

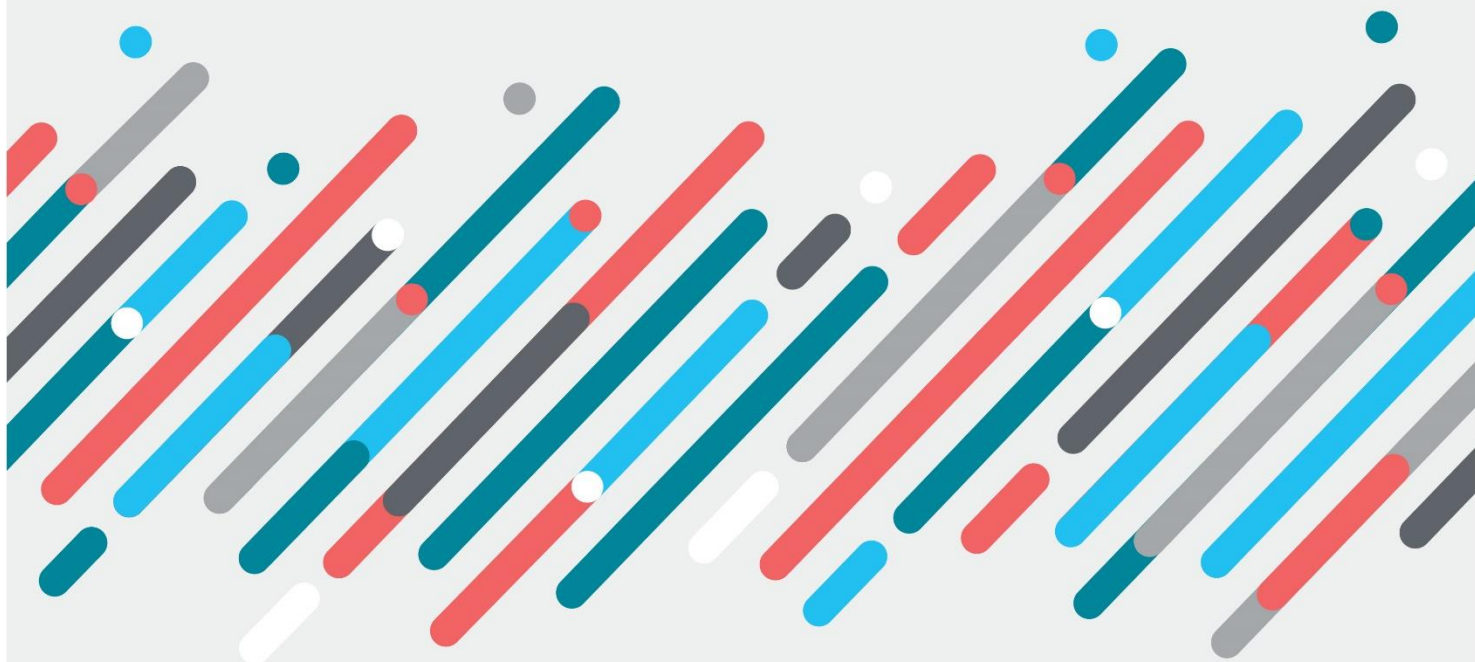


Australian Government
Department of Education

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Workforce

Practicum Exchange Living Allowance

Grant Opportunity Guidelines (2025-2026)



ECEC Workforce Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Guidelines

Opening dates:	14/07/2025 for Round 1 of applications 12/01/2026 for Round 2 of applications
Closing dates:	19/09/2025 for Round 1 of applications 13/03/2026 for Round 2 of Applications
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Education
Administering entity:	Department of Education
Enquiries:	If you have any enquiries, please contact ececgrants@deloitte.com.au
Date guidelines released:	04/07/2025
Type of Grant opportunity:	Demand-driven (Eligibility-based)

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1. Practicum Exchange Living Allowance 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 Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grant program, contributes 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 Grants 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



Confirmation of a Practicum Exchange

Confirmation that an ECEC employee and ECEC service has been agreed to and organised a practicum placement via the Practicum Exchange network.



