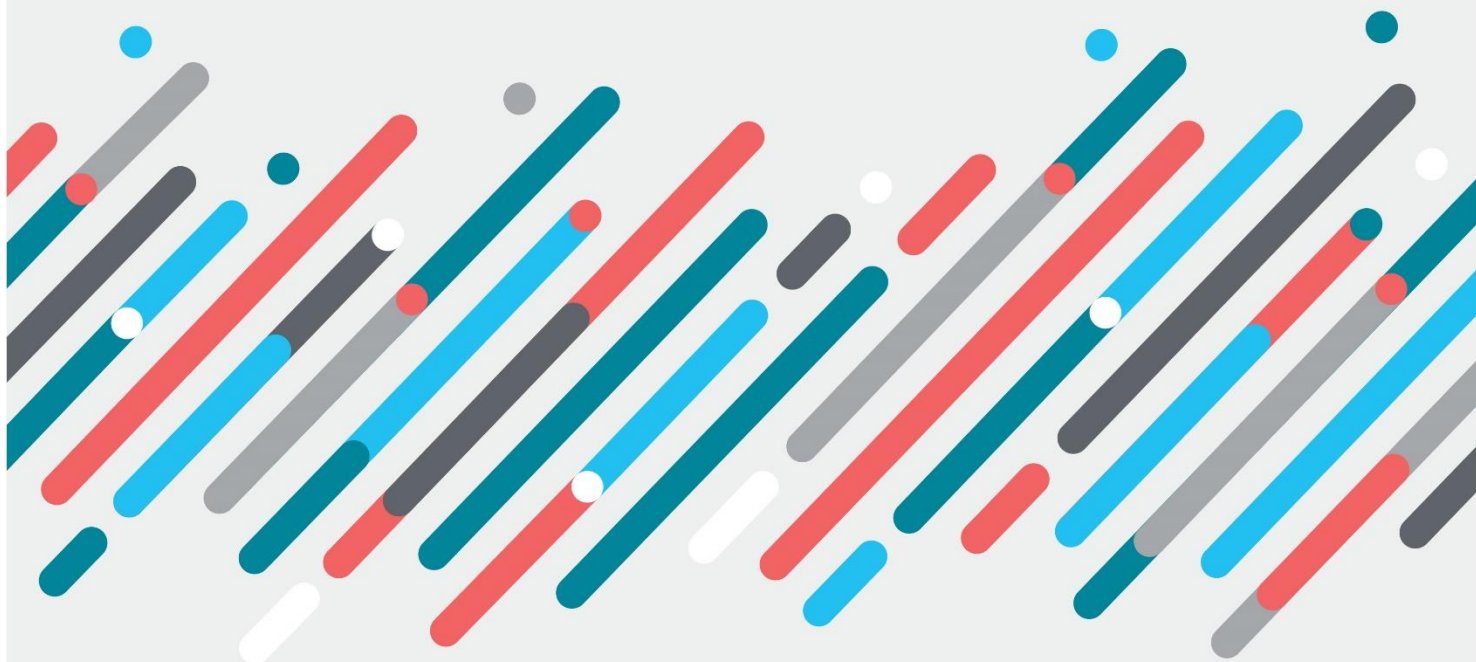




Australian Government
Department of Education

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Workforce

Professional Development and Paid Practicum
Grant Opportunity Guidelines (2024-2025)



ECEC Workforce

Professional Development and Paid Practicum Guidelines

Opening dates:	23/07/2024 for Round 1 of applications 13/01/2025 for Round 2 of applications
Closing dates:	20/09/2024 for Round 1 of applications 14/03/2025 for Round 2 of applications
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Education
Enquiries:	If you have any enquiries, please contact ececgrants@deloitte.com.au
Date guidelines released:	15/07/2024
Type of Grant opportunity:	Demand-driven (Eligibility-based)



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ECEC Workforce - Professional Development and Paid Practicum Grant processes

The Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Workforce measures are designed to achieve the Australian Government's objectives

The ECEC Workforce measures include grant opportunities for the Professional Development and Paid Practicum programs which contribute to the Department of Education's Outcome 1. The Department of Education (the department) works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#).



The grant opportunity opens on as per the dates on Page 3

The department will publish the grant guidelines on [GrantConnect](#).



ECEC Providers submit a grant application electronically



The grant application is assessed

The department will assess the application against eligibility criteria.



Grant decisions are made

The decision maker (delegate) makes a decision about the grant(s)



The department notifies the ECEC Provider of the outcome



Grant Outcome and Agreement letter

A simplified grant agreement setting out the terms and conditions for the grant will be provided to successful grant applicants.



Delivery of the grant

The ECEC Provider undertakes the grant activity as set out in the Grant Agreement. Providers are required to acquit the grant funding within 12 months and demonstrate that the activity has been undertaken and keep accurate records.



