Grant opportunities is available on the department's website at [Professional development opportunities - Department of Education, Australian Government](#).

### 8.3 Questions during the application process

If ECEC Providers have any questions during the application process, please contact:

- email at [ececgrants@deloitte.com.au](mailto:ececgrants@deloitte.com.au)
- the Helpdesk by phone at (03) 9917 7865 (open only when applications are open).

Please include your unique Provider CRN (or CCS Provider ID) in the subject line and in your address block for all email correspondence regarding your Grant application or process.

## 9. The Grant selection process

Applications will be considered **on a first come first served basis**, in accordance with the provisions of a demand-driven grant opportunity. However, if funding is likely to be exhausted before the end of the Grant period, the department reserves the right to organise applications in preferential order based on the attributes identified in Section 6.

Applications for this subsidy is managed on the Department's behalf by contract partner Deloitte. Applications will be considered against the value with money principles. The *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act (PGPA Act)* and the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs) require all commitments of public resources to be efficient, effective, economical and ethical.

The department may perform security, probity, compliance and financial investigations as it determines necessary in relation to an application. ECEC Providers should note that as part of the selection process, the department reserves the right to use information gained as part of its normal course of business in determining performance against the eligibility criteria.

### 9.1 Who will approve Grants

The Assistant Secretary of the ECEC Workforce and Reforms Branch, Australian Government Department of Education is the decision maker and decides which Grants to approve taking into account the availability of Grant funds for the purposes of the Grant program.

The decision maker's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the Grant
- the Grant amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the Grant
- any other considerations as deemed necessary by the department.

There is no appeal mechanism for the decision to approve or not to approve a Grant.

## 10. Successful Grant applications

ECEC Providers will be notified in writing (via email) of a successful or unsuccessful Grant application outcome.



Successful ECEC Providers must enter into a legally binding agreement with the Commonwealth. The department will issue a Grant Agreement to successful ECEC Providers, provided there is Grant funding available. This Grant Agreement will set out the general terms and conditions that apply to the Grant and cannot be negotiated. The Grant Agreement must be executed by the ECEC Provider before any payments can be made.

A Grant Agreement may have specific conditions determined by the grant selection process or decided by the decision maker.

The Grant Agreement will state the:

- maximum Grant amount to be paid; and
- any ECEC Provider obligations in relation to the Grant, including reporting requirements.

ECEC Providers who wish to receive a Grant are required to complete the Grant Agreement sent to them by the last date for signing outlined in that Grant Agreement.

While a Grant can be sought for any eligible paid practicum, if an ECEC Provider chooses to start an eligible activity nominally covered by this Grant before they have applied for, been successful in, and **executed** a Grant Agreement with the department, they do so at their own risk and must bear any associated costs. For example, when the grant selection process is completed, an ECEC Provider may be deemed ineligible or all funds under that Grant may have been exhausted.

## 10.1 How the Grant will be paid

The Grant will be paid into the relevant ECEC Service's bank account nominated by the ECEC Provider for receiving CCS. ECEC Providers should ensure that their Services' bank account details are up to date to avoid delayed or missed payments.

In 2026-27, the Grants will be paid to ECEC Services twice<sup>7</sup>. One payment is expected to occur in September 2026 (for funded applications submitted in Round 1) and the other in February 2027 (for funded applications submitted in Round 2 – subject to available funding).

## 10.2 Grant Payments and GST

These Grants are GST exclusive and therefore not assessable income for taxation purposes. However, receiving these Grants will not exempt an ECEC Provider from other employer obligations, such as payroll tax and superannuation contributions. We recommend ECEC Providers seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](https://www.ato.gov.au/)<sup>8</sup>. The department cannot provide advice on your specific taxation circumstances.

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<sup>7</sup> Subject to available funding. If funding is exhausted in Round 1, the planned Round 2 applications will not go ahead.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

### 10.3 Transfer of ownership

If there is a transfer of Service ownership, these Grants **cannot be transferred** as part of the settlement agreement for exchange of ownership. If a change of ownership is to occur, it is the obligation of the relevant ECEC Provider to contact the department early and notify that this is occurring.

The department will issue an invoice for the repayment of any portion of the Grant which is unused and request an acquittal for any portion of the Grant which has already been spent.

## 11. Announcement of Grants

If successful, each ECEC Provider's Grant, and any subsequent variations, will be listed on the [GrantConnect](#) website within 21 days after the date of effect<sup>9</sup> as required by Section 5.4 of the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles ([CGRPs](#)). The announcement will include a link to these grant opportunity guidelines.

