



Australian Government  
Department of Education

# Needs-based Funding and Outreach Funding reporting

Information session – 5 May 2026





**We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community.**

**We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to their Elders past and present.**




# Today's outline

1. Introduction on reporting
2. NBF (equity component) & Outreach reporting
3. NBF (regional component) reporting
4. Questions



# Why is reporting required and why is it important?

- Reporting is required as a condition of funding under the [NBF](#) and [Outreach Funding](#) Other Grants Guidelines.
  - Its purpose includes:
    - Acquitting NBF and Outreach Funding expenditure for each year, including that it is spent on eligible activities.
    - Reporting of activities to build an evidence base where outcomes can be tracked over time.
    - Enhancing transparency by sharing information.
      - This also includes with the Indigenous Governance Mechanism (IGM).
  - This will support providers in the development of their mission-based compacts in future years.
- 


## Questions from 23 March NBF and Outreach information session

**Question: What role will the [Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework](#) (SEHEEF) have in NBF and Outreach reporting?**

The reporting of 2026 NBF and Outreach Funding, and its assessment, will be closely guided by the SEHEEF. The Reporting Handbook provides guidance on how providers may use the SEHEEF to assist with completing the template.

**Question: How does the current template ensure alignment with NBF requirements?**

The 2026 NBF and Outreach Funding reporting package has been streamlined to support providers in completing their reporting. This includes through the use of drop-down menus to ensure providers are reporting appropriately. The reporting templates meet the reporting requirements as outlined in the Other Grants Guidelines for both NBF and Outreach Funding.



# 1. Expenditure & Activity Data – Activity Details

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Activity Details</b>			
2	<b>Program (NBF (equity component)/ Outreach)</b>	<b>Name of funded activity</b>	<b>Description of funded activity</b>	<b>Duration of the activity</b>
3	<i>Identify if NBF or Outreach (select from drop-down)</i>	<i>Official name of activity/program or high-level descriptive name (where appropriate)</i>	<i>Describe using free text what the activity is and how it meets the criteria of the applicable program - Approx. 100-200 words</i>	<i>Start and finish date</i>
4				
5				

- For activities with both NBF (equity component) and Outreach funding, report the activity twice, with funding amounts in column I or J.
- For activities with multiple funding sources, the description can be the same across rows.
- If the duration of the activity is not known, write TBC.



## Question from 23 March NBF and Outreach information session

**Question: Is reporting of expenditure by program required?**

Yes, reporting of expenditure by program will still be required, as outlined in the Other Grants Guidelines for both [NBF](#) and [Outreach Funding](#).



# 1. Expenditure & Activity Data – Purpose

E	F	G	H
<b>Purpose</b>			
<b>Primary target cohort/s</b>	<b>Primary target student life stage</b>	<b>Primary activity category</b>	<b>What is the intended outcome/s of the activity and is there an evidence base for this?</b>
<i>Select from drop-down</i>	<i>Select from drop-down</i>	<i>Select from drop-down</i>	<i>Describe using free text - Approx. 50-100 words</i>

- Select the primary target cohort, primary target student life stage, and primary activity category from the drop-down menus that **best** fits the activity.
- Use the free text in column H to describe where an activity does not clearly fit the menu options.



## Question from 23 March NBF and Outreach information session

**Question: Why is First Nations reported under the broader equity cohort?**

The NBF Equity Component is a grant based partially on the number of First Nations student enrolments. Where First Nations supports are delivered, it is recommended that providers collaborate or share reporting with the Indigenous Governance Mechanism or Indigenous support unit.



# 1. Expenditure & Activity Data – Purpose

## Primary target cohort/s (column E):

- Select the primary target cohort, with further cohorts provided in column H.

## Primary target student life stage (column F):

- Pre-access: refers to activities delivered under Outreach funding.
- Access: provide supports to enable pathways into higher education and admission processes.
- Participation: offer supports for transition, engagement and progression, to keep students enrolled at university and complete a qualification.
- Completion and transition: referred to as attainment and transition out in the NBF Guidance and means the successful completion of study, with smooth transition out.

## Primary activity category (column G):

- Select the primary activity category. Eligible activity categories will remain consistent with the SEHEEF.