Evaluation of the ECEC Workforce Professional Development and Paid Practicum Grants

The department will evaluate the specific grant activity and program. The evaluation will be based on the information provided by ECEC Providers and information the department collects from various sources.

1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Professional Development and Paid Practicum, program grants.

You must read these guidelines before applying for a grant.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunities
- the eligibility criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunities.

This grant opportunity will be administered by the Department of Education (the department). Grant payments for successful applicants will be processed by Services Australia and paid to Providers. The Providers subsidiary services will reimburse participating employees directly, where applicable. The program will be evaluated by the department. A glossary of defined terms is included from section 14 of these Grant Guidelines.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

All emails regarding these grants are to be sent to ececgrants@deloitte.com.au and should contain the unique Provider CRN (also known as CCS Provider ID) in the subject line and address block of your inquiry. This is used for identification matching and program record keeping of your Grant application.

2. About the ECEC Workforce grant programs

Background

On 3 May 2023, the Australian Government announced a package of workforce measures to deliver \$72.4 million over five years to support the skills and training of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) employees in the ECEC sector.

Three measures in this package are designed to help build a sustainable, skilled ECEC workforce that delivers high quality early childhood education. The workforce measures package also complements the [government's broader ECEC reforms](#) and workforce actions being undertaken across state and territory governments.

The three measures are the:

- Professional Development program
- Paid Practicum program, and
- Practicum Exchange program (see [Practicum exchange network - Department of Education, Australian Government](#) for more information)

The combined objectives of these programs are to:

- strengthen skills and professional experience
- improve retention of educators and early childhood teachers in the ECEC sector
- increase ECEC sector capacity and build supply.

It is intended that over 75,000 eligible qualified ECEC employees will benefit from these programs.

The grant opportunities in each of these programs will run over four years from July 2023 to 30 June 2027. These guidelines apply to 2024-25 only. New Guidelines for 2025-26 onwards will be released following consultation with stakeholders and agreement by the Minister for Early Childhood Education.

2.1 About the grant opportunity - Professional Development

The Professional Development Grant provides Services with a grant to cover 1 day of training (up to 7.5 hours) for eligible qualified ECEC employees.

The intended objectives of the Professional Development Program are to:

- build capacity and skills in the early childhood workforce
- allow Services to maintain adult-to-child ratios while employees complete training.

The intended outcomes of the Professional Development Grant are to:

- support ECEC educators, early childhood teachers and directors (centre managers) undertake professional development for one day.

Further information can be found here: [Professional development opportunities - Department of Education, Australian Government](#)

2.2 About the grant opportunity - Paid Practicum

The Paid Practicum Program provides Services with a wage supplement so they can give employees paid leave while undertaking their practicum.

The intended objectives of the Paid Practicum are to help:

- Services support employees to complete qualifications particularly for Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs)
- support Services to provide paid leave to student employees to complete practicums

Further information can be found here: [Professional development opportunities - Department of Education, Australian Government](#)

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Professional Development

The Australian Government will provide a total of \$30.7m in administered funding over four years for the Professional Development program. This includes a total of \$11.6m in 2024-25.

Funding provided in 2024-25 may be used to undertake professional development in the 2024-25 financial year.

Grant applications will be assessed in the order they are received, however, if funding is likely to be exhausted before the end of the grant period, the department reserves the right to organise applications in preferential order based on the attributes identified in section 5. If funding is exhausted, updated information will be published on the department’s website and GrantConnect.

Funding is not designed to cover the exact cost of an educator’s wages. The grant will be calculated on a daily flat rate, based on qualification, experience and skill level. This is based on current award rates, with rates for average early childhood educators and directors taken from the Children’s Services Award (2010) and early childhood teachers rates taken from the Education Services (Teachers) Award (2020) and include a 25 per cent casual loading.

	Early Childhood Educators	Early Childhood Teachers	Directors
Payment rate per day	\$263.45	\$415.30	\$388.13

(Providers will be advised of any changes in grant payment rates at the time of issuance of a letter of offer.)

Outside of School Hours Care employees and coordinators and Family Day Care coordinators not covered by the Awards outlined above should use the rate closest to their rate of pay per day or half day.

3.2 Paid Practicum

The Australian Government will provide a total of \$29.8m in administered funding over four years for the Paid Practicum program. This includes a total of \$21.1m in 2024-25.

Funding is not designed to cover the exact cost of an employee’s wages. The Grant will be calculated as a flat weekly rate, as practicums are generally completed in multiples of five working days. Applications can be made for up to eight weeks for a single placement.

Grant applications will be assessed in the order they are received, however, if funding is likely to be exhausted before the end of the grant period, the department reserves the right to organise applications in preferential order based on the attributes identified in section 5. If funding is exhausted, updated information will be published on the department’s website and GrantConnect.

The weekly rate has been calculated based on Level 3.4 (Diploma) of the Children’s Services Award (2010).

