



Frequently Asked Questions

20,000 additional Commonwealth supported places

Program Objectives

Why is the Government providing additional Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) for higher education providers?

The Government has committed to provide a one-off boost of 20,000 additional CSPs for sub-bachelor and bachelor level courses.

These places will support areas of skills shortages and address future workforce need. These places will also create more opportunities for students from under-represented groups to access higher education, including first in family, those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, people with a disability and First Nations people.

How many CSPs will be supported under this measure?

The Government has committed to provide 20,000 additional places. This is a one-off allocation of 10,000 commencing places in each year of 2023 and 2024 only.

These places are non-ongoing and funding for this measure is expected to be terminated by 2028.

Eligibility Arrangements

Who is eligible to apply for an allocation of these additional CSPs?

The following higher education providers meet the eligibility criteria to be invited to apply for an allocation of these additional CSPs:

- Australian universities as registered by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), including those listed at Table A and B of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)*; or
- University colleges as registered by TEQSA; or
- Institutes of higher education as registered by TEQSA and for the purposes of subparagraph 30-1(1)(b)(i) of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* listed in the *Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines 2020* for the purpose of receiving an allocation of Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) funding to increase the number of persons undertaking Education and Nursing courses of study (Chapter 3 – National Priorities (10)(a)).

Higher education providers who do not meet these criteria are not eligible to apply.

Eligibility does not extend to other higher education providers who may be receiving CGS funding for the purposes only of providing retraining and upskilling opportunities through delivery of short courses in 2021 and 2022 (*Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines 2020* Chapter 3 – National Priorities (10)(c)).

Can additional CSPs be used for students who do not fall into the identified under-represented groups?

Places are required to support access, participation and success in higher education for students from under-represented groups. This includes:

- Low socioeconomic (low SES) backgrounds
- Students from inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote areas
- First in family to access higher education
- First Nations Australians
- People with a disability

Why aren't all higher education providers eligible to apply and why is eligibility limited to those with an existing allocation of ongoing CSPs?

These CSPs are non-ongoing and target a range of national priority areas and skills needs which are typically delivered by universities.

Eligibility to receive funding under this measure is limited to universities, university colleges, and higher education providers who are approved to receive CGS funding to deliver courses in Education and Nursing under the *Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines 2020*.

What level of courses can be delivered using this funding?

Places will be allocated to bachelor and sub-bachelor courses (including undergraduate certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas and associate degrees).

Postgraduate courses will not be considered.

Are combined Bachelor/Masters programs eligible?

Only the bachelor component of a combined Bachelor/Masters program would be eligible to receive funding. Providers are permitted to use funding to enrol a student in a CSP in the bachelor component, but would be required to fund the Masters component under their existing MBGA. Providers would only receive funding for the duration of the bachelor component.

Providers should specify the bachelor components of the applicable courses in the 'Course proposals' tab of the application pack and provide sufficient detail as part of the selection criteria to support these types of courses.

Can providers use this process to apply for medical CSPs?

No, applications for medical CSPs will not be considered.

Do courses have to be new offerings in 2023 or 2024 to be eligible for an allocation of additional CSPs?

Providers are welcome to request additional CSPs for existing course offerings, as long as they are targeted towards new commencing students and meet all the eligibility requirements.

Providers are also invited to apply to deliver new offerings so long as the courses are accredited and meet all eligibility requirements.

Can providers enrol students in these additional CSPs on a part time basis?

Yes, there are no restrictions regarding a student's study basis in respect of the additional places.

Can places be used for enabling or non-award courses?

No, funding for places can only be used for sub-bachelor (including undergraduate certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas and associate degrees) and bachelor courses.

Demand driven funding already applies to First Nations students from regional and remote areas. How will this measure benefit First Nations students?

Providers are encouraged to submit applications to support increased opportunities for First Nations students from metropolitan areas, as well as for all First Nations students to enrol in sub-bachelor courses.

