



Australian Government
Department of Education

Application Guide

2024 (Cohort 5) Regional University Study Hubs
Program



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1. Purpose

This Application Guide is intended to serve as a guide for potential applicants to the 2024 round of the Regional University Study Hubs Program.

Applicants should read this Application Guide **before** applying. The Application Guide contains key information to assist in making an application, including background, the objectives of the program, considerations of the assessment process and information on eligibility and criteria.

Further information about the program, including the Application Form is available on the [Regional University Study Hubs webpage](#).

Applications for funding will be accepted until 5:00pm (AEDT), Friday, 18 October 2024.

2. Background

The Australian Government is opening the door of opportunity for more Australians by acting on the five priority actions and recommendations of the Australian Universities Accord Interim¹ and Final Reports (Accord report).² These changes will make a real difference to access and equity for under-represented student groups at Australian universities and higher education institutions.

The Government has committed to the target recommended in the Accord Final Report for 80 per cent of Australia's working age population to have a tertiary level qualification by 2050. To achieve this, more people from under-represented groups need to participate in further education and many of those Australians will need to come from the regions and the outer suburbs of major cities. Australia needs more people getting qualifications, more people getting degrees and more people in the workforce up-skilling and re-skilling with greater innovation in the way we design and deliver higher education.

Evidence shows that where Regional University Study Hubs exist, more people in the community go on to further study and can then fill local jobs. Priority Action 1 of the Accord Interim report recommended: *Extend visible, local access to tertiary education by creating further Regional University Centres (Regional University Study Hubs) and establish a similar concept for suburban/metropolitan locations.* The Interim report notes that Regional University Study Hubs have been found to be effective at improving student participation, retention and completion rates in regional and remote areas and should be expanded.

In response to the Interim Report, the Government announced \$66.9 million in additional funding to double the number of University Study Hubs across the country, including expanding the concept to outer metropolitan/peri-urban areas (Suburban University Study Hubs). This includes the establishment of up to 20 additional Regional University Study Hubs across two streams:

¹ The full Interim Report is available at: www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/resources/accord-interim-report

² The full Final Report is available at: www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/resources/final-report

- Stream 1 (Cohort 4) – On 25 March 2024, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, announced the locations of 10 new Regional University Study Hubs across the country. The Government also provided funding for two existing services in NSW, bringing them into the Regional University Study Hubs program.
- Stream 2 (Cohort 5) – up to 10 Regional University Study Hubs to be announced and established in 2025.

This Application Guide relates to Stream 2 (Cohort 5) only.

The Accord Final Report also recommended that consideration be given to broadening eligibility for the program to allow universities to operate Regional University Study Hubs. In line with this recommendation, as a trial, universities (Table A and Table B) are eligible to apply for funding through the Cohort 5 process. University applicants must still meet the key criteria of the program – to offer a provider-agnostic service that is embedded in, and driven by, the local community.

Since its commencement in 2018, overall funding for the program exceeds \$150 million, with a current total of 46 Regional University Study Hubs in all states and the Northern Territory.

2.1. 2021 Scoping Study and Regional Needs Model

A Regional Needs Model was developed in 2021 as part of a scoping study to assist in identifying potential regions for new Regional University Study Hubs based on need and likelihood of success. The model has been updated with latest available data.

The model considers factors such as population, level of tertiary access, participation and attainment, proportion of under-represented students (including First Nations and low socioeconomic status) and transition to employment outcomes. The model will be used by the assessment panel to help inform the selection of locations for new Hubs, along with the information and evidence provided as part of the application process. For more information about the model, please refer to the [Department of Education's website](#).

The model does not preclude any region from being eligible for funding. The assessment panel will make its own assessment of need and readiness for a Hub based on all the available information.

For applicants wishing to access the updated data for their region, please contact the Department of Education (the department) at regional@education.gov.au.

2.2. Legislative context

The Regional University Study Hubs Program is a program under part 2-3 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*³ (HESA). Eligibility and some conditions for the program are set out in Part 9 of the *Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022*⁴ (the Guidelines). This Application Guide should be read in conjunction with Part 2-3 of HESA and Part 9 of the Guidelines. Applicants will be responsible for complying with all relevant legislative requirements.

³ *Higher Education Support Act 2003*: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A01234/latest/text>

⁴ *Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022*: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2022L00347/latest/text>

2.3. About the program

The Regional University Study Hubs Program takes an innovative approach to improve access to tertiary education for regional and remote students. A Regional University Study Hub is a community-owned/community-based facility that provides support to regional and remote students studying at any Australian tertiary institution. Regional University Study Hubs provide:

- Infrastructure, including:
 - Study spaces
 - Break out areas
 - Video conferencing
 - Computer facilities
 - Internet access.
- Administrative and academic skills support services such as:
 - Developing writing and research skills
 - Managing administrative processes.
- Student support services, including:
 - Pastoral support
 - Study advice
 - Help accessing student services.