	Early Childhood Employees
Payment rate per week	\$1,162.40

(Providers will be advised of any changes in grant payment rates at the time of issuance of a letter of offer.)

Practicums must commence between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025 and be completed within six months of the commencement date.

Up to eight weeks of practicum is available per student per semester under this Grant.

ECEC Providers can apply for up to two practicums for an employee in a financial year. Up to two applications per employee per year will be allowed, one for each semester the employee is studying. This provides flexibility and acknowledges that ECEC employees are undertaking course requirements which usually have predetermined dates, but may sometimes be undertaken at short notice depending on centre employee changes. If an employee has already been supported for one practicum placement, an employee who applies and has not yet completed a supported placement may be prioritised, depending on funding availability.

4. Eligibility criteria

Applications that do not satisfy all the required eligibility criteria will not be considered.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Only ECEC Providers currently approved for and receiving the Childcare Subsidy (CCS) under Family Assistance Law will be considered eligible. This includes long day care, family day-care, in home care, centre-based day care and outside school hours care services.

ECEC Providers can apply for Paid Development or Paid Practicum grants for employees who are undertaking professional development if it meets the eligible grant activities set out in section 6. To be eligible for a grant, employees must be employed by the Provider and work at least 40 hours in the Service in a 3-month period. The Provider **must not** be receiving any funding from another source for the same professional development activity, see section 4.2.

4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- a stand-alone Kindergarten service
- a stand-alone Pre-School service
- an individual
- a Registered Training Organisation or other entity that is seeking to use the grant funding to provide courses (funding must be used for wages or backfill)
- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' (www.nationalredress.gov.au)
- any entity that does not meet the criteria in Section 4.1

- any entity that is already receiving **any** funding for wage replacement or backfill for the same Professional Development activity for the same employee from an Australian state or territory government
- any entity that is already receiving **full funding** for a practicum placement for the same employee for the same period from a state or territory government (NB: If an employee's placement is longer than the maximum number of weeks covered by this Paid Practicum Grant, the Provider may seek state/territory funds to cover the difference).

4.3 General requirements of ECEC Employees

To be eligible, ECEC Provider employees must be:

- an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia or hold a valid work (including student visa) allowing employment in the ECEC sector
- contact worker- an educator who is part of the adult to child ratio at a Service or who provides direct early childhood education and care, or supervision for children in other care types such as In Home Care (IHC) or Family Day Care (FDC)
- a full-time, part-time, or casual employee who has worked more than 40 hours in the preceding three months with that Service¹.

The department acknowledges that an employee may leave or be unavailable before Professional Development training has commenced. In these cases, the Department will allow a 'like for like' exchange of the employee as a replacement in accordance with clauses (4.2) and (4.3) Requirements of ECEC Staff – Professional Development and Paid Practicum. In these cases, the ECEC Provider is required to notify the Department during the acquittal process.

Please note: ECEC employees are not eligible to receive Grant payments directly.

ECEC staff (such as employees and independent contractors who are early childhood educators, early childhood teachers or directors in an eligible Provider's service) are required to apply through the approved service Provider which contracts them, and their centres that provide an approved type of care.

¹ Some IHC educators may be exempt from this requirement, pending prior approval from the Department.

5. Grant allocation preferences

5.1 General allocation preferences

If the grants receive strong interest and funding is likely to be exhausted, the department reserves the right to organise applications in the following preferential order based on the attributes identified in this section.

In the event that Paid Practicum specifically is over-subscribed, the following prioritisation may be applied:

1. Regional, remote and/or First nations educators studying ECT qualifications (including post-graduate qualifications)
2. All educators studying ECT qualifications (including post-graduate qualifications)
3. Regional, remote and/or First nations educators studying Diploma-level qualifications.
4. All educators studying Diploma Level Qualification.

5.2 Location

ECEC Providers that undertake service delivery in one of the following remoteness categories may receive grant preference if demand for any of the programs is likely to exceed the available funding:

- Inner regional Australia
- Outer regional Australia
- Remote Australia
- Very remote Australia

Remoteness categories are determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). More details can be found at:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/australianstatisticalgeographystandardasgseditio n3/jul2021jun2026/remotenessstructure>.

5.3 First Nations Providers and/or Employees

First Nations Providers and/or employees will be given grant preference if demand for any of the programs is likely to exceed available funding.

First Nations-owned and controlled Providers are eligible regardless of location, as defined in Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Further information is available at [Closing the Gap 2020: Priority Reform 2 - Building the Community-Controlled Sector](#).

First Nations employees are encouraged to directly contact their Provider, regardless of that Provider/Service's location, if they would like a Grant application submitted to the department.

6. What the Grant money can be used for

6.1 Eligible Grant activities – Professional Development

Eligible Services must use the Grant payment to:

- supplement the cost of backfilling while employees engage in mandatory or highly recommended training OR
- pay employees a supplement for training undertaken outside of work hours.