The grant application is 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 2026 and demonstrate that the activity has been undertaken and keep accurate records.



Evaluation of the Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grant program

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

1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Practicum Exchange Living Allowance (PELA) grant program.

You must read these guidelines before applying for a grant.

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 Providers. Each ECEC Provider's services will pass this funding, in full, on to participating ECEC Employees directly.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

All enquiries regarding this grant program must be sent to ececgrants@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. This is used for identification matching and program record keeping of your application.

2. About the Practicum Exchange Living Allowance grant program

Background

On 3 May 2023, the Australian Government announced a package of workforce measures to deliver \$72.4 million over five years to support the skills and training of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) employees in the ECEC sector.

The Practicum Exchange Living Allowance grant program is one of three measures in this package which are designed to help build a sustainable, skilled ECEC workforce that delivers high quality early childhood education. The workforce measures package also complements the [government's broader ECEC reforms](#) and workforce actions being undertaken across state and territory governments.

The other two measures are the Professional Development program and the Paid Practicum program. Further information on the Professional Development and Paid Practicum programs can be found at [Guidelines for professional development and paid practicum subsidies](#).

The combined objectives of all three of these programs are to:

- strengthen skills and professional experience;

- improve staff retention of educators and early childhood teachers in the ECEC sector; and
- increase ECEC sector capacity and build supply.

It is intended that over 75,000 eligible ECEC Employees will benefit from these programs.

The Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grant program will run over three financial years from 2024-25 to 2026-27. However, these guidelines apply to the 2025-26 financial year only. New guidelines for 2026-27 will be released following consultation with stakeholders and agreement by the Minister for Early Childhood Education.

The grant opportunity will be undertaken in accordance with the CGRPs.

2.1 About the grant opportunity

As part of an ECEC workforce development package, the Australian Government announced funding to support up to 2,000 ECEC Employees to undertake a practicum exchange at a different ECEC Service over the financial years 2024-25 to 2026-27. This includes a trial component to provide a living allowance for up to 350 students undertaking a practicum as part of study or training for ECEC qualifications in a regional, rural or remote location that is not the ECEC Employees home location for work purposes.

The intended objectives of the Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grant program are to support ECEC Employees to complete their ECEC qualifications. This is critical to increasing and future-proofing the ECEC workforce and sustaining a pipeline of qualified educators.

Completing a practicum at another ECEC Service is necessary for some students as part of their study towards gaining recognised ECEC qualifications.

Many ECEC Employees living in regional, rural and remote locations can face significant barriers in completing their academic practicum requirements, including but not limited to, costs for accommodation and travel to undertake a practicum at another ECEC Service.

The Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grant program provides ECEC Employees a Grant of \$1,552.50 per week (up to a maximum of four weeks) from their employer as a contribution towards living and travel costs associated with undertaking a practicum exchange at another ECEC Service. This Grant is to address the need for some ECEC Employees to temporarily relocate to complete their practicum placement requirements.

The intended objectives of the Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grant program are to:

- allow existing ECEC Employees to gain knowledge from unique experiences based at other ECEC Services in different parts of Australia.
- remove financial barriers to completing a practicum in regional, rural and remote areas.
- allow ECEC Services to maintain adult-to-child ratios while ECEC Employees complete practicum placements.

The intended outcomes are:

- increase overall completion rates of ECEC qualifications; and

- build ECEC sector capacity and supply through completion of practicum opportunities.

The Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grant program is targeted to ECEC Services and ECEC Employees that are located in regional, remote, or very remote communities.

3. Practicum Exchange Network

To support the Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grant program, a dedicated Practicum Exchange network has been developed to enable ECEC Employees and ECEC Services to search and arrange practicum exchange opportunities. The department is not involved in the matching process or exchange arrangements between ECEC Employees and ECEC Services.

