Australian Government
Department of Education

Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships

Round 4 Assessment and Selection Policy

1. Purpose

The Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships (CTS) Program Assessment and Selection Policy (the policy) outlines the criteria and process for the assessment and selection of individuals to receive a Commonwealth Teaching Scholarship.

This policy should be considered in conjunction with the CTS Grant Opportunity Guidelines (Scholarship Guidelines) available on the Scholarships website. The Scholarship Guidelines will prevail over this policy to the extent of any inconsistency.

2. Background

The Scholarship Guidelines relevant to each scholarship round outline the scholarship application and selection process.

Up to 5,000 scholarships over 5 years are available to **new** initial teacher education (ITE) students intending to start a **full-time**, accredited ITE program in the first study period or semester of the year they apply for.

3. Eligible applications criteria

To be considered for a Commonwealth Teaching Scholarship, applicants must submit a scholarship application form by the application deadline and provide all requested supporting evidence.

The Department of Education (the Department) can only consider applications that satisfy all of the eligibility criteria as outlined in the Scholarship Guidelines relevant to each scholarship round.

Submitting an application does not guarantee a scholarship and applicants should not make financial commitments in reliance on being awarded a scholarship until they have received a formal offer and have signed a Scholarship Agreement.

3.1 Target cohorts

Applicants are requested to identify if they belong to one or more of the following cohorts:

- high achieving students with an ATAR of 80 or above (or equivalent*) (undergraduate applicants only)
- First Nations peoples
- people from regional, rural and remote areas
- mid-career professionals
- people for whom English is an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D)
- people from low socio-economic backgrounds
- people with disability.

Applicants can still apply for a scholarship if they do not identify with a target cohort.

Please note, the scholarships are awarded on merit. The 'high achieving students with an ATAR of 80 or above (or equivalent*)' cohort should only be selected if an applicant can provide official evidence to support this selection. If an applicant selects this cohort but submits evidence of an ATAR or equivalent that is below 80, or an evidence type that is not an ATAR or equivalent*, the application will be deemed ineligible.

*Equivalent – means an International Baccalaureate score, Tertiary Entrance Score (Tasmania only), or pre-ATAR results statements (e.g. Overall Position (OP), Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER), Universities Admissions Index (UAI), or Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER)) that is equal, when converted, to an ATAR of 80 or more.

3.2 Previous ITE enrolment

Applicants are not eligible to apply for a scholarship if they:

- are currently enrolled and part-way through an accredited ITE program (current student);
- are enrolled and have commenced an accredited ITE program in the past two years prior to 2027 but are not actively undertaking study for this ITE program (e.g. on deferral, leave of absence or other approved break from study)
- have commenced an accredited ITE program, completed one or more units, and withdrew from the program in the two years prior to 2027.

Applicants may be eligible to apply in the following circumstances, provided they submit official evidence to support their claim:

- withdrew from an accredited ITE program more than two years prior to 2027 (i.e. before January 2025)
- enrolled in an ITE program in the two years prior to 2027 but withdrew before completing any units (i.e. before the relevant higher education provider census date)
- previously accepted an offer to study an accredited ITE program but deferred and did not commence any units
- transferred into an ITE degree in the two years prior to 2027 but have not commenced any ITE units
- obtained a teaching qualification before 2011 and are not currently registered as a teacher.

4. Application

The Department uses an online grant application platform powered by SmartyGrants. Applicants must create an account, in their own name using their personal email address, and log in before an application can be completed. A link to the application form will be available on the Scholarships website.

Advice on submitting an application is published on the Department's website. Applicants must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. **Applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be accepted.**

To apply, applicants must:

1. complete the application form;
2. meet all eligibility criteria;
3. provide all the information requested; and
4. include all necessary copies of supporting evidence (refer to section 7.3 of the Scholarship Guidelines).

Applicants should contact the Department immediately if they find an error in their application after submitting it by emailing teachingscholarships@education.gov.au. **Applications cannot be changed after the closing date and time.**

There are separate application forms for undergraduate and postgraduate applicants. Applicants must select the correct degree-type when preparing and submitting their application. The Department is unable to change applications from one degree type to another after the closing date.