Demand driven funding will continue to apply for regional and remote First Nations students enrolled in non-medical bachelor degree with a Table A provider.

Application Process

What is required in the application?

Providers will be required to identify requested numbers of places sought for proposed courses.

Providers will also be required to submit a written statement against three criteria outlining how requested places will address program objectives including supporting skills and workforce needs, supporting equity goals and meeting student demand.

Will providers be able to apply for 2024 commencing places in 2023?

Providers will be required to apply for places for delivery in both, or either of 2023 and 2024, in this application process.

The application submission will require providers to specify the requested places sought for each commencement year for each course.

There will be no additional application process for new places for 2024.

Do providers need to apply separately for access to Innovative Places funding?

Yes, a separate application form will be sent to eligible providers to apply for Innovative Places funding.

Assessment and Allocation Process

How will these CSPs be allocated?

Places must be allocated to increase the participation of regional and remote students, those from low SES backgrounds, students with a disability, First Nations students, and those who are first in family to study at university beyond the provider's current enrolment levels.

Places must also be used for courses which directly address areas of national priority, skills needs and workforce shortages at national and regional levels. This can include skills needs and workforce shortages.

Allocation of these places will be determined on a competitive basis that will consider the following:

- Delivery of places in areas of national priority, skills needs and workforce shortage
- A written statement demonstrating how the proposed courses have strong industry integration and innovation in course content, structure or delivery and evidence to demonstrate how proposed courses strongly align with and support industry needs and workforce shortages.
- The applicant's past performance in increasing participation for students from under-represented backgrounds
- A written statement detailing how places will increase participation of students from under-represented backgrounds, including examples of strategies that will be explored to support students to successfully complete their courses (related to the courses proposed)
- The applicant's past performance in demonstrating clear, unmet demand for places for students from under-represented backgrounds for the proposed courses
- A written statement detailing the expected level of unmet demand and how providers' current allocations of CGS funding (provided under their Maximum Basic Grant Amount or MBGA, as applicable), cannot meet this demand.

Who determines the allocation of places?

The Department of Education will undertake the assessment process and make recommendations to the Minister for Education. The Minister for Education will make decisions on final allocations as per section 30-10 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

Who will undertake the competitive assessment process?

The Department of Education will undertake the competitive assessment process and make recommendations to the Minister for Education on proposed allocations of CSPs to providers.

How will providers be ranked in the competitive process?

CSPs will be allocated based on an assessment of the information detailed in the application and analysis of providers' performance based on data that is collected by the Department of Education.

Further details on the assessment process are provided in the Program Guidelines.

What is the anticipated timeline for the allocation of places?

Applications will close on 19 September 2022. Final decisions on allocations will be subject to decision by the Minister for Education. The Department anticipates funding agreements will be updated towards the end of October.

Will there be any limitations applied to the allocation of the additional CSPs on providers?

A provider may not receive the full allocation of places for the courses they have requested. After providers have been ranked in the competitive process, the allocation of places will consider the following factors:

- The provider's aggregate score in the assessment process
- High level of interest – if the total number of course applications is above 20,000, then high scoring providers will be granted a higher proportion of their requested places compared to lower scoring providers.
- Course priority, as ranked by the provider in their application. If funding is significantly oversubscribed, funding to providers may be based on the 'Course Priority' rank that the provider has given each course. In this instance, more places may be allocated to courses which the provider has ranked highly, and they may receive a lower allocation for the courses they have ranked lower.

Will the additional CSPs be tied to the specific courses they were allocated to?

Yes, places will be allocated to providers in respect of specific courses as nominated in the application and can only be used to enrol students in those courses. Details in relation to the additional CSPs, including which courses they are able to be used for, will be detailed in a provider's Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding agreement.

Have certain numbers of places been reserved for specific courses or fields of study?

No. The allocation of places will be based on merit in relation to each provider's application, and demonstrated capacity and commitment to delivering the Government's equity and national priority skills targets.

