



Australian Government
Department of Education

Trailblazer Universities Program

Program Guidelines



Version control

Date	Version	Description
25 November 2021	1.0	First release of program guidelines, outlining eligibility, funding requirements and application process.
28 March 2023	2.0	Second release of program guidelines, which provides additional programmatic advice provided to participating universities in the Trailblazer Universities Program.

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1. Introduction and program overview

About the program

- 1.1 The Australian Government recognises the important role that our universities play to further Australia's research and development (R&D) and innovation ecosystem and support the skill needs of our future workforce.
- 1.2 The Australian Government has provided \$369.3 million from 2022-23 until 2025-26 to drive the establishment of Trailblazer Universities that will become leaders in research commercialisation and support Australia's strategic priority areas.¹ Selected universities will
 - 1.2.1 rapidly build world-leading research commercialisation capability behind strategic priority areas²
 - 1.2.2 adopt innovative intellectual property (IP), workplace relations and skills practices that promote university-industry collaboration and reward academics working with industry, and
 - 1.2.3 drive the job-ready skills of the future through strong engagement with industry, ensuring research and development activity and education qualifications are aligned to industry need.
- 1.3 The Trailblazer Universities Program includes a \$45 million investment for successful universities to access Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's (CSIRO) specialist equipment, such as a Test Lab, which can drive the technology readiness level (TRL) and scaling of research to a point where private sector investment is more attractive. Successful universities will formally partner with CSIRO to harness their research capability and commercialisation expertise.

Legislative authority

- 1.4 Authority to provide funding to select Trailblazer Universities is provided under *Part 2-3 Other Grants* of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA). The Minister for Education (the Minister) or the Minister's delegate (Project Delegate) will impose Conditions of Grant. The Conditions of Grant define the obligations of the Trailblazer University in relation to the Grant.

Outcomes and Objectives

- 1.5 The Trailblazer Universities Program will create leaders in research commercialisation and university-industry collaboration.

¹ Funding figures were updated to reflect the Department of Education's Portfolio Budget Statements for October 2022-2023. This is available at <https://www.education.gov.au/about-department/resources/october-2022-23-portfolio-budget-statements>.

² In 2021, these strategic priority areas referred to the National Manufacturing Priorities (NMP) as part of the Modern Manufacturing Strategy. The six priority areas were resources technology and critical minerals processing, food and beverage, medical products, recycling and clean energy, defence, and space.



- 1.6 Trailblazer Universities will form part of an ecosystem of innovation centres and dedicated research institutes that lift the impact of Australia’s researchers and encourage the translation and commercialisation of university research towards strategic priority areas.
- 1.7 The expected long-term outcomes of the program are to
- 1.7.1 create stronger commercialisation activity, particularly through to later stages of the TRL scale
 - 1.7.2 ensure Australia’s universities are recognised for the commercial value of their research, in addition to their foundational research activity
 - 1.7.3 promote a culture of collaboration of university academics and businesspeople actively working together
 - 1.7.4 drive a strong focus of R&D behind Australia’s strategic priority areas, and
 - 1.7.5 promote university exemplars across Australia that demonstrate to the sector and the country the benefits of an increased focus on commercialisation.
- 1.8 The Trailblazer Universities Program contributes to Outcome 2 of the Department’s Portfolio Budget Statements 2022-23.
- Promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality higher education, international education, and international quality research.*
- 1.9 Specific performance indicators, milestones and reporting requirements are likely to vary according to each Trailblazer University, which will factor in projects’ specific objectives and outcomes.

Background

- 1.10 In 2021 public consultation into university research commercialisation highlighted the importance of strengthening capability at the institutional level. It also emphasised key barriers to collaboration and commercialisation, including the need for more effective IP agreements and greater incentives for academics and institutions to translate and commercialise research.
- 1.11 To help achieve this outcome, the Australian Government established the Trailblazer Universities Program to drive research commercialisation and support Australia’s strategic priority areas. As part of the 2022-23 Budget, \$118.9 million was committed under the Responsible Investment to Grow Our Regions to deliver significant impact in regional Australia and allow for additional Trailblazer funding.³

³ The 2022-2023 October Budget lists this additional investment under the Responsible Investments in the Region measure.