A Grant activity should contribute to a service meeting its obligations to provide appropriate care, ensuring employees can suitably provide care against the National Quality Standard and (<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework>)

The Professional Development activity must be carried out through **formal methods** such as courses, training, workshops and conferences. The following are eligible Grant activities:

- relevant ECEC induction training
- cultural competency and inclusion training
- leadership, coaching and mentoring courses
- training to support children with additional needs
- pedagogy and curriculum courses
- training to support mandatory regulation requirements, including first aid, emergency asthma management and anaphylaxis management training, food handling courses, child protection and mandatory reporting requirements (<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/qualifications/nqf-approved>)
- eligible IHC training activities which may include, but not limited to, the following:
 - recognise and manage behaviour associated with disability and developmental delay, physical care support such as administering medication, Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG) feeding
 - training activities that are directly relevant to the education and care of children in alignment with the IHC Family Management Plan.

Some examples are provided below.

Example one

Employee A needs to undertake refresher First Aid training. This training is scheduled for a weekday when Employee A would normally work. The Grant funding can be used to support

the service to employ a relief educator to fill the shift normally worked by Employee A. Employee A is paid as per existing employment arrangements.

Example two

Employee B needs to undertake food handling training. This training is only delivered after hours or on a weekend outside of the operating hours of the Service, or if the employee is unable to undertake training during the operating hours of the Service, the Grant funding may be applied to support the costs of the Service to pay Employee B for the time to undertake training. These arrangements should be conducted in good faith and by mutual agreement of both parties. For example, the Service must cover any additional wages due by the existing employment agreement for Employee B.

Example three

Employee C has found a training program for ECEC workers that is related to mental health and wellbeing when working in an ECEC setting. This course can be completed online over several sessions, either on a weekend or while the employee is at work during Service's operating hours. The employee's Provider can apply for the Professional Development Grant to subsidise the employee's wages while taking the course if the Provider requires the employee to take the course on a weekend. In this scenario the Provider will be required to cover any penalty rate differences.

Example four

An employee has found a leadership and mentoring program that they wish to complete. It needs to be completed over four days in person. Their Provider can apply for funding from this Grant opportunity to backfill the employee at their Service for **one** of the days. They are also receiving a state-based grant to cover two other days of the program. The Provider agrees to cover the fourth day of backfill wages from their own finances.

6.2 Eligible Grant activities – Paid Practicum

Eligible Services must use the Grant to:

- provide employees leave with pay to undertake practicum requirements as part of their studies for one of the below qualifications:
 - a relevant Diploma-level qualification as recognised by the ACECQA at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) at Levels 5 and 6, for example:
 - a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care or Equivalent ECEC diploma-level qualification.
 - OR**
 - employee undertaking a relevant Early Childhood Teaching (ECT) degree-level qualification as recognised by the ACECQA at AQF at Level 7, for example:
 - a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and Care or Equivalent ECEC degree level qualification.
 - OR**
 - employee undertaking relevant post-graduate ECT qualifications as recognised by ACECQA at AQF Levels 8 and 9, for example:
 - a Graduate Certificate in Education (Early Childhood)
 - a Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Teaching

- a Master's Degree of Early Childhood Education.

The qualification requirements can be checked on the ACECQA website:

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/qualifications/NQF-approved>

Please note that ECEC employees undertaking **doctoral-level degrees (AQF Level 10) are not eligible.**

Eligible Services will be responsible for:

- the costs associated with backfilling ECEC staff while they are undertaking their practicum; and
- any costs for an employee's wage that is not covered by this Grant.

NB: The Department does not regard scholarships paid by the states and territories as covering the same activities as the Paid Practicum Grant. Scholarships are typically not intended to cover wages.

A Grant activity must contribute to a Service meeting its obligations under the [National Law and Regulations | ACECQA](#) or be focussed on mentoring or leadership.

Practicums must start between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025 to qualify. These practicums may continue beyond 30 June 2025. Services can apply retrospectively for practicums undertaken since 1 July 2024. You cannot apply for practicums that start after 30 June 2025.

If the employee has 2 semesters of practicums this financial year the Provider can apply for both at the same time. This is the case even if the employee has already completed the first.

In the application, the Provider must indicate when the paid practicum is being undertaken. If exact dates are unknown, a range in months can be provided. The practicum period may include leave or other arrangements. Some examples are below.

Example one

Employee A needs to undertake a 30-day practicum as part of their studies towards a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood). They have completed all necessary pre-requisites and are enrolled to undertake their practicum in late 2024. Employee A intends to undertake the practicum in one block over a period of six weeks. Employee A's employer can apply for a Grant to contribute towards the employee's paid leave (provided Employee A is being paid at their usual rate for the duration of their 30-day practicum).