# 1. Expenditure & Activity Data – Costs and Funding Source/s

I	J
<b>Costs and Funding Source/s</b>	
<b>Total Needs-based Funding (equity component) or Outreach funding used to deliver activity</b>	<b>Total funding (other sources) used to deliver activity, including any other government funding</b>
<i>Enter \$ amount</i>	<i>Enter \$ amount here</i> <i>Provide source of funding in column O</i>

- Enter the NBF (equity component) or Outreach funding amount used to deliver the activity.
- If relevant, enter the total amount of additional funding (other sources) used to deliver the activity, and include further information in column O.
- Other sources can include other government programs, the university, partners or industry, and reflects that activities may not be solely funded through NBF or Outreach.



# 1. Expenditure & Activity Data – Outcomes & Other supporting information

K		L		M	N	O
Outcomes					Other supporting information	
What were the key outcomes and were they achieved? What were the indicators of success used to measure intended outcome/s? What are the lessons learned?		How many participants were engaged in the activity?		How many staff were required to deliver the activity? (optional)	Include any other supporting information, including detailing sources of additional funding (optional)	
<i>Describe using free text - Approx. 100-200 words</i>		Number of target cohort participants	Number of other participants	<i>Approximate FTE (optional)</i>	<i>Free text.</i>	

- Key outcomes should refer to the intended outcomes outlined in column H.
- Numbers provided may be exact or approximate.
- Column O is free text to expand on any information already provided.
- For the 2026 transition year, if using NBF (equity component) for Outreach activities, provide further information in column O.



## 2. Expenditure Summary

	A	B
1		
2	<i>Please input relevant figures from Column B into the Declaration form</i>	
3		
4	<i>Needs-based Funding (NBF)</i>	
5	<b>A. 2026 NBF (equity component) Allocation</b>	\$ 100,000.00
6	<b>B. 2026 NBF (equity component) Expenditure</b>	\$ 200,000.00
7	<b>C. NBF (equity component) Funds remaining (if applicable)</b>	<del>\$</del> 100,000.00
8		
9	<i>Outreach Funding</i>	
10	<b>D. 2026 Outreach Funding Allocation</b>	\$ 50,000.00
11	<b>E. 2026 Outreach Funding Expenditure</b>	\$ 40,000.00
12	<b>F. 2026 Outreach Funding remaining (if applicable)</b>	\$ 10,000.00

- Cells B5 and B10 have been pre-populated for each provider.
- Cells B6 and B11 will pre-populate based on figures provided in worksheet 1.
- Cells B7 and B12 have been conditionally formatted to highlight underspends and overspends.
- This worksheet has been locked to prevent any accidental changes.

### 3. Certification

	A	B
1		
2	<b>Certification of Expenditure &amp; Data Acquittal Report</b>	
3	<b>Covering the period:</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure:</b> <i>insert date</i> <b>Budgeted Expenditure:</b> <i>insert date</i>
4	<b>University/Provider (Recipient):</b>	
5	<b>Total Needs-based Funding (equity component) Allocation:</b>	<i>Refer to Sheet 2, Cell B5</i>
6	<b>Total Needs-based Funding (equity component) Expenditure:</b>	<i>Refer to Sheet 2, Cell B6</i>
7	<b>Total Needs-based Funding (equity component) Underspend:</b>	<i>Cell B5 - Cell B6</i>
8	<b>Total Outreach Funding Allocation:</b>	<i>Refer to Sheet 2, Cell B10</i>
9	<b>Total Outreach Funding Expenditure:</b>	<i>Refer to Sheet 2, Cell B11</i>
10	<b>Total Outreach Funding Underspend:</b>	<i>Cell B8 - Cell B9</i>
11	<b>Recipient and Other Contributions:</b>	<i>Refer to Sheet 1, total of column J</i>
12	<p>The statement above must include, for the period stated, <b>all actual income and expenditure for the programs</b>. Where other sources of funding have been used to fund an activity, please identify these in the cells labelled <b>Recipient and Other Contributions</b>. This includes non-Commonwealth contributions from state or local government agencies, as well as contributions from sources such as other universities or education institutions, community organisations, research grants (including other Commonwealth grants) and/or philanthropy.</p>	

- Complete all sections with relevant financial information.
- Purple italicised text is included to guide where information can be found in the template.