2. Application and assessment process

- 2.1 In November 2021, universities were invited to submit proposals for up to \$50 million in funding to work with industry to accelerate their research capability and commercial potential. They could also include a separate bid for access to CSIRO specialist equipment. The Department of Education conducted a two-stage application process, involving an initial expression of interest stage (stage 1) with the department then inviting shortlisted applicants to provide a comprehensive business case (stage 2). An expert assessment panel of university, industry, science, and research leaders assessed the applications and made recommendations to the Minister, who was the ultimate decision maker.
- 2.2 An overview of the two-stage application process is provided at [Appendix A](#).

Selection Criteria

- 2.3 Key selection criteria to participate in the Trailblazer Universities Program are
 - 2.3.1 commercialisation readiness
 - 2.3.2 commitment to Australia's strategic priority areas, and
 - 2.3.3 industry alignment.
- 2.4 **Commercialisation readiness** refers to specific activities and approaches which promote the university/ies as a world leader of research commercialisation, including
 - 2.4.1 pathways to support commercialisation projects, and proactive approaches to engaging with businesses to select and conduct research projects
 - 2.4.2 focus on IP and industrial arrangements that promote university-industry collaboration and reward academics working with industry.
- 2.5 **Research capability** to support Australia's strategic priority areas refers to activities and approaches that will develop work toward the growth opportunities for Australia.⁴ This includes
 - 2.5.1 examples of promising research commercialisation projects, to be supported by the university
 - 2.5.2 unique assets, resources, and capabilities already resident in the university, which support the ambitions of the Trailblazer Universities Program
 - 2.5.3 identifying how the engagement with the CSIRO, including the need and utility of the CSIRO Test Lab, can elevate the translation and commercial potential of the university.
- 2.6 **Industry alignment** refers to activities and approaches that respond to industry needs and the job-ready skills of the future, including
 - 2.6.1 collaborative partnerships with industry, including matched funding commitments
 - 2.6.2 opportunities for staff interchanges between university and industry, including development and provision of industry PhD programs

⁴ In 2021, applicants were required to outline how their proposal contributed to the growth opportunities and outcomes under six National Manufacturing Priorities.



- 2.6.3 development and implementation of educational qualifications relevant to the strategic priority area, developed and delivered in collaboration with industry partners
 - 2.6.4 strengthening or creating new pathways with the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.
- 2.7 To ensure the benefits of the Trailblazer Universities Program are spread evenly through Australia, the selected universities will consist of at least one non-metropolitan headquartered university and give regard to spread across Australian states and territories. Consideration of geography, regional impact, and engagement with small to medium enterprises will form part of the overall recommendation that the assessment panel provide to the Minister.

Eligibility

- 2.8 The Trailblazer Universities Program is open to universities listed in Table A and Table B of HESA. Applications that include more than one eligible university are required to nominate a lead university.
- 2.9 Key eligibility criteria are listed below to

- 1) include at least one private sector partner, whose activities deliver significant benefit to an area of strategic priority for Australia**
- 2) have agreement from university/ies involved in the application to include**
 - a) an IP strategy that maximises benefits for Australia, incentivises collaboration and spurs innovation, including agreement to adopt the Higher Education Research Commercialisation Intellectual Property (HERC IP) Framework for any IP resulting from Trailblazer Universities Program grants⁵
 - b) industrial arrangements that promote a high-performance culture and support the achievement of commercial outcomes, for example, through a clearly articulated remuneration, reward and promotional arrangements for academic researchers engaging in commercialisation activities.
- 3) create an identifiable and separate business unit to support the application of this investment, including**
 - a) appropriate governance, a governing board with representatives of end users and an independent chair with industry experience in the relevant priority area, and
 - b) local leadership empowered to oversee management of innovative IP and industrial arrangements that promote a high-performance culture and support the achievement of focus on commercial outcomes.
- 4) demonstrate evidence of matched funding from the university/ies involved in the application and industry partners.**