Regional University Study Hubs seek to advance and support tertiary education access and participation in the community they serve and contribute to regional workforce development. The primary functions of a Regional University Study Hub are:

- to provide support for students to remain in their community while undertaking tertiary education through the provision of appropriate facilities and support, free of charge
- to undertake activities to promote higher education access and participation generally within the region, such as outreach to secondary schools to nurture aspiration.
- contributing to meeting regional workforce needs, for example, through participation in planning and workforce development initiatives with local industry, government, and non-government agencies
- developing innovative ideas to meet student needs and sharing these ideas and best practices with other Regional University Study Hubs, including through involvement with the Regional University Study Hubs Network
- forming partnerships with education and training providers, state and local governments, industry, and other regional entities.

The Regional University Study Hubs Program takes a place-based approach to establishing and operating each facility, allowing local communities to drive establishment and operations based on community need. Each Regional University Study Hub reflects the community it serves and is established with consideration of:

- its geographic location in relation to the community

- the population size, demographic and cultural needs of the local community
- the local industry and businesses in the area and the skills they need
- the location of local TAFE and VET providers and other educational offerings
- distance from existing university provision.

Regional University Study Hubs improve access and retention for regional and remote tertiary students by providing flexible support to those who choose to study locally. A 2021 evaluation of the program found there was evidence Regional University Study Hubs have a positive impact on student retention and support access to tertiary education for under-represented groups, including those who are first in family, from low socioeconomic status households and First Nations students. They provide flexibility and improve access in areas where there is very limited or no university access; for school leavers, as well as those with caring responsibilities and work commitments; and support mid-career changers and mature students.

In 2024, 42 percent of students supported by Regional University Study Hubs reported being first in their family to attend university, 11 percent identified as First Nations, and 56 percent were over the age of 25.

Regional University Study Hubs are generally established in low population areas with thin markets for university provision and no or very limited university access. In 2024, the median population of areas with Regional University Study Hubs is 5,469, with the largest population being 32,717.

Related Program: Suburban University Study Hubs

In response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report, the Australian Government announced the establishment of a new Suburban University Study Hubs Program, which will provide support to students from outer metropolitan and peri-urban areas. More information regarding that program is available on the [department's website](#).

2.4. Program objectives

The Regional University Study Hubs program aims to:

1. Enable students in regional and remote Australia to access and complete tertiary education without having to leave their community.
2. Meet a demonstrated gap in support for study in a regional or remote community.
3. Support students who wish to stay in their community while they complete their course of study.
4. Enhance the experience of students studying within their own community.
5. Encourage strong links between the Regional University Study Hubs and other organisations in the area, including other support services that students may access and industry.
6. Complement, rather than replace, existing and planned university investments and activities in regional areas, such as satellite campuses and study centres.

The program aims to improve and support diversity, equity of access and participation, and improved student outcomes.

2.5. Regional University Study Hub locations

A map of all 46 Regional University Study Hubs can be found on the [department's website](#).

2.6. Regional University Study Hubs Network

The Regional University Study Hubs Network has been established to support Regional University Study Hubs. It is led by the Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (ACSES) in collaboration with two partners: Geraldton Universities Centre and the Country Universities Centre.

The Network connects Regional University Study Hubs nationwide and provides support, shares best practice resources, and provides training opportunities to Regional University Study Hubs staff. For further information, please refer to the [Network website](#). It is highly recommended that potential applicants contact either the Network or existing Regional University Study Hubs to inform the development of their application.

3. Application and Assessment Process

Applications for funding will be accepted until 5:00pm (AEDT), Friday, 18 October 2024.

To assess applications for Regional University Study Hubs Program funding, the department will establish an Assessment Panel. The Assessment Panel will consider how well applications meet the objectives of the Program, and score applicant responses against a range of assessment criteria (outlined in below sections). Applicants must show that their proposed Regional University Study Hub will contribute to improved participation and outcomes in tertiary education for regional and remote students.

For this application round, an area of priority for consideration in the assessment process will be applications with a focus on upskilling and reskilling local workforces to prepare for the future needs of the community. This will be one factor taken into consideration by the Assessment Panel, in line with other factors such as geographic spread.

In response to recommendations of the Accord Final Report, as a trial, this application round is open to universities (including in consortia) to apply to operate a Regional University Study Hub in a regional or remote area. University applicants must meet all eligibility criteria as outlined in this Guide, including the requirement to offer a provider-agnostic service to all students, regardless of the tertiary provider they are enrolled with, and to be driven by and address the needs of their local community.