Applicants will receive a confirmation email once the application is submitted. Applicants should check their junk/spam folders if the confirmation email is not received in their primary email inbox. If an applicant does not receive this email, they should presume their application has not been submitted. An application must be completed and fully submitted before the published closing date and time. Downloaded copies of applications not fully submitted cannot be accepted.

If the scholarships are undersubscribed, no further applications will be sought past the application closing date of the relevant round.

4.1 Application evidence requirements

Applicants must provide academic evidence of their highest **completed** level of prior academic achievement except for applicants with a completed Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (see 4.1.2).

Evidence must be in the format indicated in the application form and legible in order to be accepted.

Evidence of the completed qualification that demonstrates academic achievement must include:

- full name of the applicant (or previous legal name if applicable)
- the name/branding of the education institution or awarding body (e.g. name of tertiary admission centre, higher education or Vocational Education and Training provider)
- an overall score or grade and/or individual unit grades/marks/results (as applicable)

- a date of completion or date of award
- all relevant pages and includes the required information.

Applicants must submit evidence of their qualifications in English. Qualifications in a language other than English should be translated by an official translator.

An application will be **deemed ineligible** if the evidence submitted does not meet the criteria listed in this section.

4.1.1 Undergraduate applicants

Undergraduate applicants need to provide evidence of **ONE** of the following:

- an ATAR (predicted or adjusted ATARs will not be accepted); or
- an International Baccalaureate score; or
- a Tertiary Entrance Score (TE) (Tasmania only); or
- a pre-ATAR results statement (e.g. Overall Position (OP), Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER), Universities Admissions Index (UAI), Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER)); or
- a Skills for Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) (formerly known as the Special Tertiary Admissions Test) result; or
- a Grade Point Average (GPA) or Weighted Average Mark (WAM) from a completed degree (for applicants who have completed a Bachelor degree but intend to enrol in an undergraduate ITE Program). Please refer to section 4.1.2 for GPA and WAM evidence requirements; or
- grade or score for a qualification awarded by an international school or institution; or
- evidence of a completed Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification (e.g. Diploma, Certificate IV, Certificate III).

4.1.2 Postgraduate applicants

Postgraduate applicants need to provide **ONE** academic transcript for a completed degree with:

- an overall Grade Point Average (GPA); or
- an overall Weighted Average Mark (WAM); or
- individual unit grades/marks/results with no overall score; or
- grade/score/result for a qualification awarded by an international institution.

If the academic evidence submitted **does not** contain an overall GPA or WAM, the Department will calculate this for the applicant using the subject grades awarded and based on the calculation used by the awarding institution.

Applicants with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) must provide their next highest completed qualification (e.g. Masters or Honours degree) as these generally do not attract a grade/mark.

4.1.3 Unacceptable evidence

Applicants are responsible for providing correct evidence to support their application. Submitted evidence that does not meet the required standards will result in an

applicant being deemed ineligible. Unacceptable evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- certificates/testamurs without supporting transcript/results (except for applicants submitting evidence of a completed VET qualification as per section 4.1.1)
- academic transcripts for partially completed degrees
- evidence of a completed Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (see 4.1.2)
- screenshots that do not include all the required information
- self-created documents
- corrupted/unreadable files
- links to external online storage locations (e.g. cloud-based storage)
- transcripts from overseas institutions not translated into English by an official translator.

5. Assessment and selection

Scholarships are awarded on academic merit. Previous academic results are used to assess applications. Eligible applications will be ranked. Prior to assessment, all information will be de-identified and only the academic ranking and target cohort identification will be provided to assessors. Assessors will allocate a 'recommendation for scholarship' until available scholarships are exhausted.

The selection processes for undergraduate and postgraduate applicants are conducted independently of each other.

The recommendation for CTS recipients will be provided to the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for decision and approval to issue conditional offers.

5.1 Process overview

5.1.1 Eligibility check

- The Department's CTS Assessment Team will conduct eligibility checks to ensure each application:
    - meets the citizenship and residency requirements
    - provides evidence of prior academic achievement in accordance with the evidence requirements outlined in section 4.1, and
    - meets the prior enrolment in an accredited ITE program requirements outlined in section 3.2.
- Eligibility checks may commence before the application closing date.
- Applications that are incomplete or do not include the required supporting evidence will be deemed ineligible and will not proceed to assessment.