⁵ Since the first release of the program guidelines in November 2021, following consultation on the HERC IP Framework, the Department has changed the requirements for the HERC IP Framework. The Framework is now an optional framework, which universities are encouraged but not obliged to adopt as part of their Trailblazer Project.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 The Minister has overall responsibility for the program, and makes decisions including
 - 3.1.1 which projects will be funded
 - 3.1.2 level of funding offered
 - 3.1.3 conditions of any funding offer
 - 3.1.4 changes to the level of funding, and
 - 3.1.5 termination of agreements.
- 3.2 The Department is responsible for administering the program and carrying out functions authorised by the Minister. Specifically, these tasks will be the responsibility of the Department's Research Division.
- 3.3 The Department will
 - 3.3.1 provide advice to the Minister on which proposals should receive program funding, following an application and assessment process.
 - 3.3.2 develop and negotiate Conditions of Grant for each successful Trailblazer University
 - 3.3.3 administer and exercise delegated powers under the Conditions of Grant
 - 3.3.4 support Trailblazer Universities to meet their obligations as stipulated in the Conditions of Grant.
- 3.4 The Department has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place with the CSIRO to manage the Test Lab component.
- 3.5 The Trailblazer Universities Program will be supported by the existing outreach function of the Department of Home Affairs to manage the visa implications of recruitment for key research and innovation leadership provisions, including where relevant, access to the high priority processing arrangements available under the Global Talent Visa Scheme.⁶

4. Funding support

- 4.1 Lead universities bid for up to \$50 million in funding, to be provided from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026, to support R&D projects, staff, equipment, and opportunities to increase collaboration with industry, enhance the commercialisation capability of research staff and drive the job-ready skills of the future, through alignment of courses with industry need.
- 4.2 Universities may include in their proposal a bid for new, specialist equipment to be made available in CSIRO, that will drive the technology readiness level and scaling of research to a point where private sector investment is more attractive.
- 4.3 CSIRO specialist equipment bids are provided in addition to the \$50 million stipulated above, and are likely to vary, depending on the nature of equipment required.

⁶ [Visas for innovation \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas-for-innovation)



- 4.4 It is expected that funding for the Trailblazer Universities Program will support six universities. Subject to the size of funding requested and the quality of proposals received, the number of universities funded as part of this program may change.
- 4.5 Funding for the Trailblazer Universities Program will be awarded for up to four years.
- 4.6 Funding will be provided to the lead Trailblazer University under Conditions of Grant. The payment schedule will be determined with Trailblazer Universities following negotiations on the Conditions of Grant.
- 4.7 Trailblazer Universities may transfer project funding to one or more partner organisations (university and/or business partner) so long as the funding governance arrangements with the partner university are reflected in a legally binding partnership agreement.
- 4.8 Funding for the Trailblazer Universities Program intends to support activities under the three key criteria. Eligible activities could include but are not limited to:

1) Commercialisation readiness

- a) costs to support the administration and management of a business unit
- b) staff engaged to support research commercialisation projects, including salaries for the proportion of their time spent on project activities
- c) teaching relief for academic staff engaged specifically for or in the projects, including salaries for the proportion of their time spent on project activities
- d) joint supervision or staff development arrangements.

2) Research capability to support an area of strategic priority for Australia

- a) access to research infrastructure (see CSIRO equipment below)
- b) access to major Australian research facilities, such as National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) facilities.

3) Industry alignment

- a) costs associated with establishing and strengthening collaborations, including development of education qualifications such as short courses, micro credentials, and pathways with the VET sector
- b) opportunities for staff and student exchanges, such as industry PhD programs
- c) industry engagement in governance.

- 4.9 University overheads such as payment for researcher salaries, equipment, materials can be covered by grant funding to the extent that they contribute to the outcomes of the proposal.
- 4.10 Funding for the Trailblazer Universities Program can also be used to meet the costs of establishing collaborations, such as meeting with potential collaborating institutions. Funding to establish collaborations can include payments to partner institutions where it can be demonstrated that this is an actual cost that will add value to the collaboration. An example is where costs such as travel, and catering are involved in negotiating and organising the collaborative relationship. Costs to facilitate collaboration are to be included in project budgets where applicable.
- 4.11 The way Trailblazer Universities use their funding to promote these themes will vary according to the chosen strategic priority area, the unique assets, resources, and capabilities already present in the university and the existing gaps in the innovation ecosystem.



- 4.12 While the Department does not outline specific costs that cannot be included as part of the Trailblazer Universities Program, the types of costs that likely would be ineligible include
- 4.12.1 retroactive costs (i.e., those incurred before notice of approval of the application)
 - 4.12.2 capital, infrastructure, or equipment costs that are unrelated to R&D, commercialisation, or the objectives of the Conditions of Grant
 - 4.12.3 depreciation of assets
 - 4.12.4 fines and penalties.