Some applicants may be requested to clarify specific points contained in their application, to help the Assessment Panel assess the applicant's suitability and readiness to establish and operate a Regional University Study Hub. This may include a Microsoft Teams meeting with members of the panel.

The outcome of the application process is expected in early 2025.

Getting application help

If applicants require assistance completing the online form, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions in the first instance. Otherwise, the department can be contacted at regional@education.gov.au.

3.1. Application and assessment timeline

The following table details the expected timeline for the 2024 Regional University Study Hubs application and assessment process.

Date	Activity
21 August 2024	Applications open
Week of 26 August 2024	First Department briefing session for interested applicants Separate briefing session for universities
Week of 9 September 2024	Second department briefing session for interested applicants
18 October 2024	Application process closes 5:00 pm AEDT
November/December 2024	Panel assesses applications. Some applicants may be invited to attend a brief clarification discussion with the Assessment Panel.
January/February 2025	Successful applicants announced (anticipated)

3.2. Key considerations

Applicants should consider the following application and assessment information when developing their applications:

Funding Amount

The department has undertaken analysis of the median funding figures reported by existing Regional University Study Hubs, to support applicants in determining an appropriate funding request:

	Commonwealth Grant Funding (Operational) (the amount received from the Regional University Study Hubs Program)	Estimated Operational Cost (the total amount involved in operating a Regional University Study Hub, including other sources of income)
Median Annual Amount	\$309,620	\$458,696

Funding amounts vary based on the local context, service offering (for example, a satellite Hub or Hub connected with another local service) and contributions from other sources, including in-kind contributions.

Applications which demonstrate funding or in-kind support from other parties such as local and state/territory government, industry or education partners (such as universities) will be viewed favourably in the assessment process.

Final funding amounts will be determined in consultation with the department, at the discretion of the Program Delegate. Applicants should be aware that even if their application is successful, the funding amounts contained in the application may be subject to negotiation before final agreement.

Use of grant funds

Conditions will be imposed on the use of funds. Some of these conditions are set out in Part 9 of the Guidelines, and others will be detailed in Conditions of Grant for each Regional University Study Hub. Grant funds must only be used for the purpose and activities outlined in the Guidelines and Conditions of Grant. Grant funding for this Program may be used to lease property and/or facilities but must not be used to purchase property or land.

Payment of grant funds

Funds will be paid in instalments, set out in the Conditions of Grant by the Program Delegate under subsection 41-25(2) of HESA (Conditions of Grant). Each recipient will be required to meet defined milestones (such as delivery of progress reporting) before payment of each instalment is made.

GST

GST may be applicable and if so, will be additional to grant funding paid under this Program unless the body corporate is a Government Related Entity (GRE)⁵. When making payments to Regional University Study Hubs, the department will pay GST as an additional amount to the grant funds, and Regional University Study Hubs will need to ensure they account for GST when reconciling their finances for tax purposes.

Reporting requirements

Funding is subject to ongoing reporting requirements. Successful applicants will be consulted, and an agreed milestone reporting and payment schedule will be detailed within the Conditions of Grant.

Reporting will include the submission of an Operational Plan that provides a detailed overview of how the Regional University Study Hub will achieve its goals through its day-to-day management, and if required, a Capital Works Plan (see section on Capital Works). Ongoing progress reporting will also be required as part of the Conditions of Grant.

The types of information and data Regional University Study Hubs will need to be able to provide in periodic reports to the department includes:

- Unique Student Identifier for each student registered with the Hub (subject to the requirements of Division 5 of the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*)
- Equivalent Full time Student Load (EFTSL) data
- Student characteristics
- Course details of the students supported through the Regional University Study Hub and the number of students undertaking them

⁵ GST and payments between Government Related Entities: www.ato.gov.au/Business/Government-entities/In-detail/GST-and-payments-between-government-related-entities/

- Note: Regional University Study Hubs must support all students studying externally in their local area that wish to access the facility, regardless of any partnerships with tertiary education providers
- Staff numbers and qualifications
- Operational hours
- Current and anticipated facilities
- Risk plan and insurance arrangements
- Detailed information on student support services and pastoral care
- Education provider partnerships
- Business and industry partnerships (including local and state government)
- Community organisation partnerships – including evidence of ongoing community engagement
- General courses or training offered through the Regional University Study Hubs
- Expenditure of grant funding and other income
- Projected communications and marketing activities
- Ongoing project activities, milestones, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Requirement to comply with the Privacy Act 1988

Regional University Study Hubs are required to comply with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) described in Division 2, Part III of the *Privacy Act 1988*⁶ (the Act). This requirement applies regardless of whether a Regional University Study Hub would normally be considered a relevant organisation under the Act. The APPs impose obligations on organisations with respect to the way that they handle and deal with personal information and give individuals the right to access that information in certain ways.