For further information on the Practicum Exchange network, see [Practicum exchange network](#)

4. Grant amount and grant period

The Australian Government will provide a total of \$2.262m in administered funding over three years for the Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grant program. This includes a total of \$0.642m in the 2025-26 financial year.

The 2025-26 funding will subsidise eligible ECEC Providers via their Services to support up to 100 ECEC Employees already working in the ECEC sector with a living and travel allowance to assist those ECEC Employees to complete a practicum placement away from their home location.

This is a demand driven grant opportunity and funding may be exhausted prior to the final date for applications. Should this occur, updated information will be published on GrantConnect and the department's website.

Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grants are not designed to fully cover the exact cost of an ECEC Employee's travel and living expenses whilst on their practicum exchange. The Grant will be calculated based on a weekly block amount of \$1,552.50 per week for up to four weeks. The weekly amount will be indexed annually, and this figure relates to the 2025-26 financial year only.

Making travel and accommodation arrangements is the responsibility of the relevant ECEC Employee. ECEC Employees are encouraged to retain receipts of expenditure associated with the practicum exchange for record keeping purposes. Please note, no additional funding will be provided by the department if an ECEC Employee uses more than the Grant amount to undertake their practicum exchange.

The department will provide up to four weeks of practicum exchange Grant funding per semester per ECEC Employee under this grant opportunity. The funding amount (paid in week blocks) will be based on the ECEC Employee's practicum requirements for that semester. ECEC Providers, when submitting applications, will be asked to provide indicative dates for the practicum placement of their ECEC Employee. Further evidence that a practicum placement has occurred may be collected from the ECEC Provider after the practicum placement has been completed.

ECEC Employees can receive support for multiple practicum placements in 2025-26 in a minimum of one-week blocks. Practicum placements must commence between 30 June 2025 and 28 June 2026. Practicum placements must be completed by 27 September 2026.

Funding provided to the ECEC Service as part of an ECEC Employee's practicum exchange must be passed on to the individual ECEC Employee in full, in addition to their agreed wages or salary set out in the recognised Industry Award or employment contract. Receiving this grant does not end or change any other legal and tax obligations that an ECEC Provider has towards their ECEC Employee.

5. Eligibility criteria

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

If an ECEC Employee is receiving a bursary or scholarship from a not-for-profit charity to support their ECEC studies, the ECEC Provider can still apply for a Grant on the relevant ECEC Employee's behalf. The application must confirm if the relevant ECEC Employee is applying, or has already applied, for practicum placement support payments from the non-government sector if the amount is higher than \$250 dollars.

5.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

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

An Eligible ECEC Employee must:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia or hold a valid work visa (including a student visa) allowing employment in the ECEC sector;
- be a contact worker - an educator who is part of the adult to child ratio at a ECEC Service or who provides direct early childhood education and care, or supervision for children in other care types such as In Home Care (IHC) or Family Day Care (FDC);
- be a full-time, part-time, or casual ECEC Employee who has worked more than 40 hours over all in the preceding three months with that ECEC Service, who is working towards a recognised and approved Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) training qualification. Through these qualifications, it may be necessary for the relevant ECEC Employee to undertake a practicum at a different work location;
- be undertaking their practicum in a regional, remote or very remote location other than their home location; and
- have used the practicum exchange network to be matched to an alternate ECEC Service for their practicum exchange.

ECEC Employees are not eligible to apply for or receive Grant payments directly.

ECEC Employees are required to apply through the ECEC Provider which employs them.

ECEC Employees may commence employment with an ECEC Provider after this grant opportunity opens and still be eligible for this grant opportunity as long as they meet all the eligibility criteria.

Location

This grant opportunity is for ECEC Providers which have ECEC Employees that will provide education and care as part of their practicum exchange in one of the following remoteness categories:

- Inner regional Australia
- Outer regional Australia
- Remote Australia
- Very remote Australia.

