



# Program Guidelines

## 20,000 additional Commonwealth supported places

### 1. Program overview and objectives

The Government will invest up to \$485.5 million over the forward estimates to support a one-off boost of 20,000 commencing Commonwealth supported places (CSPs).

These places will specifically focus on increasing participation for regional and remote students, those from low socio-economic (low SES) backgrounds, students with a disability, First Nations students, and those who are first in family to study at university. Providers who receive an allocation of CSPs must use these places to increase the participation of students from these under-represented groups.

Places will be provided for sub-bachelor and bachelor level courses in areas of national priority, skills and workforce need. Places will not be provided for postgraduate level courses.

### 2. Grant amount and grant period

Funding is provided under section 30-1 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and Chapter 3 – National Priorities of the *Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines 2020*.

Funding is provided through the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) for 10,000 commencing CSPs in 2023 and 10,000 commencing CSPs in 2024. These places are non-ongoing and funding for these places will terminate by 2028.

### 3. Eligibility

The following higher education providers meet the eligibility criteria to be invited to apply for an allocation of these 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 HESA listed in the *Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines 2020* for the purpose of receiving an allocation of 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 under the *Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines 2020* only for the purposes of providing retraining and upskilling opportunities through delivery of short courses in 2021 and 2022 (Chapter 3 – National Priorities (10)(c)).

## 4. Selection process

Allocation of places will be determined based on the outcomes of a competitive selection process.

Applications will be assessed against criteria by the Department of Education.

The Department of Education will make recommendations to the Minister for Education on proposed allocations of places for approved courses for individual providers. Final decision on allocations will be determined by the Minister for Education.

## 5. Selection criteria

In applying for additional places, providers are required to submit information in relation to requested number of commencing CSPs for delivery in each year of 2023 and 2024 for individual courses (sub-bachelor and bachelor level), and a written statement against three criteria to demonstrate intended delivery against program objectives.

These are:

- Delivery of places in areas of national priority, skills needs and workforce shortage.
- Increasing participation for students from under-represented backgrounds.
- Provider capacity and student demand.

Scores will be determined based on assessment of written statements and consideration of data collected through CGS estimates and TCSI data collection processes related to performance and progress supporting students from under-represented groups, such as low SES, regional and remote, First Nations people, people with a disability and those who are first in their family to study.

### 5.1 Delivery of places in areas of national priority, skills needs and workforce shortage

Places will only be allocated to courses which meet areas of national priority, skills needs and workforce shortage.

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

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

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

Places may also be allocated to courses aligned to relevant industry needs or shortages, however applicants must provide evidence to support these claims.

The application template requires providers to identify proposed courses, requested places and the relevant occupation.

The application template also includes requirement to provide written statements of up to 800 words to demonstrate how the proposed courses meet workforce and industry needs, informed by industry engagement and will deliver work-ready graduates.

Evidence such as links to the areas of shortage (National Skills Commission or State and Territory Government skills priority list) and examples of how all or some courses have been designed with industry is encouraged.

<i>Highly suitable</i>	<p>Courses are explicitly linked to areas of national priorities and skills needs in areas currently assessed to be in shortage that are indicated to have strong future demand.</p> <p>Written statement provides strong claims to demonstrate courses are informed by industry engagement and will deliver work-ready graduates.</p> <p>This may include examples of how some courses may have been designed with industry partners, include opportunities for work-integrated learning and placement.</p>
<i>Suitable</i>	<p>Courses are explicitly linked to areas of national priorities and skills needs in areas of medium to low shortage.</p> <p>Written statement provides claims to show courses are informed by industry engagement and will deliver work-ready graduates. Statement provides limited detail to describe level of industry engagement.</p>
<i>Not suitable</i>	<p>Courses are not in areas of national priorities or skills need.</p> <p>No written statement provided.</p>

## 5.2 Increasing participation for students from under-represented backgrounds

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

The application template requires providers to submit a written statement of up to 500 words detailing how places will increase participation of these students, including examples of strategies that will be explored to support students to successfully complete their courses (related to the courses proposed).

The Department of Education will consider data collected through TCSI data collection processes related to performance and progress supporting students from equity groups.

<i>Highly suitable</i>	<p>Written statement provides strong claims to demonstrate evidence-based strategies to ensure student success related to the proposed courses.</p> <p>Data demonstrates provider's clear record of success to increase participation of students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds; people from inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote areas; First Nations people, people with a disability and those who are first in their family to study.</p> <p>Written statement also highlights success of provider to increase participation of students who are first-in-family and may face other compounding barriers to access higher education.</p>
<i>Suitable</i>	<p>Written statement provides some claims to demonstrate strategies to ensure student success related to the proposed courses.</p> <p>Data demonstrates provider is seeking to increase participation of students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds; people from inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote areas; First Nations people, people with a disability and those who are first in their family to study.</p>
<i>Not suitable</i>	<p>No written statement provided. Data does not demonstrate provider's commitment to increase participation of students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds; people from inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote areas; First Nations people, people with a disability and those who are first in their family to study.</p>

### 5.3 Provider capacity and student demand

Places will be allocated to providers who can demonstrate clear, unmet demand for places for students from under-represented backgrounds for the proposed courses.