The Application Form includes a section for each applicant to acknowledge this requirement.

Student access

It is a requirement of the funding that any student, enrolled with any higher education provider or Vocational Education and Training provider,⁷ must be able to register their student details with the Regional University Study Hub, utilise its facilities, and access the support services provided. Consideration should also be given to the provision of after-hours access.

No fees

Regional University Study Hubs **must not** charge students for:

⁶ *Privacy Act 1988* <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03712/latest/text>

⁷ <https://training.gov.au/Home/Tga>

- a. the use of the Regional University Study Hub
- b. the support that is provided through the Regional University Study Hub
- c. any other resource for which the Regional University Study Hub is funded for through the Program.

Students can be charged for incidental or consumable items, and the type and costs that will be charged should be clearly identified in application documentation.

Naming

The proposed Hub name should reflect the community it services (for example, *[community name]* Regional University Study Hub). To ensure open access for all tertiary students, the Hub name should not mention any specific education provider. The Program Delegate must also agree to the Hub name as part of the Conditions of Grant.

Note: if successful, the Hub name may be used in public media material, including any Ministerial announcements.

Partnerships

Partnerships with a range of education providers, local organisations, industry, and business, as well as local and state government, are crucial to demonstrating the ongoing sustainability of a Regional University Study Hub. Typical supports provided through partnerships include free professional advice or consultation, donations, in-kind support, and fee-sharing arrangements or other financial support such as peppercorn rent.

Regional University Study Hubs should have (or plan to have) partnerships with secondary schools in their region to help support the aspirations of local students. These partnerships could involve participating in school events or providing information and advice regarding further study options and careers. Hubs are also welcome to provide informal support to secondary students, such as providing quiet space and internet access for year 12 students to complete assessments or undertake exams, providing the Hub has the appropriate requirements in place to supervise students under the age of 18.

University partnerships in the Regional University Study Hubs program

To date, universities have played a significant role in the Regional University Study Hubs program, with many Hubs partnered with universities. Partnerships vary widely, consisting of formal and informal partnerships with a range of financial commitments and collaborative arrangements. Regional Hubs provide opportunities for aspiration building, and provision of additional information and support to a university's students in thin markets, without the university needing to heavily invest, but allowing the university to extend its reach to new students that may otherwise have not undertaken further study. Hubs can also provide valuable connections between students, universities and local business and industry.

To facilitate cooperation between Regional University Study Hubs and universities, the Australian government has encouraged and invested in formal partnerships between these parties. Partnerships have led to collaboration for mutual benefit, for all parties, such as increased student

participation/recruitment and better supported students (including improved understanding and in some cases, supported delivery of course options).

While universities are eligible to apply to operate a Hub as part of this funding round, the department also strongly encourages universities providers to actively engage with community organisations and other prospective applicants to discuss how they could be involved in a Regional University Study Hub.

University applicants will need to outline how they will work with other education providers to ensure the hub will support all tertiary students, regardless of which provider they are enrolled with. Consideration will be given to the extent to which universities are able to demonstrate strong engagement with other providers in supporting the proposed Hub.

Geographic spread

Geographic spread is a consideration for the Assessment Panel in determining which locations should have a Regional University Study Hub. This ensures equity in the distribution of Regional University Study Hubs and tertiary education access across Australia. Geographic spread may include factors such as distance from the nearest university campus, distance from existing hubs, number of Regional Hubs in a particular state or territory, and Regional Hubs by regionality.

3.3. Application documentation

The application and all accompanying documents must be completed and submitted via the Qualtrics Application [here](#). You will receive an automated email confirming that your application has been received.

Applicants can download and complete the Application Form, and templates for supporting documents, from the department's website [here](#).

Application Form

The application form includes questions and tables that address all Program eligibility requirements and assessment criteria. All sections should be completed following the requirements specified on the form.

There are sections within the form that require attachments to be uploaded. Templates for these attachments are outlined below and are available [here](#). If there are any issues uploading the attachments to the application form, please contact regional@education.gov.au.

Budget Template

Applicants must use the provided template to develop a detailed budget which outlines expected income and expenditure for the proposed Regional University Study Hub from 2024-25 to 2027-28. The budget must identify other sources of funding which will support the Regional University Study Hub. The Budget Template also includes a section for the proposed Capital Works Budget if applicable (more information on Capital Works below). The budget will be considered as part of the overall assessment criteria.

