



2025 Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) Reports

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Thursday 5 March 2026 and Tuesday 24 March 2026

Program background and closure

HEPPP provided funding to universities listed in Table A of the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) to implement strategies that improve access to undergraduate courses for those with low socioeconomic status (low SES) backgrounds, those from regional and remote areas, and First Nations people. The program also aimed to improve the retention and completion rates of these students.

Grants were made each calendar year based on each university's respective share of domestic undergraduate students from each of the three target cohorts.

Universities managed the expenditure of their HEPPP grant funds on eligible equity activities and provided the Department of Education (the department) with reports each year. These reports gave insights into the types of activities receiving HEPPP funding, included a financial acquittal of HEPPP-funded activities. Universities had the opportunity to submit optional case studies to the department to showcase activities and their impact/results.

HEPPP was discontinued on 1 January 2026. Most activities previously funded under HEPPP may now receive support through Needs-based Funding (NBF) and the Outreach Program. The 2025 HEPPP Reports are due on 31 March 2026 and will be the final reports submitted by universities on HEPPP-funded activities. Once these reports are assessed and accepted, the department will request the return of any unspent HEPPP funds from universities and finalise closure of the program.

HEPPP report questions

- 1. What is the difference between “... staff members ... involved in the activity” (Column J) and “... additional staff members ... involved in the activity” (Column K) in Tab 1 of the Expenditure and Activity Data document?**

Column J is intended to gather the number of part-time and full-time (usually salaried) equity staff involved in the activity. This includes staff who manage the day-to-day administration of the equity office, workers engaged to regularly deliver core equity activities or programs, etc.

Column K is intended to gather the number of contracted and casual (usually unsalaried) equity staff. This includes volunteers, paid student workers, staff frequently engaged for short shifts, staff contracted short-term for the delivery of an event, etc.

2. How do you calculate the number of staff involved in an activity as a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) where staff worked a low number of hours over the year?

When calculating FTE, the department recommends using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{(Total number of hours worked by staff engaged in the activity)}}{\text{(1.0 FTE in hours [2,080 for a 40-hour work week])}} = \text{FTE}$$

For example, below is the calculation for an activity on which 12 staff worked on an activity for an average of 20 hours each:

$$(12 \times 20) / 2,080 = 0.1$$

This formula can apply to all activities independent of the number of staff, the hours worked and whether the activity was delivered regularly throughout the year or as a single event.

Please round all FTE values to one decimal place. If the calculated result is lower than 0.05, please round up to 0.1. For the department's analysis, a minor overrepresentation of staff numbers for an activity is preferable to no representation.

3. How do you calculate the number of staff involved in an activity as an FTE when the activity is delivered regularly over the course of the year by many workers, but each one's hours vary significantly from week to week?

If calculating the total number of hours worked by staff on an activity cannot be done simply or promptly (as may be the case in the question above), you may estimate the average.

4. In the Expenditure Summary tab, must the value of unspent 2025 HEPPP funds, labelled "Department" (Cell B13) equal \$0? Would a negative number be accepted?

The value of unspent funds in the Expenditure Summary does not need to equal \$0. However, if there is a positive value in this field, the department will request a return of those funds upon HEPPP's closure.

A negative value of unspent funds will not be accepted, as it indicates an accounting error. If the value in this field is a negative number, the report acquits a higher total expenditure of HEPPP funds than the university's 2025 allocation + its 2024 rollover.

This can be remedied by identifying the individual activities which have reported an overspend of HEPPP funds, subtracting the overspent amounts for those activities from Tab 1 Column C ("HEPPP funds") and adding them to Tab 1 Column D ("Other sources of funding"). The "Department" cell in the Expenditure Summary Tab should now reflect a \$0 or positive value.

5. What happens to case studies after submission to the department, and can the sector receive copies of the case studies?

Submitted case studies are read and summarised for internal analysis. Their content has been used to support the extent of HEPPP's impact in discussions with department executives and the minister's office.

The department often shares case studies with the Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (ACSES), in support of capability building work undertaken across the sector. Flinders University's presentation of their HEPPP case study at the ACSES Equity Hub Community of Practice 2026 is an example of how ACSES brings the findings of these case studies to a wider audience.

There is scope for the department to share case studies with universities and publicly on the departmental website. On submission, each university chooses whether they consent to a



case study being shared with third parties. If consent has been granted, that case study may be uploaded to the department website.

Based on recent requests from the sector, the department has undertaken to publish this year's case studies as soon as the 2025 HEPPP Reports have been fully assessed and accepted.

As a sign of courtesy, the department will email each university which submitted 2025 case studies to re-confirm their consent to share them publicly.

6. Do declaration forms need to be hand signed by the university's authorised representative?

A handwritten signature (and dated) is preferred, but an electronic signature is acceptable for the declaration form if a handwritten signature cannot easily be provided.

Needs-based Funding (NBF) transition questions

7. If a university contact is on the HEPPP mailing list, will they be included on the NBF mailing list?

For NBF and Outreach Funding, primary correspondence, such as official funding allocation letters, will be sent to Vice-Chancellors and their offices. Additional correspondence, such as updates to guidance material and information session invites, will be sent to both Vice-Chancellors and their offices, and equity practitioner contacts.

If you would like to update contact details for Needs-based Funding and Outreach correspondence, please email equityprograms@education.gov.au and provide preferred contacts.

8. Will universities be eligible to receive NBF based on regionality and remoteness if they don't have campuses in regional or remote locations, but do provide online courses to students located in regional or remote locations?

NBF (regional component) is provided on the basis of campus location, not on the student's address. This is because NBF regional component is to offset the higher costs associated with operating regional campuses and support high-quality, accessible higher education in remote and regional Australia. Regionally headquartered providers are also eligible for NBF (regional component) if a student is studying entirely online at a regional or remote campus.

9. How will the monthly payments for the Outreach Funding Program work from 2027?

Payments for the NBF equity component, NBF regional component and Outreach Funding (where eligible) are paid as separate monthly payments through the UniPay system as a proportion of a provider's total yearly entitlements, similar to the Commonwealth Grants Scheme.

10. Will university NBF allocations be made public like HEPPP allocations have been?

NBF allocations are currently public with each provider's NBF and Outreach Funding allocations available on HEIMS Online Institution Payment Information report which is linked to the UniPay system.