5.1.2 Assessment and selection

- Assessment and selection of eligible applications will commence after the application closing date, once all submitted applications have been eligibility checked.
- Prior to assessment, application information will be de-identified. Assessors will only be provided with academic ranking information and target cohort identification.
- Eligible applications will be ranked according to academic merit, using previous academic results, with priority given to those that identify in a target cohort (see section 3.1)
- Assessors will recommend applicants for scholarship offers, based on ranking order, until all available scholarships have been allocated.
- Undergraduate and postgraduate applications will be assessed and selected through separate processes.

5.1.3 Approval of recommendations

- Recommendations for scholarship recipients will be provided to the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for approval.
- Approved applicants will be issued a conditional scholarship offer and all applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application at this time.
- Individual feedback on assessment outcomes will not be provided.
- All decisions made by the Department are final. There is no mechanism for applicants to appeal a decision to approve or not approve a scholarship application.

5.2 Assessment and Selection Principles

5.2.1 State and territory distribution

- To support equity across states and territories (jurisdictions), eligible applications will be distributed into relevant states and territories according to the permanent address provided by the applicant in their application.
- The notional distribution is based on the number of government schools in each state and territory and will be used to allocate scholarships, with allowable variations (e.g. where a particular jurisdiction is undersubscribed).

5.2.2 Target cohorts

- To support an equitable distribution of target cohorts across each jurisdiction, a notional equal distribution will be applied to the target cohorts, with allowable variations where target cohorts are undersubscribed.
- Applications in each jurisdiction will be assigned, from highest to lowest academic achievement, to a relevant target cohort on an even basis across the relevant target cohorts (where applicable).
- Where the number of eligible applications within a target cohort exceeds the number of scholarships available, scholarships will be awarded to applicants with the highest academic achievement.
- Where a target cohort within a jurisdiction is undersubscribed, unallocated scholarships may be redistributed to other target cohorts within that jurisdiction or to oversubscribed jurisdictions, as required.

- For applicants who identify as belonging to more than one target cohort, assessors may allocate a successful application to any of the applicant's identified target cohorts to support representation across cohorts. This allocation does not affect the value, conditions or nature of the scholarship.
- If scholarships remain available after eligible target cohort applicants have been considered, scholarships may be awarded to other eligible applicants who do not identify as belonging to a target cohort.

6. Conditional offer

6.1 Receipt of a conditional offer

- Successful applicants will receive a conditional scholarship offer from the Department.
- The offer is conditional on providing:
    - evidence of Australian citizenship (or other eligible citizenship status, as required);
    - evidence of full-time enrolment in an accredited initial teacher education (ITE) program; and
    - any other evidence which may be specified by the Department.

- Successful applicants are encouraged to seek appropriate, independent and qualified financial, taxation and legal advice regarding their obligations and receipt of scholarship payments before signing a Scholarship Agreement.

6.2 Accepting the Offer

- Applicants have 14 days from the date of the offer to:
    - Accept the conditional scholarship offer; and
    - Submit all required supporting evidence.
- Acceptance of a conditional scholarship offer does not guarantee that a scholarship will be awarded.
- Applicants who cannot obtain enrolment confirmation from their higher education provider before the deadline may request an extension by emailing the Department before the deadline expires.
- Extensions will not be granted after the deadline has passed, except where an applicant is seeking consideration due to unforeseen circumstances (see below).

6.3 Failure to Respond

- If an applicant:
    - does not accept the conditional offer within 14 days; and
    - has not requested an extension within that period,

  the conditional offer will be withdrawn and will be offered to another applicant.

6.4 Unforeseen Circumstances

- Applicants who miss the conditional offer deadline due to unforeseen circumstances, as defined in the relevant Scholarship Guidelines, must contact the Department within 7 days of the missed deadline.
- Requests made more than 7 days after the missed deadline will not be considered.
- Special consideration will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

6.5 Reserve offers

Following the initial conditional offer round, additional conditional offers may be made to fill available scholarship places. Eligible applicants who do not receive an initial offer will be placed on a reserve list. Applicants will be informed if they have been placed on the reserve list.

If an applicant is no longer interested in being considered for a scholarship, they can decline their conditional offer. Subsequent conditional offer rounds will be made until scholarship places are exhausted. No further conditional offers will be made after 30 May 2027 due to the minimum timeframe for applicants to consider their offer and Scholarship Agreement.