Financial and Credentials Information Form (Financial viability)

Applicants must satisfy the department that their organisation is financially viable to receive funding. The Financial and Credentials Information Form must be completed and returned with the Application Form to the department. The department will coordinate assessment of Financial and Credentials Information Form. This form is not available from the website and can only be accessed by emailing regional@education.gov.au.

Where an applicant has not yet established a body corporate, the Financial and Credentials Information Form must be completed using the financial details of an **existing organisation** which is connected to the Regional University Study Hub application. However, in filling out the 'Relevant persons' tab of the form, please include the details of people associated with the proposed new entity, where known.

Capital Works Proposal (if applicable)

The Program will provide funding towards fit-out costs to upgrade existing infrastructure (capital works) to ensure the proposed site is fit for purpose. This may include installation of interior walls, secure swipe card access to support after-hours use, painting, floor covering and purchase of ICT equipment. The Program is not intended to fund large-scale capital works, and successful applicants cannot use funding to purchase property or land.

If funding is required to undertake capital works, applicants must provide relevant details in the 'Current or Proposed Site/s' section in the Application Form. Evidence of entering into capital works must be provided to the Program Delegate prior to payment of capital funding. This requirement will be negotiated with the applicant as part of the process of developing Conditions of Grant for each project.

If applicants are unsure if planned activities are considered capital works, please contact the department at regional@education.gov.au.

3.4. Eligibility requirements: Sections A-E of the Application Form

To be eligible to apply for funding under the Program, an applicant must meet the following requirements:

A. Regional or Remote requirement

Regional University Study Hubs (including all sites for multi-site Hubs) must be established in a regional or remote area of Australia.

Regional classification is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Australian Statistical Geography Standard Remoteness Areas* (ASGS) classifications⁸. Anticipated Hub locations (address of the Hub) must be classified as being in the following:

- Inner Regional Australia (Code: 1 or RA1)

⁸ *Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS)*:
www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/remoteness+structure

- Outer Regional Australia (Code: 2 or RA2)
- Remote Australia (Code: 3 or RA3)
- Very Remote Australia (Code: 4 or RA4)

The ASGS classification of current or anticipated Hub locations can be determined using the online ABS Maps tool: <https://maps.abs.gov.au/index.html>.

How to use the ABS Maps tool to determine Remoteness:

- In the **‘Choose boundary type’** (the first drop down menu) field, please select **“2021 Remoteness Area (RA)”** under the **“ASGS Edition 3 ABS Structures”** heading.
- Search for your chosen location or address in the **‘Find address or place’** search bar.
- Click the map on your searched location. The tool will provide you with the resulting ASGS classification for your potential Hub location. Please enter those details in your Application Form.

B. Body Corporate requirement

Word limit: 500 words

Applicants must provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the department that their organisation is, or can become, a body corporate.

If the applicant is not yet incorporated, a declaration is required to confirm understanding that the applicant organisation must become a body corporate to be eligible for funding. If the application is successful, the Program Delegate’s approval of a grant is contingent on the applicant organisation successfully incorporating.

Applicants will be required to provide evidence of eligibility/capability to become a body corporate at least seven days prior to the Conditions of Grant being executed.

C. ‘Fit and proper person’ requirement

For the purpose of completing the ‘fit and proper person’ section in the Application Form, the term ‘organisation’ refers to the Regional University Study Hub. The individual completing the ‘fit and proper person’ requirement must be the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chair of the Board, Director or other equivalent executive authorised to do so on behalf of the Regional University Study Hub.

Before allocating funding under the Program, the Minister must be satisfied that the recipient organisation, and each person who makes or participates in making decisions that affect the whole or a substantial part of the organisation’s affairs, is a ‘fit and proper person’, in accordance with subsection 65(2) of the Guidelines. In making this decision, the Minister and/or their Delegate will consider matters similar to those described in paragraph 6.2 of the *Higher Education Support (Fit and Proper Person) Instrument 2019*.⁹

⁹ *Higher Education Support (Fit and Proper Person) Instrument 2019*: www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019L01682

Regarding an organisation, the 'fit and proper person' requirement focuses on the organisation's business and financial affairs and on its compliance with relevant regulatory schemes.

The Application Form includes questions that applicants are required to answer which address the 'fit and proper person' requirement.

D. 'Community owned' or 'community-based' requirement

Word limit: 500 words

Applications should include evidence that the applicant organisation is 'community owned' or 'community-based'. The evidence could include any of the following:

- The organisation's Articles of Association.
- Documents that show that the governing body of the organisation draws the majority of its members from the local community where it operates or from the local community that it would serve.
- Documents showing that the organisation is prevented from distributing its assets or profits to individual members, both while the organisation is operating and if it ceases to operate or is wound up.