Partner contributions

- 4.13 The Trailblazer Universities Program is a partnership between the Australian Government, universities, and industry. Any Government funding must be matched by the Trailblazer University (this can include the partner universities) and industry partners.
- 4.14 Funding can be cash or in-kind. The Trailblazer Universities Program does not require a minimum cash contribution.
- 4.15 The lead Trailblazer Universities will be required to enter a legally binding arrangement with a third-party which commits the third-party to match the funding amount.
- 4.16 Existing arrangements between universities and industry partners can count towards the matched funding requirement if the partner contribution has not yet been provided.
- 4.17 For project reporting purposes, the Department has provided definitions of partner contributions, cash contributions and in-kind contributions at [Appendix B](#). The Department acknowledges that projects under the Trailblazer Universities Program will operate in varied ways reflecting the different nature of the projects and partners. The definitions are not intended to constrain how partner contributions are managed, but rather, aim to guide and create consistency in how partner contributions are reported to the Department.

CSIRO Specialist Equipment

- 4.18 As part of the Trailblazer Universities Program, prospective universities can include requests for access to, or funding for, additional specialist equipment in line with the objectives of their proposal.
- 4.19 No matched funding is required to support access to, or purchase of, Test Lab equipment.
- 4.20 Any Test Lab equipment that Trailblazer Universities leverage for their project will be owned and managed by the CSIRO, and successful Trailblazer Universities are expected to formally partner with the CSIRO to harness their research capability and commercialisation expertise.
- 4.21 Trailblazer Universities are expected to engage directly with CSIRO about the ongoing use, cost and opportunities associated with their specialist equipment.



5. Grant requirements and Conditions of Grant

Conditions of Grant

- 5.1 The Minister or the Project Delegate will impose Conditions of Grant. The executed Conditions of Grant define the Trailblazer University's obligations in relation to the Grant over the four-year funding period.
- 5.2 The Conditions of Grant include
 - 5.2.1 project objectives
 - 5.2.2 project period
 - 5.2.3 reporting requirements
 - 5.2.4 project milestones, and
 - 5.2.5 project budget and payments.
- 5.3 The details of the Conditions of Grant, including the payment schedule and milestones, will be informed by the business case stage, and negotiated with successful lead Trailblazer Universities.
- 5.4 The Department may elect to terminate funding should the proposal fail to meet key milestones or deliver key objectives as specified in the Conditions of Grant.

Project Plan

- 5.5 The Trailblazer University must provide a Project Plan to the Department at the beginning of their project, which at a minimum
 - 5.5.1 address planned activities to achieve project milestones
 - 5.5.2 include a detailed budget outlining income and expenditure for the year, and a high-level budget for the remainder of the project
 - 5.5.3 anticipated outcomes and key performance indicators for the project.
- 5.6 The Trailblazer University will be required to provide updated Project Plans annually to the Department that reflect changes or progress made to the Project's key milestones and anticipated outcomes.
- 5.7 The Department will provide a template for Project Plans.

Progress Reports

- 5.8 The Trailblazer University must provide six-monthly Progress Reports on their projects, which at a minimum
 - 5.8.1 report on the work done for each activity
 - 5.8.2 report on progress against the Project Plan
 - 5.8.3 evidence to demonstrate the relevant milestones have been completed



- 5.8.4 an annual statement of actual income and expenditure compared against the budget in the Project Plan. This statement should be based on cash rather than accruals.
- 5.8.5 an annual statement of cash and in-kind contributions. This statement can take the form of a table or spreadsheet and identify all sources of cash and in-kind contributions from partners for Trailblazer activities.
- 5.8.6 a statement signed by an authorised person that the reports are true and accurate, and that the grant funds have been expended only for eligible activities under the Trailblazer Universities Program and in accordance with the Conditions of Grant.
- 5.9 The statement of income and expenditure will be submitted with an independent auditor's statement that:
 - 5.9.1 that reported expenditure is true and accurate; and
 - 5.9.2 the Grant Amount was expended in accordance with the Conditions of Grant.
- 5.10 The Department will provide a template for the Progress Reports. However, all financial reporting and relevant statements can be provided in a manner consistent with the Trailblazer University's preferred templates.⁷