6.6 Accepting a conditional offer

To accept a conditional offer, applicants must submit the conditional offer form and meet the conditions of the offer by providing the required information about their ITE program (see section 6.7.1).

Applicants are required to select their higher education provider and their accredited ITE program from a list of accredited courses. The list of accredited courses will include the length of the program, based on the standard course structure listed on ITE program websites. This information will determine the amount of scholarship funding included in the Scholarship Agreement (see section 7).

6.7 Conditional offer evidence requirements

To accept a conditional offer, applicants must provide evidence issued by their higher education provider of full-time enrolment for the full academic year (as defined in the Scholarship Guidelines) in an accredited ITE program and citizenship evidence to demonstrate eligibility for a formal scholarship offer.

Evidence must be in the format indicated in the conditional offer form and legible to be accepted.

The Department may contact applicants to request additional evidence if the evidence submitted does not include all the required information as set out in the conditional offer form.

A conditional offer may be withdrawn if the evidence provided does not meet the requirements (see section 6.7.3).

6.7.1 Enrolment evidence

Evidence of full-time enrolment for the full academic year in an accredited ITE program must be issued by the applicant's higher education provider and must include the:

- full name of the applicant
- name of the higher education provider (e.g. the relevant university)
- name of the accredited ITE program
- study load for the full academic year (e.g. equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL), study load percentage or a list of enrolled units)
- commencement date of the ITE program.

Where an applicant submits enrolment evidence that only covers the first half of the academic year, the Department will contact the applicant to request evidence for the full year. If an applicant is enrolled at a higher education provider that cannot provide evidence for the full academic year, they will be advised that they will need to provide evidence for the remaining half of the academic year when it is available. This will also impact payment of the first scholarship instalment (see CTS Payments Policy).

6.7.2 Citizenship evidence

Evidence of Australian citizenship, permanent residency, permanent humanitarian visa or a New Zealand citizen living in Australia may include:

- Australian or New Zealand Passport
- Australian or New Zealand Birth certificate
- Australian Citizenship certificate
- VEVO/visa documents.

New Zealand citizens living in Australia must also provide evidence of residency in Australia. This may include a:

- driver licence
- rental/lease agreement
- rates notice
- electricity/gas/water bill.

6.7.3 Unacceptable evidence

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide correct evidence to support the information provided in the conditional offer. Submitted evidence that does not meet the required standards may result in the response to the conditional offer being deemed ineligible. Unacceptable evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- letter of offer/acceptance into an accredited ITE program
- academic transcripts/proof of enrolment documents that only includes details for the first semester or study period (except where a higher education provider cannot provide evidence of full-year enrolment – see section 6.7.1)
- screenshots of class schedules/timetables or course planners
- international passports or birth certificates (with the exception of New Zealand passports or birth certificates)
- expired passports
- Australian driver licences
- Medicare or concession cards
- corrupted/unreadable files

- cropped screenshots that do not include the required information outlined in section 6.7.1
- half-scanned pages/blurry files
- links to external online storage locations (e.g. cloud-based storage).

6.8 Assessment of conditional offer

Conditional offer responses will be assessed to determine eligibility for a formal scholarship offer.

The Department may seek further information from an applicant to clarify information provided in the conditional offer response. Applicants will have seven (7) days to provide the requested information. If an applicant is not able to meet the deadline, they must contact the Department before the deadline to request an extension.

If an applicant's response provides all supporting evidence (as prescribed above) and is deemed eligible, a formal offer and Scholarship Agreement will be issued to the applicant.

7. Scholarship agreement

Successful applicants will be issued an individual legally binding Scholarship Agreement (the agreement) outlining the obligations of the CTS recipient. The successful applicant must ensure they review and complete the agreement within 14 days of receiving the agreement.

The agreement includes the funding details, based on the course length indicated in the conditional offer form. For example, an applicant enrolled in an accelerated 1.5-year Master of Teaching will receive a total of $15,000 in scholarship funding (see CTS Payments Policy).

Any individualised course plans outside the standard structure may impact scholarship funding.

8. Complaints

Any complaint about a decision made by the Department will be handled in accordance with the CTS Complaints Handling Policy.