What data will be used to gauge provider's capacity for additional demand?

The Department's assessment of provider's capacity will consider 2017—2022 enrolment data, which includes estimates for 2022, and whether providers are estimated to be over or under-enrolled in 2023.

Skills Needs

What is considered areas of national priority, skills needs or workforce shortage to receive an allocation of places under this measure?

Courses approved for an allocation of places will be required to be in areas of national priority, skills need and workforce shortage.

These include areas identified in the [Secure Australian Jobs](#) plan and areas identified by the National Skills Commission's [Skills Priority List](#).

This includes, but is not limited to, courses and occupations in:

- Nursing
- Engineering
- Health and aged care
- Teaching (including early childhood)
- Disability care
- Digital and cybersecurity
- Advanced manufacturing
- Clean energy

Consideration will also be given to requests for places in courses that demonstrate evidence of being aligned to support relevant industry needs or shortage from areas beyond those identified in the skills list.

All supported courses must also support goals to increase access, participation, and success in higher education for students from under-represented groups.

Will the Department provide a mapping for which Fields of Education (FOEs) align to which skills priority list items?

The Department will not specify FOEs for occupations identified in the Government's Secure Australian Jobs plan and the National Skills Commission's Skills Priority List. This is to give providers flexibility to map appropriate FOEs to courses and occupations when applying for courses. Instead, providers will be able to identify the links between their proposed courses and areas of identified national priority in Selection Criteria 1 of the application pack.

Places for some eligible courses are capped due to clinical or practical placement availability. Will the Department work with local, state and federal bodies to assist with increased capacity needs for courses?

It is expected that providers work with relevant employers to ensure that students have access to practicums and practical experiences required for relevant courses.

Funding

Are the additional CSPs being funded on an ongoing basis?

No, the 20,000 additional CSPs are for CSPs commencing in 2023 and 2024 only. Depending on applications received it is anticipated that 10,000 places will commence in both 2023 and 2024.

Places are non-ongoing and funding for the measure is expected to terminate in 2028.

Funding will be allocated to providers for each respective commencing place in the approved course, pipelined for the duration of the course based on the standard 75 per cent costing methodology.

The use of a 75 per cent pipeline is consistent with the long-term provision of additional Commonwealth supported places. This provides for a consistent methodology for all providers and courses (with the exception for CSPs for courses of study in medicine).

Will these additional CSPs be included in the provider's base Maximum Basic Grant Amount (MBGA)?

No, funding to deliver the additional places will be a separate allocation of funding specified to be specified in the provider's Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding agreements. This will be reflected in the funding agreements consistent with approach used for additional short course funding for 2021 and 2022.

Funding distributed as part of this measure will be subject to reconciliation processes in future years. While the funding will be included in a provider's total MBGA, it does not fall under a provider's base MBGA and therefore the CPI indexation under the Higher Education Continuity Guarantee will not apply.

Providers that do not have existing funding agreements or MBGAs will be required to have these established to receive payments under this measure. Similar to other providers, CPI indexation under the Higher Education Continuity Guarantee will not apply.

Does a university need to consume its full MBGA before utilising these places?

Providers are encouraged to maximise their full MBGA as part of enrolment strategies. To ensure funding efficiency, the Department will reconcile funding to first account for universities' full utilisation of their MBGA ahead of reconciling funding provided as part of an allocation of additional places. This approach applies for 2023 where the Higher Education Continuity Guarantee (HECG) is in place. From 2024, the HECG will not be in place and all funding will be reconciled based on student enrolments.

Can a university receive funding if they are delivering under their total funding cap as a result of a shortfall in designated places only?

Providers must first use all available funding under the base MBGA for higher education courses. Since the base MBGA does not include funding under the MBGA for designated higher education courses (medicine), providers can receive funding if there is a shortfall in designated courses only.

Why is the Department using a 75 per cent costing methodology for the pipeline?