Final Reporting

- 5.11 The Trailblazer University must provide a Final Report to the Department, covering the period from the project commencement to project completion.
- 5.12 The Final Report must contain, at a minimum
 - 5.12.1 evidence that the project has been completed
 - 5.12.2 a statement describing the objectives and outcomes achieved because of the grant
 - 5.12.3 a report on project outcomes and key performance indicators as agreed in the Project Plan
 - 5.12.4 copies of any published reports, pamphlets, or other documentation relevant to the project which have not already been included in the Progress Reports, and
 - 5.12.5 an Acquittal Report.
- 5.13 The Acquittal Report must contain, at a minimum
 - 5.13.1 a cash report that details expenditure of cash for the activities against each theme or category of expenditure throughout the project funding period
 - 5.13.2 a certificate signed by the Trailblazer University's chief executive officer (or equivalent) that the report is true and accurate, and that grant funding was expended for the Project and in accordance with the Conditions of Grant

⁷ Universities may wish to leverage existing templates made available through other research programs including the Government's Cooperative Research Centres (CRC): [Cooperative Research Centres \(CRC\) Grants – Round 24 | business.gov.au](#).

- 5.13.3 an independent auditor's report on the budget and account, and that reported expenditure throughout the project funding period is true and accurate.
- 5.13.4 any other requirements advised by the Department to the Trailblazer University.
- 5.14 The Department will provide a template for the Final Report. However, all financial reporting and relevant statements can be provided in a manner consistent with the Trailblazer University's preferred templates.

Variations and approvals

- 5.15 Variations to the project's partners, activities, payments, timeline, or budget, as outlined in the Conditions of Grant require the prior written approval of the Minister or the Project Delegate.
- 5.16 Generally, such changes will require a variation to the Conditions of Grant. Requests to vary the Conditions of Grant must be made in writing and addressed to the Project Delegate.
- 5.17 In some cases, variations can be agreed through an approved Project Plan. The Project Plan can be used to secure approval to
 - 5.17.1 purchase assets
 - 5.17.2 change the project budget, and
 - 5.17.3 change partners and/or contributions.
- 5.18 Only the Minister or the Project Delegate can approve variations to the Conditions of Grant. They are not obliged to agree to any variation requested.
- 5.19 Failure to obtain the approval of the Minister or the Project Delegate prior to making a substantial change is a breach by the lead university under the terms of the Conditions of Grant and may affect the payment of Government funding.

Managing changes to project partners or co-contributions

- 5.20 Under the Conditions of Grant *all* changes to partnership arrangements, including the partner organisation and the amount of cash or in-kind contribution, must be approved by the Project Delegate in writing or through an approved Project Plan. This includes university partners and industry partners.
- 5.21 The Department is aware that changes to partnership arrangements are expected over the life of the project given the nature of the commercialisation projects being undertaken, the influence of external factors on business investment decisions and the length of the project period.
- 5.22 A priority for the Department is to maintain the level of ambition for the projects as outlined in the original business case while allowing for changes to project specifics.
- 5.23 The Department will take a risk management approach to approving changes to partnership arrangements as outlined at [Appendix C](#). This will provide clarity on the expectations for Trailblazer Universities and allow for streamlined decision making.



- 5.24 The Department notes that any consideration of withholding payments or withdrawing support for a project would only occur after the Trailblazer University has had a reasonable time and opportunity to address any shortfall in partner support.

Acknowledgement of funding

- 5.25 Trailblazer Universities must acknowledge the contribution made by the Australian Government to the Project in all related promotional material. In particular, Trailblazer Universities should ensure that
- 5.25.1 the acknowledgment is prominently recorded and commensurate with that given to state or local government, corporate or other sponsors
 - 5.25.2 any formal statement issued in relation to any aspect of the Project, including speeches, media releases, brochures, should refer to the Australian Government contribution
 - 5.25.3 any signs and plaques erected in association with the Project must acknowledge the Australian Government's assistance, and
 - 5.25.4 where an official opening or launch is proposed for the Project, the Minister is to be invited.
- 5.26 The Department has provided specific guidelines around the use of text and logos acknowledging the Australian Government's contribution at [Appendix D](#).