Example two

Employee B needs to undertake a 10-day practicum as part of their studies towards a Bachelor of Education (Early Learning). They have completed all necessary pre-requisites and are enrolled to undertake their practicum in late 2024. Employee B intends to undertake the practicum over ten weeks, spending one day each week at their practicum site. Employee B's employer can apply for a Grant to contribute towards the employee's wages for each of the days Employee B is completing the practicum (provided Employee B is being paid at their usual rate for the duration of their 10-day practicum).

Example three

Employee C has three remaining practicums to complete their studies towards a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Teaching (Birth-12). They are enrolled to undertake a 10-day

practicum in late 2024, and a 15-day practicum in early 2025. They intend to undertake their third practicum in late 2025. Employee C's employer can apply for a Grant to contribute towards the employee's paid leave to complete the practicum (provided Employee C is being paid at their usual rate) for the first two practicums, but not the third practicum commencing in late 2025 because the placement period falls in the 2025-2026 financial year and is not eligible under the 2024-25 guidelines.

Example four

Employee D is paid above the award rate specified in Section 3.2. They are enrolled to undertake a practicum in late 2024 as part of their studies towards a Master of Teaching (Early Childhood). Employee D's employer can apply for a Grant to contribute towards the employee's paid leave to complete the practicum (provided Employee D is paid at their usual rate). In accepting the Grant, the employer must meet the gap cost (if any) between the Grant amount and the usual rate that Employee D is being paid as agreed between employer and employee.

Example five

Employee E is paid above the award rate specified in Section 3.2 as an IHC employee/contractor. They are enrolled to undertake a practicum in late 2024 as part of their studies towards a Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Teaching. Employee E's approved Provider can apply for a Grant to contribute towards a replacement employee (with Employee E being paid at their usual rate for the duration of their practicum). In accepting the Grant, the IHC Provider must meet the gap cost between the Grant amount and the rate that the replacement employee is being paid.

Example six

Employee F is a part time employee and cannot undertake the paid practicum for their Diploma on a full-time basis (would be expected to complete five days of training over a mutually agreed period to complete the training (i.e.). 3 weeks – 2-day block, 1 day block, 4 half day blocks). They also cannot complete their practicum at their current place of employment. In this case, the employee may use the paid practicum funding paid in per week amounts to cover the equivalent number of days spread out over multiple weeks. Weeks do not need to be consecutive, but the number of weeks applied for should cover the intended number of placement days **as closely as possible**.

e.g. If an employee is completing 16 days of placement, they should apply for 3 weeks, not 4. If they are completing 60 hours of practicum placement, they should apply for 2 weeks not 1 week.

Example Seven

Employee G works at three different Services during a month, owned by multiple different ECEC Providers. She works 10 hours per week at Service 1, 15 hours per week at Service 2 and only works at Service 3 on an on-call basis. Employee G should apply for these grants from Service 2, as this is the Service where the employee works the most.

7. What the Grant money cannot be used for

7.1 Ineligible activities – Professional Development

A Provider cannot use the Grant for the following:

- Any form of training that does not contribute to a Service meeting its obligations under [Education and Care Services Regulations](#) or [Education and Care Services Law](#) or is not focussed on mentoring and leadership.
- To directly employ an external or onsite training consultant to conduct Professional Development courses (grants **must** be used for employee wage supplementation or employee backfilling while the primary employee is absent for training).
- Backfilling or paying staff, even if otherwise adhering to the above conditions, if the employee was not included as a listed beneficiary in the Grant application.
- Pay for wages for an employee or backfill for an employee for the same exact period of training as another state or territory grant that has been awarded (however it can be combined with others grants to cover multiple day trainings, see example four, section 6.1)
- Subsidise the costs of *both* backfilling and paying the same employee. The payment for either condition is the same and it is the responsibility of the Service and the employee to mutually decide which option is preferable.
- Where a Service has already received or is receiving funding in part for Professional Development or in full for a practicum placement from other sources, for example through a State or Territory Government grant. (see Section 4.2)

7.2 Ineligible activities - Paid Practicum

A Provider cannot use the Grant for the following:

- practicums which conclude prior to 1 July 2024 and practicums which commence after 30 June 2025.
- to cover any gap between the award rates outlined in Section 3 and the rate of pay an ECEC employee is being provided.
- to fund practicums or placements for ECEC employees where the relevant ECEC employee or Service is already receiving another payment designed to cover the student's wages during a practicum for the same exact period, such as a teaching bursary. (NB: If the practicum is longer than the maximum covered by this Paid Practicum Grant, other funding can be sought. Living and travel funding may also be sought from other sources.)
- to pay for wages of an employee completing practicum arrangements as part of their normal employment arrangements at their service – employees must be taking unpaid leave to be completing their practicum
- to pay for an external training organisation/consultant to offer onsite professional development training for staff.

8. How to apply

Before applying, as the approved Provider, you must read and understand these guidelines which can also be found at [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations² will be published on GrantConnect and by registering on this website you will be automatically notified of any updates. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

All applications are to be made submitted online at www.secure-portal.com.au/ececgrants where there are step by step instructions to assist approved Providers to navigate the application process.