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)

5.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

ECEC Providers are not eligible to apply if they are:

- a stand-alone kindergarten service
- a stand-alone pre-School service
- an individual
- 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)
- any entity that does not meet the eligibility criteria in Section 6.1
- any entity that is already receiving living and travel allowance funding for a practicum placement for the same individual ECEC Employee for the same period from a Commonwealth or state or territory government.

6. What the Grant money can be used for

6.1 ECEC Providers

ECEC Provider's Services that receive this Grant **must** pay the Grant **in full** to the relevant ECEC Employee's nominated financial institution upon receiving it through the CCS payment system.

ECEC Provider's Services will be responsible for:

- passing the Grant on to the successful ECEC Employee employed at their Service
- any costs for an ECEC Employee's practicum placement already agreed with the ECEC Employee that are not covered by this Grant
- ensuring the continued payroll tax and superannuation obligations (if any) for their ECEC Employee are met at their Service.

6.2 ECEC Employees

ECEC Employees must use the grant to pay for costs associated with living at and/or traveling to and from a ECEC Service hosting their practicum exchange. The practicum exchange location cannot be the relevant ECEC Employees existing primary place of employment or home location.

Costs associated with living and/or travelling to and from a ECEC Service, may include, but are not limited to:

- paying for a hotel or short-term rental accommodation required by the relevant ECEC Employee to stay close to the practicum exchange location. This could also include any dependents of the ECEC Employee
- paying for food consumed during the period of living away from primary residence for the purposes of the practicum exchange
- paying for fuel or toll costs incurred while traveling to and from the practicum exchange location
- other associated family costs, for example the cost of child care services if the ECEC Employee is temporarily relocating with dependents.

ECEC Employees must be enrolled in and undertaking practicum requirements as part of their studies for one of the below qualifications:

- a relevant Certificate III qualification as recognised by the ACECQA at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) at Level 3, for example:
 - a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care or Equivalent ECEC Certificate III level qualification.

OR

- a relevant Diploma-level qualification as recognised by the ACECQA at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) at 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 the ACECQA at AQF at 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.

Practicum placement examples

Example one

Student A needs to undertake a 20-day practicum exchange as part of their studies towards a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood). Student A used the practicum exchange network to find a suitable ECEC Service to complete their practicum. They have completed all necessary pre-requisites and are enrolled to undertake their practicum at their agreed ECEC Service in Semester One 2026. The agreed ECEC service is located in a regional, rural or remote location other than Student A's home location. Student A intends to undertake the practicum in one block over a period of four weeks. Student A's employer can apply for this Grant on behalf of Student A for the duration of their 20-day practicum.

Example two

Student B needs to undertake a 10-day practicum as part of their studies towards a Bachelor of Education (Early Learning). Student B used the practicum exchange network to find a suitable Service to complete their practicum. They have completed all necessary pre-requisites and are enrolled to undertake their practicum at their agreed ECEC Service in Semester One 2026. Student B intends to undertake the practicum over ten weeks, spending one day each week at their practicum ECEC Service. Student B's employer cannot apply for this Grant to contribute towards Student B's 10-day practicum because this Grant is only paid in one-week blocks.

Example three

Student C has three remaining practicums to complete their studies towards a Certificate III in Childcare. They cannot complete their practicum placement at their current ECEC Service and are enrolled to undertake a 5-day practicum in Semester One 2026 and another 10-day practicum later in Semester One 2026 at a different ECEC Service. They intend to undertake their third practicum in Semester Two 2026. Student C used the practicum exchange network to find a suitable ECEC Service to complete their practicums. The suitable ECEC Service is located in a regional, rural or remote location other than Student C's home location. Student C's employer can only apply for the Grant the first two practicums, but not the third practicum commencing in Semester Two 2026 because that practicum placement occurs in the 2026-2027 financial year and is not eligible.