University Applicants

For this section, universities applying to operate a Hub must demonstrate they have, or plan to have, an advisory board or committee that includes a range of relevant community members from the area the Hub will be located to ensure community engagement in the mission, purpose, partnerships and operations of the Hub. In other words, it will be community-embedded and driven by local student and community needs.

E. New hubs requirement

To ensure Regional University Study Hubs are established in areas with the highest need, funding is only available for new Hubs. Existing facilities that are already operating and providing similar or equivalent services are ineligible to apply.

Applicants will be required to advise if the proposed Hub is currently delivering a similar or equivalent service funded through other sources of income (including the Australian Government or a State or Territory Government).

Hubs which are not currently operational and/or do not meet the similar or equivalent service criterion below may be classified as new.

Co-investment from a range of funding sources such as local and state governments, universities, and other sources is encouraged for new hubs.

A similar or equivalent service will include:

- some, or all, of the facilities described as infrastructure; **and**

- some, or all, of the services listed in administrative and academic skills support and/or student support services.

Facilities or Services	
Infrastructure	study spaces, break out areas, video conferencing, computer facilities, internet access
Administrative and academic skills support services	developing writing and research skills, managing administrative processes
Student support services	general wellbeing support, study advice, help accessing student services, supporting students with paid placements and Work Integrated Learning, careers advice

Consideration should be given to the extent to which your service or facilities provides for these aspects, and who is able to access your service.

If you are unsure, you may submit an application, which will be assessed for eligibility by the department. Select 'No' to this question in the Application Form and provide context if needed in the provided box.

3.5. Assessment criteria: Sections F-L of the Application Form and Budget Template

The Assessment Panel will consider whether applications:

- respond clearly with evidence that supports claims against each assessment criteria, and
- meet the overarching program objectives (see '2.4 Program Objectives') when assessing each criterion.

The Assessment Panel will assess responses to each assessment criteria and provide a rating of either:

- Highly Suitable
- Suitable
- Unsuitable.

Achieving 'highly suitable' for all or any of the assessment criteria is not the only consideration of the Assessment Panel when determining suitable applicants. The Assessment Panel may, at its discretion, determine any applicant to be a preferred candidate for grant funding provided it is:

- eligible; and
- achieves a minimum of a suitable rating against all assessment criteria.

In addition to ensuring good geographic spread of Regional University Study Hubs, a priority for this funding round includes applications that have a focus on upskilling and reskilling local workforces to prepare for the future needs of the community.

The assessment panel will also take into account other considerations when making recommendations for funding, including the Regional Needs Model outlined above.

Weighting

Different sections of the Application Form are weighted differently for assessment purposes. The following table summarises the weighting of each against relevant sections of the application form.

Criteria	Overall weighting
Criteria F – G	40% of overall score
Criteria H – L	40% of overall score
Budget	20% of overall score

Details of what these criteria involve are outlined below.

F. Tertiary education participation and outcomes within the community

Word limit: Community need – 1500 words, addressing need – 1500 words

Describe the current gaps in access and support for tertiary education within the community the proposed Regional University Study Hub will be established in. How will a Regional University Study Hub lift tertiary education participation and outcomes within the community? Describe the specific community needs that would be fulfilled by the establishment of a Regional University Study Hub. Include any available evidence of community need, including quantitative data, if available.

Applicants should provide detailed information regarding any difficulties the community currently experiences in accessing the services of higher education and vocational education and training (VET) providers.

Whilst Regional University Study Hubs must support all tertiary (university and VET) students studying at any Australian provider who wish to access their facilities, they may also have a focus on, or provide more in-depth support for, students undertaking specific fields of study or types of qualifications, where there is demand from students or the local community. Include details of any specific areas of focus that the Regional University Study Hub may have.

Regional Needs Model Considerations

The Regional Needs Model considers a range of factors in determining the need and readiness of regions, including:

- Demographics, such as:
 - Population and population growth
 - Year 10 completion rate
 - Distance to the nearest higher education campus.
- Education access and participation rates, such as:
 - Enrolment rates and growth

- Indigenous enrolment levels
- Future demand for higher education.
- Retention and engagement in higher education, such as:
 - Course completion rates
 - Drop-out rates
 - Demand for online education.
- Transition and outcomes, such as:
 - Rate of students entering employment within one year of finishing
 - Rate of students continuing to further study within one year of finishing
 - Growth in higher skilled labour.

Applicants should address relevant factors in their application, demonstrating why their region is an appropriate location for a new Regional University Study Hub. As noted, applicants can contact the department to seek updated data from the Regional Needs Model.