Enquiries can be emailed through to ececgrants@deloitte.com.au or you contact the Helpdesk on (03) 9917 7865 from 9am – 5pm AEST Monday to Friday from 22 July (while applications are open).

8.1 The application

To be considered, returned applications must include:

- confirmation that the Provider meets all eligibility criteria (these are declarations of eligibility by the Provider)
- details of the employee for whom the Grant is sought, including a statement / declaration that the employee meets all eligibility criteria and the rate of Grant payable for each employee (based on Sections 4.3 and 4.4)
- agreement to undertake required acquittal reporting of the expenditure of funding (expended Grant) within 12 months of Grant agreement being executed.
- confirmation that the person signing the application is registered as a Person with Management or Control (PMC) of the Provider (legal entity)
- any other details outlined in the Application Form which includes the Provider's unique Customer Reference Number (CRN) - also known as the CCS Provider ID (example 190000000S).

Submitting a completed application form does not guarantee funding.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should email us at ececgrants@deloitte.com.au immediately. You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.

If an application is incomplete or has incorrect information this may impact the timing of the Grant payment.

Providers are responsible for ensuring that their application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code 1995](#) and the

² Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents

department will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration and future funding rounds under the program.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

The department will acknowledge receipt of your application within five business days of receipt.

8.2 Timing of Grant opportunity

Applications and payments will be processed in two batches, with the first round of grant applications open in July 2024 and payments expected to be made in November 2024, with the second round of grant applications open in January 2025 and payments expected to be made in May 2025. Further information on the timeframes for these Grant opportunities is available on the department's website, [Professional development opportunities - Department of Education, Australian Government](#)

Once an assessment of the application has been undertaken, if approved, the Provider will be sent a Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter.

All offers of Grants by the department remain **provisional** until the Grant Outcome and Agreement Letters are:

- signed by the correct PMC (registered and current in CCS system)
- returned and received by the department
- executed and witnessed by departmental representatives.

The Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter will be sent to successful applicants. Providers will be required to sign the Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter within 7 days of receiving it. Payments are scheduled to be made over 2024-25, subject to available funding.

8.3 Questions during the application process

If Provider's have any questions during the application process, please contact:

- Via email at ececgrants@deloitte.com.au
- Via phone at (03) 9917 7865

Please include your unique Provider CRN (or CCS Provider ID) in the subject line and in your address block for all email correspondence regarding your Grant application or process.

9. The Grant selection process

Your application will be considered through a demand driven grant assessment process. Successful eligible applications will receive funding once a Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter has been signed, provided sufficient grant funding is available.

If the Grants receive strong interest and funding is likely to be exhausted, the department reserves the right to organise applications in preferential order based on the attributes identified in section 5.

9.1 Assessment of applications

Applications will be assessed in the order they are received, however, if funding is likely to be exhausted before the end of the Grant period, the department reserves the right to organise applications in preferential order based on the attributes identified in section 5. This applies to both the Professional Development and Paid Practicum subsidies.

Applications will be assessed against the value with money principles and the relevant eligibility criteria. The employee listed in the Grant application must be employed by the Provider and work at least 40 hours in the Service in a 3-month period. The employee must be undertaking an eligible Grant activity as set out in section 6.

If the assessment process identifies unintentional errors and/or further information is required in the application, the Provider will be contacted to correct them and/or to provide additional information. If the information requested is not provided in a timely manner (within 21 business days), the application will be voided and the applicant will be advised in writing to submit a new application.

9.2 Approval of Grants

The Assistant Secretary of the ECEC Workforce Branch, Australian Government Department of Education is the Program Delegate and makes the final decision to approve any Grant, considering the availability of Grant funds for the purposes of the Grant.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the Grant
- the Grant amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the Grant
- any other considerations as deemed necessary.

There is no appeal mechanism for the decision to approve or not to approve a Grant.

10. Successful Grant applications

Successful Grant applicants will receive a Grant Agreement and Outcome letter.

Providers of ECEC Services must enter into a legally binding agreement with the Commonwealth. The department will issue a Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter to formalise the Grant with general terms and conditions that cannot be changed.

The Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter must be executed with a Provider before any payments can be made to the Provider on behalf of their Service/s. The department is not responsible for any expenditure committed by a Provider or Service for professional development activities until a Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter is executed.

While funding can be sought for any eligible professional development course / program or practicum placement undertaken from 1 July 2024, when this Grant commences, if Providers or Services choose to start an activity nominally covered by this Grant before they have an **executed** Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter, they do so at their own risk. For example, when the assessment of the Grant application is completed, a Service may be deemed ineligible or all funds under that Grant may have been exhausted.

Providers will be notified in writing (usually email) of a successful Grant application outcome.

A Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate.

The Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter will state the:

- Maximum Grant amount to be paid; and
- Provider obligations in relation to the Grant, including reporting requirements.

10.1 How the Grant will be paid

The Grant will be paid into the bank account nominated by the Provider for receiving CCS. Providers should ensure that their bank account details are up to date to avoid delayed or missed payments.

Providers who wish to receive a Grant in the 2024-25 Financial Year are required to complete the Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter sent to them by the last date for signing outlined in the letter.

Payments will be made on a biannual basis and Providers whose Grant Outcome and Agreement Letters are not able to be executed by this deadline will be carried over into the next payment period, subject to availability of funds.

In 2024-25, the Grants will be paid to Services twice. One payment is expected to occur in November 2024 and the other in May 2025. Adjustments to incorrect payments may occur in June 2025 where the Department has identified an error.

10.2 Grant Payments and GST

These Grants are not assessable income for taxation purposes. However, by receiving these Grants for wage supplementation, you are not exempt from other employer obligations such as payroll tax and superannuation contributions. We recommend participants seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](https://www.ato.gov.au/).³ The department cannot provide advice on your specific taxation circumstances.

10.3 Transfer of ownership

If there is a transfer of ECEC service ownership, these Grants **cannot be transferred** as part of the settlement agreement for exchange of ownership. If a change of ownership is to occur, it is the obligation of the ECEC Provider to contact the department early and notify that this is occurring.

³ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

The department will issue an invoice for receipt of an unused funds and request an acquittal for funds already spent.

11. Announcement of Grants

If an application for a Grant is successful, the approved Grant will be listed on the [GrantConnect](#) website within 21 days after the date of effect⁴ as required by Section 5.3 of the [Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines \(CGRGs\)](#).

12. How the department will monitor your Grant activity

12.1 Evaluation

The department will evaluate the Professional Development and Paid Practicum Grants to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved each financial year. We may use information from your application for this purpose. The department or a contracted third party may also interview you or ask you to provide relevant information to help us understand how the Grant impacted you as a Provider and/or the ECEC workforce and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes for each payment quarter. If you believe you have a valid reason to not participate in this evaluation when requested to, please inform the Department in writing.

Information that Providers submit through the acquittals process will be used as part of the evaluation process and will be organised through the use of ECEC Provider and Service Customer Reference Numbers. The department will not use disaggregated educator information for public purposes. However, in instances where acquittals raise concerns about improper use of funds, the Department may use personal details provided for internal financial integrity purposes. All uses of information provided will be in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and other relevant guidelines and principles (see Section 13).

The department may contact Providers or their relevant employees with a questionnaire up to three months after the end of the funding agreement's validity period, to assist with the evaluation of the program. The information provided, if deemed relevant, may be used for reporting purposes in the department's Annual Report or on its website. It may include examples of course completions and types of professional development opportunities undertaken by the ECEC workforce / employees.

12.2 Grant Acquittal Process

The Grant recipient must hold / retain relevant records of current or former employees who have undertaken either Professional Development or Paid Practicum training for 24 months after the Grant agreement has expired. If they are no longer employed by the Provider and the ECEC staff member has not commenced the nominated activity, the funds may be utilised by another ECEC staff member during this period and before the Grant agreement expires. If this occurs, the Provider must submit the replacement employee's details to the Department. The department may also request, in writing and at any time, certified copies for

⁴ See glossary

audit and validation purposes, that training was delivered by a registered training organisation (RTO) or educational institution.

As a guide, Grants awarded in 2024-25 are to be acquitted within 12 months of the Grant agreement being executed. The Grant may not be transferred to the Provider's other Services (if any).

12.3 Grant Recovery Process

If required, the department may recover all or part of Grant if the recipient has been over paid or has breached the Grant agreement. The department will advise in writing if a Grant recovery is being considered by the delegate. It will allow reasonable time for the Grant recipient to respond before the Grant recovery process commences. As a guide, if relevant information is provided within 30 calendar days in response to the notification, the delegate will advise the Grant recipient in writing if recovery operations are to proceed.

13. Probity

The department will ensure that the Grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

The department may require Grant applicants and recipients to provide additional evidence in support of an application, for example, requiring Providers to complete a Commonwealth statutory declaration form. Information on Commonwealth statutory declarations can be found at <https://www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/statutory-declarations>.

These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by the department. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect and on the department's website.

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

The department's [complaints procedures](#) apply to complaints about this Grant opportunity. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing.

Any questions about Grant decisions for this Grant opportunity should be emailed to ececgrants@deloitte.com.au.

If you do not agree with the way in which the department has handled your complaint, you may wish to contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) to discuss further. The Ombudsman will not usually consider a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the relevant department; in this instance, the Department of Education.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted by:

Phone: 1300 362 072 (Toll free)

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the Grant opportunity or program. There may be a real or perceived conflict of interest, if an employee of the department, member of a committee or advisor and/or a Provider or any of their employees:

- has a professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who can influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer (or member of an external panel)
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a Grant under the Grant program/Grant opportunity.

