



Frequently Asked Questions

Innovative Places – 2023 allocation

Program objectives

How many CSPs will be supported under this measure?

This allocation process will provide up to 300 commencing Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) in 2023 only (including appropriate pipeline funding) in line with the current 2021—2023 Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) funding agreement period.

What is the difference between the 20,000 additional CSPs and Innovative Places?

The 20,000 additional CSPs are a one-off allocation of commencing places in courses for students commencing in 2023 and 2024. These places are specifically designed to increase opportunities for students from under-represented backgrounds. More information about the 20,000 additional CSPs can be found at the [Department of Education website](#).

The Innovative Places are tied to funding agreement periods. Since 2023 is the last year of the 2021—2023 funding agreement period, providers who are successful in receiving an allocation of funding in this current round are not eligible to retain this funding on an ongoing basis. Providers who currently receive Innovative Places funding are also not eligible to retain the funding on an ongoing basis. However, providers are eligible to re-apply for allocations as part of the 2024—2026 funding agreement period. For 2024, around 900 commencing CSPs will be available under the program.

Innovative places are specifically focussed on courses that can demonstrate strong integration and innovation in course content, structure or delivery. They are a flexible funding pool designed to respond to national priority and emerging skills needs.

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 Innovative Place CSPs:

- Australian universities listed at Table A of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA); or
- University colleges as registered by Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.

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

Courses for inclusion among Innovative Places funding must be in an area of national priority or skills needs, and lead to an award of a bachelor level qualification. Places will not be provided for postgraduate level courses.

What courses can be delivered using this funding?

Innovative Places are restricted to bachelor level courses. Postgraduate courses will not be considered. 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](#).

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 to be eligible for an allocation of Innovative Places?

Providers are welcome to request 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 Innovative Places on a part time basis?

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

Application and Allocation process

What is required in the application?

Providers will be required to identify requested numbers of places sought for proposed courses. In applying for Innovative Places, providers will be required to submit information in relation to the requested number of commencing CSPs for delivery, and a written statement of up to 500 words against the following criteria:

- evidence that places will be delivered in areas of national priority, skills needs and workforce shortage
- how proposed course(s) will bolster industry collaboration and linkages, support labour market needs, and advance the National Priorities Industry Linkage Fund's (NPILF) purpose
- innovation in course content, structure or delivery

How will the Innovative Places be distributed?

Places will be allocated through a competitive merit-based process with no guarantee that every EOI will be allocated places.

Universities or university colleges interested in seeking an allocation of Innovative Places in 2023 to deliver courses in an area of national priority or skills needs were asked to apply to the department by 19 September 2022 to ensure courses could be provided to Commonwealth supported students from January 2023.

Who determines the allocation of places?

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

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 commitment to delivering national priority skills targets.

Funding

Are the Innovative Places being funded on an ongoing basis?

No. This allocation process will provide up to 300 commencing CSPs in 2023 only (including appropriate pipeline funding) in line with the current 2021-2023 Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding agreement period.

Providers who currently receive Innovative Places funding, or are successful in receiving an allocation of funding in this current round, are not eligible to retain this funding ongoing. However, providers are eligible to re-apply for allocations as part of the 2024-2026 funding agreement period. For 2024, around 900 commencing CSPs will be available under the program.

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 CSPs. This provides for a consistent methodology for all providers and courses (with the exception for CSPs for courses of study in medicine).

Will the Innovative Places be included in the provider's base Maximum Basic Grant Amount?

No, funding to deliver Innovative 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.

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

No. Funding will be provided only for commencing students in 2023. Providers will not be permitted to roll-over unspent funding to the following year.

However, providers are eligible to re-apply for allocations as part of the 2024-2026 funding agreement period. For 2024, around 900 commencing CSPs will be available under the program.

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.

Can providers swap CSPs between 20,000 additional CSPs and Innovative Places in 2023 if approved for both?

Once approved, providers are not permitted to transfer places between the two programs.