## 12. How the department will monitor your Grant activity

### 12.1 Grant Acquittal

ECEC Providers must hold / retain relevant records of all current or former ECEC Employees who have undertaken a paid practicum using the Grant for 24 months after the Grant Agreement has expired.

If an ECEC Employee is no longer employed by an ECEC Provider but that ECEC Provider already received a Grant in relation to a paid practicum for that ECEC Employee, the Grant may be utilised by another ECEC Employee for that paid practicum. If this occurs, the ECEC Provider must submit the replacement ECEC Employee's details to the department via their grant acquittal. If this doesn't occur, the department will ask the ECEC Provider to repay the unused grant funds.

The department may also request, in writing and at any time, copies (including certified copies) for audit and validation purposes of:

- documentation confirming date(s) of paid practicum for named ECEC Employees at another Service (could be from educational organisation) or confirmation from an educational organisation that paid practicum could be completed at the relevant ECEC Employee's usual workplace.
- payroll records indicating the named ECEC Employee was paid for the week(s) in which the paid practicum was undertaken (including any gaps in salary that were covered by the ECEC Employee's Service) and that the ECEC Employee was on leave for this period.

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<sup>9</sup> See glossary

Please note, Grants awarded in 2026-27 are to be acquitted by 14 July 2027. If a practicum that is funded via a grant goes beyond this date, then an extension of no more than 14 days after the conclusion of the practicum period will be given to acquit the grant. The Grant may not be transferred to an ECEC Provider's other Services (if any).

## 12.2 Evaluation

The department may evaluate the Paid Practicum Grant program in the future, to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. The department may interview you or ask you to provide relevant information to help us understand how the Grant impacted you as an ECEC Provider and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

## 12.3 Grant Recovery Process

The department may recover all or part of a Grant if the relevant ECEC Provider has been overpaid or the Grant has not been spent in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

## 13. Probity

The department will ensure that the Grant opportunity process is fair, is conducted in accordance with the published grant opportunity guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud and corruption, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct, and is consistent with the CGRPs.

These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by the department. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect and on the department's website.

ECEC Providers should be aware of their obligations under the [National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022](#) noting that, under that Act, grantees will generally be considered 'contracted service providers' [see <https://www.nacc.gov.au/resource-centre/nacc-fact-sheets>].

### 13.1 Enquiries and feedback

The department's [complaints procedures](#) apply to complaints about this Grant opportunity. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing.

Any questions about Grant decisions for this Grant opportunity should be emailed to [ececgrants@deloitte.com.au](mailto:ececgrants@deloitte.com.au).

If you do not agree with the way in which the department has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually consider a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the relevant department.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted by:

Phone: 1300 362 072 (Toll free)

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

## 13.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the Grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or a perceived conflict of interest, if an employee of the department, member of a committee or advisor and/or an ECEC Provider or any of their employees:

- has a professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who can influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer (or member of an external panel)
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a Grant under the Grant program/Grant opportunity.

ECEC Providers will be asked to declare, as part of their application, any real or perceived existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of their knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If an ECEC Provider later identifies or is informed of a real, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, they must inform the department in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Section 13(7), [Australian Public Service Commission Code of Conduct](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials, including the Grant assessor and decision maker, must declare any conflicts of interest.

## 13.3 Privacy

The department will treat your personal information in accordance with the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone for the primary purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about Grant applicants and Grant recipients under this Grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect, as



required, for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

The department may share the information you have provided with other Commonwealth entities, for purposes including government administration, research and/or service delivery, in accordance with relevant Australian laws/legislation.

As part of the application process, ECEC Providers must declare their ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and your intention to impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of the personal information collected, used, stored, or disclosed in connection with the activity. Accordingly, ECEC Providers must not do anything, which if done by the department would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the *Privacy Act 1988*.

### 13.4 Confidential Information

Other than information available in the public domain, ECEC Providers must agree not to disclose to any person, other than the department, any confidential information relating to the Grant application and/or agreement, without prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament, or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

The department may at any time, require you to arrange for yourself, as the ECEC Provider, or your employees, agents, or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of the department's confidential information in a form the department considers acceptable.

The department will keep any information in connection with the Grant Agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all three of the conditions below:

1. the ECEC Provider clearly identifies the information as confidential and explains why it should be treated as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to the ECEC Provider or someone else.