Providers will be asked to declare, as part of their application, any real or perceived existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of their knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If a Provider later identifies or is informed of a real, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, they must inform the department in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the [Australian Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13 \(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials, including the Grant assessor and decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

13.3 Privacy

The department will treat your personal information in accordance with the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone for the primary purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about Grant applicants and Grant recipients under this Grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect, as required, for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

The department may share the information you have provided with other Commonwealth entities, for purposes including government administration, research and/or service delivery, in accordance with relevant Australian laws/legislation.

As part of the application process, the Provider must declare their ability to comply with the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy

obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that it engages with, to assist with the activity, in respect of/with reference to the personal information collected, used, stored, or disclosed in connection with the activity. Accordingly, the Provider must not do anything, which if done by the department would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the *Privacy Act 1988*.

13.4 Confidential Information

Other than information available in the public domain, the Provider must agree not to disclose to any person, other than the department, any confidential information relating to the Grant application and/or agreement, without prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament, or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

The department may at any time, require you to arrange for yourself as the Provider, or your employees, agents, or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of the department's confidential information in a form it considers acceptable.

The department will keep any information in connection with the Grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all the three conditions below:

1. the information is clearly identified as confidential, and an explanation is provided as to why it should be treated as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you as the Provider or someone else.

The department will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of the department for research, assessment, monitoring and analysis of its programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research, or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The Grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created, or held under the Grant agreement.

13.5 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this Grant opportunity, are subject to the [*Freedom of Information Act 1982*](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public the right of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator of the department in writing as per the FOI guidelines.

Department of Education
Freedom of Information Coordinator
Department of Education
50 Marcus Clarke Street
Canberra ACT 2601

By email: FOI@education.gov.au

14. Glossary

Term	Definition
accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act)
administering entity	when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all the Grant administration processes
assessment criteria	are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive Grant opportunity, to determine application rankings
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority is an independent statutory authority that assists governments in implementing the National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care throughout Australia
commencement date	the expected start date for the Grant activity
completion date	the expected date that the Grant activity must be completed, and the Grant spent by
co-sponsoring entity	when two or more entities are responsible for the policy and the appropriation for outcomes associated with it
date of effect	can be the date on which a Grant agreement is signed by the delegate or a specified starting date. Where there is no Grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable
decision maker	the person who decides to award a Grant
DocuSign (TM)	the electronic portal for the administration purposes of the program
ECEC employee	a person that works in an ECEC Service, is an employee or independent contractor who are early childhood educator, early childhood teacher or a director
educator	a person who is employed as an early childhood educator and provides care for children in an approved Service
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a Grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria

Term	Definition
Commonwealth entity	a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act
<u>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines</u>	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration
Customer Reference Number or CRN	<p>A series of identification numbers allocated by Services Australia to organisations receiving funding from the Australian Government including families who are eligible for the Childcare Subsidy through an approved childcare Service.</p> <p>With reference to grant opportunities/ applications, the only CRNs required by the department are also known as the Provider CCS ID and the Service CCS ID which can both be found on the letter / certificate of approval for CCS from the Department of Education.</p> <p>Service and Provider CRNs will both take the format:</p> <p>1900#####A – where # is a numeral from 1 to 9 and A is a letter from A to Z</p>
Grant	<p>for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'Grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money⁵ or other <u>Consolidated Revenue Fund</u> (CRF) money⁶ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
Grant activity/activities	refers to the project /tasks /services that the grantee is required to undertake
Grant Outcome and Agreement Letter	sets out the outcome of the Grant, the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the Grant

⁵ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

⁶ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.



Term	Definition
GrantConnect	is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs
Grant opportunity	refers to the specific Grant round or process where a Commonwealth Grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process
Grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A Grant program is a group of one or more Grant opportunities under a single Department of Education Portfolio Budget Statement Program
grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a Grant
PMC	person/s with management or control of the Provider, who have significant authority, responsibility, or significant influence over planning, directing, or controlling and take part in the decision-making or management of the Provider
PBS Program	described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise several lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more Grant opportunities
Provider	is the legal entity approved to operate an ECEC Service and administer the Child Care Subsidy (CCS)
registered training organisation	a recognised training organisation which has been identified by ACECQA to deliver education training that meets the National Quality Framework (NQF)
selection criteria	comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria



Term	Definition
Service	refers to eligible family day-care, in-home care, centre-based day care and outside school hours care Services that Provide early childhood education and care. Excludes preschool and kindergarten services
value with money	<p>value with money in this document refers to ‘value with relevant money’ which is a judgement based on the Grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical, and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a Grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the project proposal and activities; • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives; • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved; and • the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history.

