



Fraud Strategy Statement

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment has a responsibility to ensure the appropriate use of public resources to achieve its goals and promote financial sustainability. We are committed to preventing and controlling fraud. This can only be achieved through the collective effort of staff, contractors, external service providers and the community.

What is fraud?

Fraud is defined as *'dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means'*¹. Fraud is intentional; it requires an intent to obtain a benefit (tangible or intangible) which may be obtained by a third party. It is not the result of carelessness, accident, or error.

Fraud can be perpetrated internally (by employees) or externally (by service providers, contractors, individual recipients of departmental funding or organised crime groups). Examples of fraud include:

- customers providing false information (such as claiming false eligibility in an application)
- misuse of the government's money (through spending money on something it was not intended for)
- contractors inflating invoices for services
- unauthorised access to sensitive information (including personal information of individuals)
- misuse of corporate resources (such as corporate credit cards)
- provision of false medical certificates or
- misusing departmental information.

What are the consequences of fraud?

When fraud is committed, the effects can be wide ranging. When fraud results in a financial loss, it increases the cost to the public or reduces the benefit to the community. For those who commit fraud, consequences can include jail sentences, pecuniary penalties, civil or administrative sanctions or a loss of job opportunities.

What are your responsibilities?

We expect everyone who engages with us to act with honesty and integrity and report suspected fraud.

If you receive funding or financial assistance from us, you have an obligation to provide accurate information to be a recipient of or continue to receive Commonwealth money. Failure to provide correct information, or update information if it changes the status of eligibility, may constitute fraud.

If you are a contractor or external service provider, you are required to adhere to all contractual obligations, program guidelines or conditions of funding that governs your relationship with us. You are required to ensure

¹ [Commonwealth Fraud Control Framework 2017](#), *Commonwealth Fraud Control Policy*, p. B1

all information requested by us is provided in a timely manner, is accurate and that you report to us when you are obligated to.

External providers should have in place a risk based approach to minimise potential waste of Commonwealth money as well as mechanisms to identify and report suspected fraud. Providers delivering services on behalf of the department should consider communicating to clients their policies and procedures relating to fraud, ensuring awareness of obligations and fraud control responsibilities.

How do you report suspected fraud?

You can report suspected fraud to the department's Fraud Prevention and Investigations Team by:

Email: fraud@dese.gov.au

Phone: (02) 6121 5450 or

Anonymously: online through [Whispli](#), an anonymous reporting tool or

Post: Fraud Prevention and Investigations Team, PO Box 9880, Canberra ACT 2601.

Providing as much information as possible will assist the department in assessing matters efficiently. If possible, include the following information:

- Who is involved? Include the name/s of the person/s or organisation/s, address/es and phone number/s.
- What fraud do you think has occurred? Including how, when and where it occurred.
- If you believe the behaviour is continuing.
- How you came to know about the matter.

If you have supporting documentation, it is beneficial to provide that information. You do not need to provide your contact details; however, it can enable the department to follow up with you if necessary.

What happens if you report suspected fraud?

The department will assess each allegation of suspected fraud. Where allegations are substantiated, there may be a range of options available including recovering overpaid funds, cancelling a service provider's registration, taking other action for breach of contract or pursuing a criminal fraud prosecution.

Safeguards for Persons Reporting Suspected Fraud

The department takes all allegations of fraud seriously, including providing disclosers with adequate support and confidentiality. If you provide a service under a Commonwealth contract, the protections and immunities of the Public Interest Disclosure (PID) scheme may be available to you. Information on the PID scheme is available from the [Commonwealth Ombudsman website](#). Informants wishing to make a disclosure under PID are encouraged to contact the department to ensure PID protections are applicable.

Privacy Notice

Your personal information is protected by law, including the *Privacy Act 1988*, and is collected by the department for the purposes of investigating allegations of suspected fraud. If the information you provide does not relate to the activities or functions of the department, we may disclose the information to other Commonwealth, state or territory bodies (including law enforcement bodies) for appropriate assessment or action. Your information may also be used by the department or given to other parties if it is required or authorised by law.

For more information about how the department manages personal information (including information on accessing or correcting information) and how to make a complaint, please view our full privacy policy or you can request a copy from the department by sending an email to privacy@dese.gov.au.