Program evaluation

- 5.27 The Department will assess the effectiveness of the Trailblazer Universities Program, including the extent to which the program is meeting the program objectives and any unintended consequences.
- 5.28 This assessment will include consideration of Trailblazer Universities Program Conditions of Grant, program reports and project-specific outputs, and other relevant information.
- 5.29 Lead Trailblazer Universities are required to collect and maintain information relevant to the program's evaluation. This includes information on the achievement of agreed project output milestones. This may include
- 5.29.1 research projects funded
 - 5.29.2 new IP resulting from funding, and
 - 5.29.3 development of new, industry aligned courses.
- 5.30 Lead Trailblazer Universities are also required to collect and maintain information relevant to the achievement of project outcomes. This includes
- 5.30.1 contribution to its strategic priority areas
 - 5.30.2 the economic, environment and/or social benefits of the projects
 - 5.30.3 improvement in the quality of translational and experimental research conducted at the university.



6. Additional information

Conflicts of Interest

- 6.1 The Trailblazer University will ensure to the best of its knowledge that no conflicts exist or are likely to arise in the performance of its obligations under the Trailblazer Universities Program.
- 6.2 If during the project a conflict arises or is likely to arise, the Trailblazer University must
 - 6.2.1 immediately notify the Department in writing of that conflict and the steps the university propose to take to resolve or address the conflict
 - 6.2.2 make full disclosure to the Department of all relevant information relating to the conflict.

Freedom of Information

- 6.3 The Department is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 ('the FOI Act'). The object of the FOI Act is to make available information about the operations of departments, to create a general right of access to information in the possession of Ministers, departments, and public authorities and to create a right for people to amend records containing personal information that is incomplete, incorrect, or misleading.
- 6.4 Anyone can make a freedom of information (FOI) request. An applicant is not obligated to state a reason for their request, nor can the Department ask for a reason.
- 6.5 All documents held by the Department can be subject to a FOI request, however, in some cases exemptions from disclosure may apply.
- 6.6 A valid request is one which is in writing, states that it is a request for the purposes of the FOI Act, provides enough information about a requested document to enable its identification, give details on how notices under the FOI Act may be sent to the applicant (the return address may be a physical, postal or electronic address) and must be sent to the department either by post, email or fax or delivered in person.
- 6.7 All requests should be made directly to the FOI Coordinator: foi@education.gov.au.

Privacy

- 6.8 The Department is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles in the Privacy Act 1988 (the Privacy Act). The Department uses and discloses personal information only for the purposes in which it was provided, or for a secondary purpose if an exception applies.
- 6.9 The exceptions include if
 - 6.9.1 the individual has consented to a secondary use or disclosure
 - 6.9.2 the individual would reasonably expect the Department to use or disclose their personal information for the secondary purpose, and that purpose is related to the primary purpose of collection, or, in the case of sensitive information, directly related to the primary purpose



- 6.9.3 the secondary use or disclosure is required or authorised by law
 - 6.9.4 a permitted general situation exists in relation to the secondary use or disclosure, and
 - 6.9.5 it is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law or of a law imposing a pecuniary penalty, or for the protection of public revenue.
- 6.10 The Department takes all reasonable measures to ensure that personal information collected by us is accurate, up to date and complete. These measures include updating and maintaining personal information when we are advised by individuals that information has changed.
- 6.11 The Department also takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the personal information it holds is protected against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure and other misuse.
- 6.12 Any individual may contact the Department to obtain information about how to request access to or changes to the information the Department holds about them.
- 6.13 Access may be given unless we consider that there is a sound reason under the Privacy Act, the FOI Act or other relevant law to withhold the information.
- 6.14 All requests for personal information should be made to the Privacy Officer:
privacy@education.gov.au.

Or in writing to:

Privacy Officer
Legal Services
Department of Education
LOC: C50MA10
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

Complaints and Review of Decisions

- 6.15 Questions or complaints concerning the Trailblazer Universities Program must be lodged in writing and must be directed to the Trailblazer Universities Program Manager in the first instance at

Trailblazer Universities Program Manager
Department of Education
LOC: C50MA7
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Australia
Email: urcs@education.gov.au.

- 6.16 If the question or complaint is not satisfactorily resolved by the Trailblazer Universities Program Manager, the matter can be taken to the:



First Assistant Secretary
Research Division
Department of Education
LOC: C50MA7
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Australia
Email: Dom.English@education.gov.au.