Applicants may wish to provide additional evidence to support claims, such as:

- Quantitative data, graphs, and analysis
- Surveys, testimonials, and interviews
- Details of current education services and facilities and their utilisation
- Location of current tertiary education services and facilities in the community
- Networks or relationships with current Regional University Study Hubs, TAFE, VET, or university providers
- Research demonstrating current and future workforce needs in the region
- Current student enrolment data for VET or higher education in the region
- Information on jobs or career counselling provision or networking events or activities.

G. Governance arrangements and connections

Word limit: 1000 words

Provide the current or anticipated governance structure of the Regional University Study Hub. Include details of operational, financial, risk management and reporting processes in place (or to be established). Provide details of the Regional University Study Hub's current or intended Board or Committee, including the skills, knowledge, and experience of its members. Describe any engagement the Board or Committee has had with education matters or issues in the community to date.

Describe the processes and procedures in place to enable adequate access to information by all members of the board, executive and managers. If available, a visual representation of the current or proposed governance structure of the Regional University Study Hub should also be included. For more information on business structures and creating a governance structure, go to www.business.gov.au/planning/business-structures-and-types/business-structures.

Please also provide details of any affiliations or proposed connections with other organisations or [existing Regional University Study Hubs](#), including the nature and length of the affiliation, and any agreements reached to date.

University applicants will need to ensure the governance arrangements show how the proposed Hub is community-embedded and will be driven by local student and community needs.

Applicants may wish to provide additional evidence to support proposed governance/affiliation arrangements, such as:

- Constitution, Charter or other governing policies or arrangements
- Risk management plan and matrix
- Relevant project planning or business planning documentation, policies and procedures to manage the establishment and/or operation of the Regional University Study Hub
- Certificate of incorporation or evidence the process to achieve incorporated status has commenced
- Confirmation of insurance (certificates, policies, receipt of payment for insurance)
- Letters of support from affiliate organisations
- Memorandums of Understanding or other written agreements.

H. Staffing

Complete table provided in Application Form – maximum 2 pages

Applicants should provide a description of the academic and professional expertise that is already available to support the establishment of the Regional University Study Hub, together with a description of the expertise required to support ongoing operation.

Please include all employees and volunteers in the table provided in the Application Form. The titles, type of employment (paid or volunteer), Full-time Equivalent (FTE), required skills and qualifications, and employment status (commenced, anticipated commencement) should be included.

Please note, Commonwealth grant funding will typically only provide for up to two FTE per Hub. If your application seeks more than two FTE, additional evidence should be provided to justify the request.

Applicants may wish to provide additional evidence to support claims, such as:

- Organisational plans or charts that provide staff and position information
- Operational, business or project planning that identifies positions and duties required for each staff member
- Operational, business, project planning that identifies the necessary qualifications, skills and experience required for each staff member.

I. Partnerships – Education Providers, Community and Industry

Complete table provided in Application Form – maximum 4 pages

Partnerships play an integral role in the overall success of Regional University Study Hubs. Applicants are encouraged to engage with a wide range of partners who can provide further support and benefits to registered students.

Applicants should provide information regarding existing/confirmed partnerships and planned activities to engage with partners. Where a partnership exists, applicants should provide relevant details of current or anticipated financial support, memoranda of understanding, service level agreements or other contracts and in-kind support received from current partners.

Applicants may wish to provide additional evidence to support claims, such as:

- Project planning that includes collaboration and input from partner organisations
- Information that demonstrates commitment from local community organisations, businesses, or volunteers to establish or support the operation of the Regional University Study Hub.

As mentioned above, university applicants will need to outline how they will engage with other providers in supporting the proposed Hub.

Note: Successful applicants will have access to a dedicated stream of funding to support their partnerships activities. This funding will be made available once successful applicants for new Regional University Study Hubs have firmly established operations and can demonstrate readiness to engage in further partnerships development. Suitability and readiness for this funding will be assessed separately by the department and is not considered as part of the application process.

J. Student support services and care

Complete table provided in Application Form – maximum 3 pages

Applicants should provide a detailed description of the services the Regional University Study Hub will provide to students. Where a Regional University Study Hub will provide services and/or care requiring qualified professionals, the qualifications required, or relevant details of services that will be provided by external organisations or through partnerships arrangements, must be provided.

Applicants should also outline how they will provide safe and accessible support for students from under-represented groups, in particular First Nations students and students with disability, and any requirements for supervising students under the age of 18, if required.