# 3. Certification

	A	B
14	<b>Comments on financial reporting and underspends</b>	
	Please provide any further comments and detail on the allocations and expenditure information outlined above. If NBF was used to deliver Outreach activities, as an allowable feature in 2026, please provide the details here.	
	Please also include a statement regarding any unspent funds for either program and how they will be spent in future year/s.	
15		
16		
17	<b>Chief Financial Officer or delegate to complete below</b>	
	I declare that I am authorised by [PROVIDER NAME] to sign this Declaration on its behalf. I certify that this Expenditure & Data Acquittal Report is true and fair as of [DATE], and that the funding provided for the programs, under the [NBF PROGRAM AND/OR OUTREACH PROGRAM], has been expended in accordance with the Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Amendment (Needs-based Funding Program) Guidelines 2025 and the Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Amendment (Outreach Funding Program) Guidelines 2025. I understand that the provision of false or misleading information or the making of false or misleading statements to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995.	
18		
19		
20	<b>Signature of authorised representative or delegate:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
21		
22		
23	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
24		
25	<b>Authorised representative or delegate details</b>	
26	Title: <i>Title</i>	
27	Full Name: <i>Full Name</i>	
28	Position: <i>Position</i>	
29	Email Address: <i>Email Address</i>	
30	Contact Number: <i>Contact Number</i>	

- In row 15, providers should include information on any underspends and/or if NBF (equity component) was used to deliver Outreach activities.
- To be approved and cleared in full by the CFO or delegate.
- Return file as **.xlsx** (Excel document) and retain all worksheets.



## Question from 23 March NBF and Outreach information session

**Question: Is the CFO expected to be the submitting officer, or is their primary role to certify the accuracy of figures?**

Under the 2026 NBF and Outreach Reporting Handbook, the CFO or delegate is required to approve and clear the Expenditure Data & Acquittal Report. The CFO or delegate is not expected to submit the report to the department.

As providers receive funding for First Nations enrolments, we recommend additional consultation with the Indigenous Governance Mechanism to ensure activities are not duplicated across other government programs.



# NBF (regional component) Letter of Assurance

- Provides assurances to the department that NBF (regional component) has been spent on appropriate activities, in line with the [NBF Other Grants Guidelines](#).
- Any request to rollover funds must be expressly written.
- Include details of certifying officer.

Dear Australian Government Department of Education

## 2026 Letter of Assurance

1. [The letter should provide a summary of how the regional component of Needs-Based Funding (NBF) has been used to support regional delivery, including any examples of key projects or deliverables undertaken in line with the guidelines and policy objectives of the program.] (Free text – 500-1000 words)
2. [Summary of the NBF regional component funding expended within the activity period;
  - a. Evidence of funding being allocated to appropriate activities during the activity period.
  - b. Information on the higher regional campus costs, including an explanation of how the funding helped mitigate the additional expenses associated with operating a regional campus.
  - c. Details of support for high-quality, accessible education, including the measures to enhance the quality and accessibility of higher education in regional and remote Australia.
  - d. Summary of funding usage, including an overview of how the funding has been distributed and applied across activities.
  - e. Detailed expenditure breakdown, including a reference to the total amount of NBF regional component funding received. This should include a clear financial breakdown showing total expenditure by region/category and any request for rollover of remaining funding.]
3. [Any information or insights the provider might like to share to inform future policy settings, funding settings or program objectives.]
4. [Certification that funding has only been used to cover expenses or deliver activities relating to regional campuses, in line with the [Higher Education Support \(Other Grants\) Amendment \(Needs-Based Funding Program\) Guidelines 2025](#), compliant with guidelines and policy objectives.]
5. [Certification that certifying officer is authorised to make this certification on behalf of the provider.]

Yours sincerely

[Details of certifying officer, including:

- Name
- Position
- Signature
- Date of signature]

# Wrap-up and questions

Reporting due by **5pm, 27 March 2027 (AEDT)**

Email: [equityprograms@education.gov.au](mailto:equityprograms@education.gov.au)

Q&As from the 23 March NBF and Outreach information session can be found [here](#).

## Upcoming session/s (TBC)

- Second session of NBF/Outreach and/or reporting for those who missed the first one
- *Please send an email if your provider has interest in a second session and we will gauge interest*
  - NBF and Outreach: policy discussion and early feedback