This methodology is consistent with previous allocations of funding, such as Innovative Places and National Priority Places.

If funding cannot be delivered for the required commencing year (2023 and 2024), can funding be rolled over to be delivered in the following year? Can commencing students be enrolled in 2025?

Providers should utilise the funding they have been allocated in respect of each particular year. Providers are encouraged to discuss with the department as early as possible if funding cannot be used as allocated for the relevant 2023 or 2024 commencing year. Funding cannot be rolled over and be used for later years and reconciliation processes will apply.

If a student initially enrolled in one of these CSPs transfers to a new course, can their enrolment still be supported using funding from the 20,000 CSPs measure?

Providers may continue supporting students who transfer to another course as long as the new course is approved to receive funding through the allocation process.

Funding cannot follow the student if they transfer to a new course which has not been approved to receive places under this measure. Instead, the provider will be required to fund the cost of this CSP as part of funding provided through their MBGA. The provider can enrol another student in that CSP using the residual funding provided that the new student commences in 2023 or 2024.

This will need to be reported as part of the additional reporting requirements listed above.

Will providers need to submit a reallocation request to the Department of Education if they would like to move funding between two approved courses?

Providers who are listed as Table A in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* will be able to use the funding allocated to them under this measure as a funding envelope. While the approved courses will be listed in their funding agreement, the funding agreement will not specify the amount of funding tied to each course, so long as it is part of the list of approved courses. Providers will be required to report student enrolment data through the additional reporting process associated with this measure.

All non-Table A providers will have the funding and places for these courses specified in their funding agreements as required in Section 30-10 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*. If a cost-neutral reallocation of funding is required, the provider will need to contact the Department of Education who will assess the reallocation and update the provider's funding agreement accordingly.

How will the Department determine funding for courses with units which sit across different FOEs?

Funding will apply to the primary FOE of the course only. Providers are encouraged to work with the department to provide a further detailed breakdown of FOEs for courses, with potential for two FOEs to be approved.

Reporting

Will there be additional reporting requirements associated with the allocation of additional CSPs?

Yes. The Department of Education will track the progress of providers in meeting the objectives of the measure.

This will include additional reporting, where providers will be required to report the CHESN (element 488) and USI (element 584) of students enrolled in these places. This is to ensure the places are being offered to commencing students only, and skills and equity objectives are being met.

As has been the case with National Priority Places and Innovative Places, it is expected that universities will separately report enrolments in these courses in their estimates.

How will the Department determine that there has been an increase in the number of places provided to equity students?

Determinations of increases in places will not be based on provider forecasts. Instead, determinations will be assessed based on provider's enrolments against the following:

1. There is an aggregate increase in the number of commencing students from under-represented groups enrolling in the approved courses relative to 2022; and/or
2. There is an increase in the proportion of commencing students enrolling in these courses that are from under-represented groups.

If either of these tests are satisfied, all equity enrolments in approved courses will be considered eligible for inclusion among the provider's allocation of 20,000 places funding so long as the provider has delivered in excess of its MBGA.

Following the application process, the Department will approach each provider that has been allocated places to determine appropriate benchmarks that can be used to track and demonstrate an increase in enrolments of under-represented students on either an aggregate or proportional basis.

At times, the Department may seek further information from providers to clarify equity group participation for the purposes of determining payment eligibility in instances of doubt.

How can providers determine whether students are from under-represented backgrounds?

The additional CSPs are being allocated specifically to increase participation from under-represented equity groups. Proxy indicators such as a student's current or past address do not necessarily define whether a student is from a low SES background. Providers are encouraged to consider individual student's disadvantage when determining their eligibility for these places. This will remain a matter for the provider's discretion.

Providers will be required to submit information in relation to students enrolled under 20,000 places funding through estimates processes. Standard reporting requirements, including the reporting of USIs, will be used to ensure that funding is used in respect of commencing students only and to track success in achieving skills and equity objectives.