The department will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of the department for research, assessment, monitoring and analysis of its programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research, or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations



- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman, Privacy Commissioner or National Anti-Corruption Commissioner or staff of its agencies
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The Grant Agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created, or held under the Grant Agreement.

### 13.5 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this Grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests should be in writing and either:

- use the department’s online FOI Application form at [How to make a freedom of information \(FOI\) request](#); or
- be emailed to: [FOI@education.gov.au](mailto:FOI@education.gov.au)

## 14. Glossary

Term	Definition
ACECQA	the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority is an independent statutory authority that assists governments in implementing the National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care throughout Australia.
Child Care Subsidy	Child Care Subsidy (CCS) aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assist families with the cost of early childhood education and care</li> <li>• facilitate individuals to participate, or increase their participation, in the workforce</li> <li>• facilitate children's attendance in child care to support their early learning and development.</li> </ul>
Commonwealth entities	a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act.



Term	Definition
<a href="#">Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 (CGRPs)</a>	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
contracted service provider	a contracted service provider is a person who is a party to a Commonwealth contract or is a party to a subcontract with a contracted service provider and is responsible for the provision of goods or services under contract, either directly or indirectly.
Customer Reference Number or CRN	<p>a series of identification numbers allocated by Services Australia to organisations receiving funding from the Australian Government, including families who are eligible for the Childcare Subsidy through an approved childcare Service.</p> <p>With reference to grant opportunities/ applications, the only CRNs required by the department are also known as the ECEC Provider CCS ID and the Service CCS ID which can both be found on the letter / certificate of approval for CCS from the department.</p> <p>Service and Provider CRNs will both take the format:</p> <p>1900#####A – where # is a numeral from 1 to 9 and A is a letter from A to Z.</p>
date of effect	can be the date on which a Grant agreement, or in this case, the Grant Agreement, is signed by both parties or a specified starting date. Where there is no Grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
decision maker (delegate)	the person who decides to award a Grant.
ECEC Employee	a person that works in a Service and is an employee or independent contractor who is an early childhood educator, early childhood teacher, director or educational leader.
ECEC Provider	is the legal entity approved to operate a Service and administer the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).
educator	a person who is employed as an early childhood educator and provides care for children in an approved Service.
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a Grant. Eligibility criteria should be developed to enable objective validation and are either 'met' or 'not met'. Additional criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.



Term	Definition
Family Assistance Law	Family Assistance Law (FAL) sets the rules for providers that administer the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).
Grant	for the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'Grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– under which relevant money<sup>10</sup> or other <a href="#">Consolidated Revenue Fund</a> (CRF) money<sup>11</sup> is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and</li> <li>– which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</li> </ul>
Grant activity/activities	refers to the project /tasks /services that the grantee is required to undertake.
Grant applicant	refers to an eligible ECEC Provider, not an individual employee.
Grant Agreement	sets out the outcome of an ECEC Provider's Grant application, the relationship between the parties to the agreement and specifies the details of the Grant.
<a href="#">GrantConnect</a>	is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs.
grant opportunity	refers to the specific Grant round or process where a Commonwealth Grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
Grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A Grant program is a group of one or more Grant opportunities under a single Department of Education Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a Grant.
large ECEC Provider	is one that operates 25 or more Services.

<sup>10</sup> Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

<sup>11</sup> Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money and PGPA Rule section 29 Other CRF money.



Term	Definition
like for like	refers to the exchange of another ECEC Employee at the same service.
medium ECEC Provider	is one that operates between 6 and 24 Services.
National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC)	the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) is an independent Commonwealth agency. It detects, investigates and reports on serious or systemic corruption in the Commonwealth public sector. The Commission operates under the <a href="#"><u>National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022</u></a> .
PMC	person/s with management or control of the ECEC Provider, who have significant authority, responsibility, or significant influence over planning, directing, or controlling and take part in the decision-making or management of the ECEC Provider.
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees.
Service	refers to eligible family day-care, in-home care, centre-based day care and outside school hours care services that provide early childhood education and care. Excludes preschool and kindergarten services.
small ECEC Provider	is one that operates between 1 and 5 Services.
value with money	<p>value with money in this document refers to ‘value with relevant money’ which is a judgement based on the Grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical, and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a Grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of the project proposal and activities;</li> <li>• fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives;</li> <li>• that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved; and</li> <li>• the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history.</li> </ul>