Examples of student support services and care include:

- a. Computing facilities: online access, computers/laptops/docking stations, printers, scanners and required software to support online learning
- b. Teleconferencing and videoconferencing facilities
- c. Administrative support
- d. Academic skills support (may include visiting academics, lecturers, or tutoring)

- e. Mentoring
- f. Internship programs
- g. Library support or access
- h. Counselling and/or psychological assistance
- i. Career counselling and local business and industry networking
- j. General academic support and training: literacy, numeracy, research and writing support
- k. Cultural training and support
- l. Secure facilities.

Applicants may wish to provide additional evidence to support claims, such as:

- a. Supporting research, reporting or literature
- b. Quantitative data, graphs, and analysis.

University applicants will need to outline how they will ensure the Hub is providing high quality facilities and support to all students, regardless of which tertiary provider they are enrolled with.

K. Current or proposed site/s

Complete table provided in Application Form (maximum 4 pages)

Outline the proposed site/s for the Regional University Study Hub.

- **If the specific location for the proposed Hub is known:** please provide a description of the site, including size, existing facilities/infrastructure and leasing arrangements (if known).
- **If an exact location or street address has not yet been determined:** please provide information explaining the type of facility that will be used, and availability of such facilities within the proposed area. Applicants should provide evidence of comparable leasing costs in the region to support the proposed budget.

In selecting an appropriate site to establish a Regional University Study Hub, consideration should be given to leveraging existing community and social infrastructure including services in close proximity (for example, childcare, nursing rooms and medical facilities). Applications which demonstrate evidence of consideration of potential sites, their suitability and indicative costs will be favourably considered.

Please also complete the table indicating your expected student load for the first four years of operation. There are two different rows to complete:

- Expected **Peak** Student Load = the maximum number of students anticipated to be physically using the proposed Hub's facilities at any one time.
- Expected **Total** Student Registrations = the total number of students anticipated to be registered to access the proposed Hub.

Capital Works (if required)

Word limit – 500 words

If capital works funding is being sought for the proposed Regional University Study Hub, applicants should identify and detail these works, including their anticipated cost. Applicants should endeavour to provide as much detail as possible, including any technical drawings, quotes, etc.

- **If the specific location for the proposed Hub is known:** please provide a detailed breakdown of the capital works required, including any evidence available to support claims. Evidence can be included as attachments.
- **If an exact location or street address has not yet been determined:** please provide an estimate of the capital works that will likely be required, based on the types of facilities that are available in the region and undertaking necessary research.

Successful applicants will be required to complete a more detailed Capital Works Plan for approval by the department following the establishment of Conditions of Grant.

Applicants may wish to provide additional evidence to support proposed sites/s and capital works, such as:

- Photos
- Technical drawings and designs
- Map with site/s clearly located
- Relevant site-specific information
- Quantitative data, graphs and analysis
- Quotations and Project Plans.

L. Hub Implementation and timeline

Complete table provided in Application Form (maximum 2 pages)

Outline the key milestones required to implement the Regional University Study Hub and proposed timings. This should include all key activities required from confirmation of funding to the Regional University Study Hub being operational. Where Capital Works are to be undertaken, include activities related to project management and building works.

Budget Template

Excel Document

The budget must clearly indicate the grant funding (excluding GST) sought from the Commonwealth to deliver the Regional University Study Hub. Detailed expenditure for the total funding period 2024-25 to 2027-28 should be clear and realistic. The budget should be presented by financial year and cover the total funding period.

The budget must also identify other sources of income (including any actual or anticipated funding through Hub partnerships above) and detail how that funding, together with program funding, would be used for the establishment and ongoing operations of the Regional University Study Hub.

Applicants should note that the budget will be carefully reviewed and its value for money assessed by the Assessment Panel. This includes requests for capital works funding. As noted above, applicants should be aware that even if an application is successful, funding amounts are subject to negotiation, and the Program Delegate will determine the final amount of funding to be approved. Final funding amounts will be determined after the application process concludes, in consultation with the department and at the discretion of the delegate.

Attach quotes or other relevant material to support expected costs for establishment, operation and/or capital works (keeping within the attachment page limit outlined below).

During the assessment process, the assessment panel may seek further clarification from applicants regarding their proposed budget as required. This may include asking potential applicants to submit a revised budget based on feedback from the panel.

3.6. Attachments list

Attachments should only be provided where they add value or context to the overall application. The sum of all attachments **must not exceed 50 one-sided equivalents to A4 pages** (30 pages of attachment for the application, and an additional 20 pages of attachments for the budget). Any attachments beyond this page limit **will not be considered** by the Assessment Panel.

Please list attachments in the table provided in the Application Form. Please include the correct attachment reference in the title of each document.

3.7. Additional reference material

- *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2011A00073/latest/text>
- *Corporations Act 2001*: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A00818/latest/text>
- Higher Education Data and Publications: <https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education/data-statistics-and-publications>