- 6.17 Unresolved issues can be lodged as a complaint with the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has offices in all states and territories. Contact details can be found on the Ombudsman's website at: www.ombudsman.gov.au.

Contact Information

- 6.18 The Department welcome questions, feedback, or comments on the Trailblazer Universities Program. You can submit them via email at urcs@education.gov.au.
- 6.19 Questions, feedback, or comments on CSIRO Test Labs are welcome and can be submitted via email at testlabsatcsiro@csiro.au.

7. Appendices

Appendix A: Application and Assessment

- 7.1 The Trailblazer Universities Program involves a two-stage application process, an initial Expression of Interest (EOI) with shortlisted applicants invited to present a comprehensive business case for final assessment.
- 7.2 The EOI and Business Case stages are both assessed by a panel (assessment panel), which consists of representatives from Government, industry, innovation, and the university sector. The panel is chaired by the Department. The assessment panel makes recommendations to the Minister on which universities should receive funding based on the key selection criteria.
- 7.3 The EOI requires universities to submit an application form, which includes
- 7.3.1 a description of the proposal, detailing how it meets the key selection criteria
 - 7.3.2 a one-page budget outlining indicative costs and contributions from university and industry partners.
- 7.4 Each eligible university can submit only one EOI as the lead university. There is no limit to the number of universities who can participate as a partner to the lead university.
- 7.5 The Business Case requires shortlisted applicants to submit a business case form, which includes
- 7.5.1 a short summary of the proposal
 - 7.5.2 details of the proposal, including specific projects and collaborations
 - 7.5.3 a business plan detailing the impact of the proposal, governance arrangements, key risks and forward workplan



- 7.5.4 a bid for any specialist CSIRO equipment
- 7.5.5 a budget, which details all major costs and levels of cash and in-kind contributions from university and industry partners.
- 7.6 To complement the business case template, shortlisted applicants are required to deliver a presentation on their proposal (followed by a Q&A session) to the assessment panel.

Appendix B: Partner Contributions

Partner Contributions	Partners contributions must be cash and/or in-kind that is specific to the project and not part of a broader contribution made by your organisation.
Cash Contributions	Cash contributions include: • cash from a university partner which is dedicated to the project and spent in accordance with the plans and budgets agreed by the lead university, or the governance structure established for the project (these funds may be retained by the university partner or transferred to and managed by the lead university) • cash from an industry partner for the project which is transferred to and managed by the lead university, the governance structure established for the project, or a partner university in accordance with the plans and budgets agreed by the lead university. • funds which an industry partner is using for the establishment or purchase of an asset (e.g., a manufacturing facility or equipment) which is for the exclusive or primary use in the Trailblazer project.
In-kind Contributions	In-kind contributions mean a contribution of goods, services, materials, access to existing facilities and equipment and/or time to the project (including personnel or labour and the indirect costs of labour/overheads). In-kind contributions must be essential and central to the project. It is the lead university's responsibility to establish the merit of the case for recognition of in-kind contributions. Values for in-kind contributions should be calculated based on the most likely actual cost, for example, current market, preferred provider, or internal provider rates/valuations/rentals/charges of the costs of labour, workspaces, equipment, and databases. The calculations covering time and costs should be documented by the lead university. The Department may request to review the calculations.

Example

Question	Answer
An industry or university partner is establishing a new facility and equipment. The facility will be used for the Trailblazer project but is not fully dedicated to it. Is this a cash or in-kind contribution?	If the facility <i>will</i> be used primarily for the Trailblazer project, then the cost of establishing the facility can be reported as a cash contribution. If the facility <i>will not</i> be used primarily for the Trailblazer project the cost of establishing the facility cannot be reported as a cash contribution. Instead, a value for an in-kind contribution can be calculated based on, for example, a market rental or user cost rates. The lead Trailblazer university will need to determine, based on advice from the partner, if the facility is primarily for the use of the Trailblazer project. Factors for consideration may include if the infrastructure is demonstrably under the control or management of the project manager, or if there are documented rights for access and usage and whether they provide for priority access and the usage percentage for Trailblazer purposes compared to other purposes.
A user cost arrangement has been applied for access to facilities or people.	This should be included as an in-kind contribution.
An industry partner is committing cash to acquire new equipment to dedicate to Trailblazer commercialisation activities. The equipment will be retained by the business at the completion of the Trailblazer project.	This contribution can be reported as a cash contribution as it is for an asset dedicated to the Trailblazer project. Note, that if any Australian Government funds contributed to the purchase of the asset, then clause 14 (Assets) of the Conditions of Grant applies.