7. How to apply

Before applying, ECEC Providers must read and understand these guidelines which can also be found at [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations¹ 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 where there are step by step instructions to assist approved Providers to navigate the application process.

¹ Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to corrections to currently published documents, changes to closing times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents

Enquiries can be emailed through to 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).

7.1 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).
- confirmation that an ECEC Employee and ECEC Service has been agreed to and organised a practicum placement via the Practicum Exchange network.
- details of the ECEC Employee for whom the Grant is sought, including a statement / declaration that the relevant ECEC Employee meets all eligibility criteria (based on Section 5).
- agreement to undertake the required acquittal reporting of the expenditure of the Grant as specified in any resulting Grant Agreement.
- confirmation that the person signing the application is registered as a Person with Management or Control (PMC) of the ECEC Provider (legal entity).
- 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).

Submitting a completed application form does not guarantee a Grant. Applications need to meet the eligibility criteria to be considered for selection. The selection process is outlined in Section 8.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should email us at ececgrants@deloitte.com.au immediately. 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](#). 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.

You will receive acknowledgement of the receipt of your application within five business days of receipt.

7.2 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 open in July 2025 and close in September 2025, with payments expected to be made in November 2025. The second round of grant applications open in January 2026 and close in March 2026, with payments expected to be made in May 2026.

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 undertaken in the following two weeks after applications are assessed. Once checking of the application has been undertaken, if approved, an ECEC Provider will be sent a Grant Agreement and will be required to sign and return it to the department within 7 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 [Practicum exchange network - Department of Education, Australian Government](#).

7.3 Questions during the application process

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

- email at 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.

8. 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. Applications will be checked by Deloitte² to ensure relevant eligibility criteria are met in the order that applications are received.

Applications will also be considered against 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.

² As a contracted grants administrator on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Education, Deloitte are required to adhere to the key principles and applicable requirements of the CGRPs and the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

8.1 Who will approve Grants

The Assistant Secretary of the ECEC Workforce 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.

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

9. Successful Grant applications

ECEC Providers will be notified in writing (via email) of a successful and 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 that 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 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 this Grant opportunity may have been exhausted.

9.1 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 2025-26, the Grants will be paid to ECEC Services twice³. One payment is expected to occur in November 2025 (for Round 1) and the other in May 2026 (for Round 2).

9.2 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/).⁴ The department cannot provide advice on your specific taxation circumstances.

9.3 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.

10. 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 effect⁵ 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.

11. How the department will monitor your Grant activity

11.1 Grant Acquittal Process

ECEC Providers must hold/retain relevant records of all current or former ECEC Employees who have undertaken a practicum exchange with a living allowance using the Grant for 24 months after the Grant Agreement expires.

The department may also request, in writing and at any time, certified copies for audit and validation purposes, that the Grant was transferred to the relevant ECEC Employee for the practicum exchange and that the Grant was used in accordance with these guidelines and the Grant Agreement.

³ Subject to available funding. If funding is exhausted in Round 1, the planned Round 2 of applications will not go ahead.

⁴ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

⁵ See glossary

Please note, Grants awarded in 2025-26 are to be acquitted by 14 July 2026⁶. The Grant may not be transferred to an ECEC Provider's other Services (if any).

11.2 Evaluation

The department will evaluate the Practicum Exchange Living Allowance Grant program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application for this purpose. The department, or a contracted third party, may also 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.

The department may contact ECEC Providers up to one year after the Grant period ends for more information to assist with this evaluation.

Information that ECEC Providers submit through the acquittals process will be used as part of the evaluation process and will be organised through the use of ECEC Provider and Service Customer Reference Numbers. The department will not use disaggregated ECEC Employee information for public purposes. However, in instances where acquittals raise concerns about improper use of funds, the department may use personal details provided for internal financial integrity purposes. All information provided will be used in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and other relevant guidelines and principles (see Section 12).