The application template includes a requirement to provide a written statement of up to 500 words detailing expected levels of unmet demand from students from under-represented backgrounds and how providers' current CGS funding (provided under their Maximum Basic Grant Amount (MBGA)), *as applicable*, cannot meet this demand.

The Department of Education will consider data collected through CGS estimates and TCSI data collection processes to demonstrate delivery across the target courses. As applicable, the Department of Education will also consider providers' history of under or over-enrolments and anticipated enrolment levels in 2023 and 2024 based on CGS estimates and enrolments.

<i>Highly suitable</i>	<p>Written statement provides strong claims to demonstrate unmet demand from students from under-represented backgrounds. Data demonstrates history of persistent demand, ongoing demand and a capacity to deliver additional places.</p>
<i>Suitable</i>	<p>Written statement provides some claims to demonstrate unmet demand from students from under-represented backgrounds. Data demonstrates some history of demand and potential to deliver additional places.</p>

<i>Not suitable</i>	No written statement provided. Data suggests history of low enrolments or under-enrolment.
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## 6. Application submission

Applications will open on 17 August 2022 and close on 19 September 2022.

Applications must be submitted to [CGS@education.gov.au](mailto:CGS@education.gov.au)

The Department of Education, at its discretion, may seek additional information, or allow applicants to remedy minor errors, but will not accept responsibility for any misunderstanding arising from the failure by an applicant to comply with the requirements set out in these guidelines, or arising from any ambiguity, discrepancy, inconsistency, error or omission contained in the application.

Late applications will not be considered.

## 7. Selection process

The Department of Education will assess the information detailed in the applications.

Recommendations on allocations will be considered by the Deputy Secretary, Higher Education, Research and International and the First Assistant Secretary, Higher Education. Recommendations may also be considered by other officials in the Department of Education.

Recommendations will be made to the Minister for Education on which providers should receive funding for approved courses and number of places. Advice will consider program objectives and total available funding.

While a provider's application may be rated highly suitable or suitable, it does not guarantee that the provider will receive the full allocation of places 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.

## 8. Successful providers

Funding will be allocated to providers for each respective commencing place in an 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).

Funding will be reflected in providers' CGS funding agreements. For Table A universities, this will list the approved courses and combined total funding provided for courses for 2023 and 2024 (as a funding envelope). CGS funding agreements for non-Table A universities will be required to reflect the specific allocation of places for each approved course.

CGS funding agreements will be required to be established with providers who do not currently have an agreement in place with the Commonwealth.

If a cost-neutral reallocation of funding (to another approved course) is required, the provider will need to contact the Department of Education who will assess the reallocation accordingly.

## **9. Reconciliation of funding**

Funding will be provided only for commencing students in 2023 and 2024 only. Funding must be used for CSPs in approved courses only.

Funding distributed as part of this measure will be subject to reconciliation processes in future years. Providers will not be permitted to roll-over unspent funding to the following year.

While the funding will be included in a provider's total MBGA, it does not fall under a provider's base MBGA and would not be subject to the Higher Education Continuity Guarantee in 2023.

Providers will be required to submit estimates of utilisation of these places as per usual CGS estimates collection processes.

## **10. Accountability and monitoring**

These places are intended to result in an additional increase in commencing enrolments of students from under-represented backgrounds. The Department of Education will track the progress of providers in meeting the objectives of the measure.

This will include additional reporting as part of standard estimates process, where providers will be required to report the CHESSN (element 488) and USI (element 584) of students enrolled in these places through TCSI. This is to ensure that places are being provided to commencing students only, that places are being used to ensure higher levels of enrolment, and that skills and equity objectives are being met.

The Department of Education will also engage with providers regularly to seek advice on the providers' utilisation of these places to ensure it is in line with program objectives and may request additional information as part of the condition of grant.

## **11. Roles and responsibilities**

The Minister for Education has overall responsibility for the program and will make decisions including which provider will receive an allocation of funding and the level of funding provided.

The Department of Education will assess applications and provide advice to the Minister on which proposals from providers (including courses and number of CSPs) should receive funding.

The Department of Education will also develop conditions of grant for each successful provider, to be reflected in the provider's CGS funding agreement.

## **12. Additional information**

In general, the information contained in applications will reflect publicly available information regarding the provider's strategies and courses, or publicly available as part of the Department of Education suite of provider and student enrolment data. The Department of Education will not disclose data relating to CGS estimates for individual providers.

Providers' Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding agreements will be published on the Department of Education's website. This will include details of allocated funding, approved courses, and number of places.

Providers who also wish to apply for Innovative Places funding will be required to submit a separate application form. Funding for Innovative Places will be available for universities and university colleges only.

## **13. Contact information**

Questions on the program and application process can be submitted via email to [CGS@education.gov.au](mailto:CGS@education.gov.au).