Appendix C: Risk Management for Partnerships

Risk Assessment	Description	Action
Low: Minor changes	- The lead university has secured additional partnerships so that ongoing co-contributions match or exceed the quantum proposed in the original business case. - The departure or addition of an industry partner which had committed either <i>less than</i> \$10 million or <i>less than</i> 10% of the project budget (cash or in-kind).	- Limited departmental scrutiny required. - Requires commitment from university that project deliverables and outcomes are not impacted or a plan to redress.
Medium: Significant changes	- Any change in university partners. - The departure or addition of an industry partner which had committed/will commit either <i>more than</i> \$10 million or <i>more than</i> 10% of the project budget.	- Departmental scrutiny required. - Requires the university to provide a detailed and feasible plan for how the change will be managed and addressed, including for securing additional investment. - The Department will consider imposing additional reporting requirements until the issue is resolved (e.g., new partners or increased contributions secured).
High: Major changes/impact	- Any change which means the Australian Government's \$50 million contribution has not been matched two-fold over the life of the project. - The departure of an industry partner which had committed either <i>more than</i> \$25 million or <i>more than</i> 25% of the project budget. - The loss of a university partner which had committed <i>more than</i> \$10 million. - Any change which poses a risk to the project outcomes (i.e., regardless of the value of their contribution, if the organisation's expertise, facilities, reputation, linkages are mission critical).	- High level of departmental oversight required. - Requires the university to provide a detailed and feasible plan for how the change will be managed and addressed, including for securing additional investment. - The Department will consider withholding payments until suitable replacement partners are found and project viability confirmed. - The Department will consider withdrawing further Government support for the project.

7.7 Circumstances which would override the above framework and trigger a higher level of scrutiny or action include

7.7.1 failure or repeated failure to meet reporting requirements and project milestones/deliverables.

- 7.7.2 an increasing frequency of requests to change partnership arrangements which the department considers a trend or escalating problem, or
- 7.7.3 a proposed partner organisation represents a reputational risk to the project, program or the Australian Government or their involvement would be contrary to Australia's sovereignty, values, and national interests.

Appendix D: Promotional Text and Logos

To provide guidance on satisfying the clauses 5.24 and 5.25, the Department has developed the following guidelines:

Type	Outline	Requirements	When to use	Examples
Text	In written or spoken contexts, or to accompany the use of the Department's logo, a line acknowledging the contribution of the Australian Government to supporting the Trailblazer project is to be included.	Must mention the contribution/support of the Australian Government. Where possible, acknowledgement should include reference to the Trailblazer Universities Program.	Text acknowledgements should be used as the primary form of acknowledgement.	<i>'This project/event/product/publication is supported by the Australian Government Department of Education through the Trailblazer Universities Program.'</i> In cases where there is less room, this can be reduced to: <i>'Supported by the Australian Government.'</i>
Logo	Where appropriate, visual materials can include the logo of the Department of Education. The Department's logo pack, which includes a copy of the Australian Government Branding Guidelines, is provided to ensure proper use of the logo. It is important that the following requirements be adhered to when using the Department's logo as its use by a non-government body can cause misrepresentation of the organisation or its staff if done incorrectly.	It should be clear that the logo is being used in a sponsorship context, for example by placing it under a text label which says <i>'funded/supported by'</i> . If the logo is being placed on a website, it should not be placed within the header or on a repeating part of the website. The footer of the home page or on a 'sponsors' page is usually an appropriate place for the logo to be displayed. If the logo is to go on printed collateral, the logo should not be placed in the most prominent position on the collateral. The	To reduce the risk of misuse of the Department's logo, we recommend that a text-based acknowledgement be used as the first option, rather than the logo. Cases where use of the logo may be appropriate include where other funding partners logos are being used.	<i>Supported by</i>  Australian Government Department of Education

		bottom is usually the best location. If that collateral is a report or discussion paper, usually the best location is on the inside front cover rather than the cover itself. The placement of the logo must adhere to the Australian Government Branding Guidelines.		
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