Information provided by ECEC Providers through the acquittals process may, if deemed relevant, be used for reporting purposes by the department, including in its Annual Report or on its website.

11.3 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.

12. Probity

The department will ensure that the Grant opportunity process is fair, is conducted in accordance with the published 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>].

⁶ If the grant activity goes beyond 14 July 2026 (for example a practicum placement that commences before 28 June 2026 but does not conclude until August 2026 or September 2026), an extension to this timeframe will be given and this must be acquitted 14 days after the activity has concluded.

12.1 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.

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
- Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

12.2 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 third-party provider)
- 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 your 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.

12.3 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 the purposes of 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*.

12.4 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.

12.5 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 the right to access 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 the 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

13. Glossary

Term	Section	Definition
ACECQA	5.1; 6.2	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	5.1; 6.1; 7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 9.1	<p>Child Care Subsidy (CCS) aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist families with the cost of early childhood education and care • facilitate individuals to participate, or increase their participation, in the workforce • facilitate children's attendance in child care to support their early learning and development.
Commonwealth entity	12.3	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.
<u>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs)</u>	8; 10	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	12	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.



Term	Section	Definition
Customer Reference Number or CRN	1; 7.1; 7.3	<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 Child Care Subsidy through an approved child care Service.</p> <p>With reference to grant opportunities/applications, only the 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	10	can be the date on which a 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)	8.1	the person who decides to award a Grant.
ECEC Employee	1; 2; 2.1; 3; 4; 5; 5.1; 5.2; 6.1; 6.2; 7.1; 11.1; 11.2	a person that works in a Service and is an employee or independent contractor who is an early childhood educator, early childhood teacher or director.
ECEC Provider	1; 4; 5; 5.1; 5.2; 6.1; 7; 7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 8; 9; 9.1; 9.2; 9.3; 10; 11.1; 11.2; 11.3; 12; 12.2; 12.3; 12.4	is the legal entity approved to operate a Service and administer the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).
educator	2; 2.1; 5.1	a person who is employed as an early childhood educator and provides care for children in an approved Service.
eligibility criteria	1; 5; 5.1; 5.2; 7.1; 8	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	Section	Definition
Family Assistance Law	5.1	Family Assistance Law (FAL) sets the rules for providers that administer the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).
Grant	1; 2; 2.1; 3; 4; 5; 5.1; 6.1; 6.2; 7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 8; 8.1; 9; 9.1; 9.2; 9.3; 10; 11.1; 11.2; 11.3; 12; 12.1; 12.2; 12.3; 12.4; 12.5	for the purposes of the CGRGs, 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"> a. under which relevant money⁷ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money⁸ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
Grant activity/activities	11	refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake.
grant applicant	12.3	refers to an eligible ECEC Provider, not an individual employee.
Grant Agreement	7.2; 9; 11.1; 12.4	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 Agreement.
GrantConnect	4; 7; 10; 12; 12.3	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	1; 2; 2.1; 4; 5.1; 7.2; 8; 9; 10; 12; 12.1; 12.2; 12.3; 12.5	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	1; 2; 2.1; 3; 5.1; 8.1; 11.2; 12.2	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	1; 12	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a Grant.

⁷ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

⁸ 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	Section	Definition
home location	2.1; 4; 5.1; 6.2	refers to an ECEC Employee's usual place of work.
National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC)	12	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 <i>National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022</i> .
PMC	7.1; 7.2	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.
Practicum Exchange network	3; 5.1; 6.2; 7.1	a dedicated website where ECEC services and educators in training can search for and arrange practicum exchange opportunities.
selection process	8; 9; 12.2	the method used to select potential grantees.
Service	2.1; 3; 4; 5.1; 5.2; 6.1; 6.2; 7.1; 9.1; 9.3; 11.1; 11.2; 12; 12.3	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.
value with money	8	<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"> • the quality of the project proposal and activities; • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives; • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved; and • the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.

