

Grant Guidelines for baseline payments to Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Overview

ACARA was established by the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008* (ACARA Act). Its role is to support all Australian governments to deliver the Australian Curriculum, national assessment programs, and to manage the collection, quality assurance and reporting of school information to all Australian governments and the Australian people.

The *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) superseded the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* (CAC Act) which has changed the funding arrangements for bodies previously subject to the CAC Act, including ACARA. ACARA is now subject to the PGPA Act. Baseline payments to ACARA are paid as grant funding from the Commonwealth for the purposes of ACARA's functions.

Objectives

The ACARA Act, at section 6, sets out ACARA's functions including to:

- Develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum and achievement standards, for school subjects specified in the ACARA Charter
- Develop and administer national assessments
- Collect, manage and analyse student assessment data and other data relating to schools and comparative school performance
- Facilitate information sharing arrangements between Australian government bodies in relation to the collection, management and analysis of school data
- Publish information relating to school education, including information relating to comparative school performance
- Provide school curriculum resource services, educational research services and other related services
- Provide information, resources, support and guidance to the teaching profession

Funding is provided to ACARA for the purposes of fulfilling ACARA's legislative functions. ACARA's

Charter outlines the priorities for each of these functions. ACARA's Charter is revised from time to time, and is approved by the "Ministerial Council" pursuant to the ACARA Act, which in practical terms means the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council (which consists of the Commonwealth and all state and territory education ministers) (Education Council). ACARA's Charter is published on ACARA's website at www.acara.edu.au.

Further operational objectives are outlined in ACARA's four year work plan and budget, which is approved by the Education Council.

Funding

Commonwealth payments to ACARA are made as ongoing, non-competitive grants. These grants represent the Australian Government's 50 per cent share of ACARA's baseline funding. The states and territories collectively fund the remaining 50 per cent of ACARA's baseline funding.

The amount of ACARA's baseline funding is approved on a four-yearly basis by the Education Council. Following Education Council approval, the Department of Education and Training will supply ACARA with a grant agreement. Funds will be paid bi-annually to ACARA following receipt of a correctly rendered invoice due to the department in September and March of each year.

In line with the department's PGPA Delegations, the approval to commit relevant money (s 23(3)) must occur at the Group Manager level or higher. Given the value of the agreement, it would be appropriate for the grant agreement to also be signed (s 23(1)) by the same delegate who approved the expenditure-i.e. signed by the Group Manager or higher.

The usual term of payment is within 30 business days of a correctly rendered invoice being received by the department.

No other organisation in Australia has the legislative authority and unanimous support of all Australian governments to deliver the national educational outcomes of curriculum, assessment and reporting, accordingly there is no competitive grants application process for funding given to ACARA.

Grants paid to ACARA are conditional on ACARA performing its functions under the ACARA Act, the Charter, and the four year work plan as endorsed by the Education Council.

Performance and Evaluation Measures

ACARA reports annually, to the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC), its progress against its four year work plan. ACARA also provides an annual report for submission to the Australian Parliament and participates in Senate Estimates processes. ACARA's financial statements are audited on an annual basis by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), and are published in ACARA's annual report.

Governance Arrangements

Education Council is responsible for approving ACARA's four year budget and for providing directions to ACARA. As part of this approval, the Australian Government Minister for Education and Training is also responsible for approving the Australian Government's 50 per cent share of ACARA's baseline funding.

Privacy

In administering the funding, the department and ACARA are bound by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* (the Privacy Act). For further information please go to our website: <http://education.gov.au/privacy>.

Fraud

The department and ACARA are committed to ensuring that the grant funding is only used for a proper purpose, and any complaint or allegation regarding misuse will be handled promptly and in an appropriate manner having regard to relevant Australian Government policies and procedures.

Program Contact

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