

# WORKFORCE TRAINING INNOVATION FUND

Guidelines



Education  
and Training



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# BACKGROUND

The Victorian Government is prioritising education because it sits at the heart of our future social, economic and global success. The Education State is about giving every Victorian the opportunity to succeed in life, regardless of background, place or circumstance.

Skills, knowledge, creativity and adaptability will be central in the economy of the future. Victorians will have access to quality training to get the skills they need and industry wants, and the knowledge to build careers and create jobs. The Government has implemented reforms to the training and TAFE system, *Skills First*.

*Skills First* will improve the quality, stability and sustainability of the Victorian training and TAFE system that is better aligned to industry needs, where 'real training leads to real jobs'.

It is vital for Victoria's current and future industries to be equipped with employees who have the skills to support continued productivity and economic prosperity. *Skills First* will build business and employer confidence in the training system and the qualifications of their current and future employees.

A number of initiatives and programs will be implemented to ensure the training and TAFE system is adaptable and flexible. The Workforce Training Innovation Fund (WTIF) is one of the targeted funding streams that will be delivered.

Economic, employment and workplace skill requirements are evolving rapidly, creating challenges for industry, employers, and training providers in ensuring that workers' skills match those required by industry.

In responding to this challenge, WTIF creates opportunities for the joint exploration of new ideas and solutions to enhance workplace productivity.

Innovative thinking and approaches will allow industry and training providers to challenge existing practices in skills development, training methods and product design. This will result in the improved relevance of training for students, generate outcomes for employees and industry and support economic growth.

A key focus of WTIF is strengthening partnerships between industry and the training and TAFE system to better respond and adapt training courses and materials for existing, new and emerging industries and the Victorian Government priority sectors.

The fund will improve the flexibility and responsiveness of the training and TAFE system to strengthen the relevance of training to industry and workforce needs; ensuring students develop the high-quality skills that are crucial to industry.

The objectives of the WTIF are:

- Improving the flexibility and responsiveness of the training and TAFE system in meeting industry skill-needs and business training requirements
- Encouraging greater industry and employer partnerships with training providers and participation in workforce training and skill development
- Contributing to broader economic productivity gains in future growth sectors, and/or workforce skill improvements
- Supporting industry or business productivity improvement through training and TAFE system involvement in industry-based applied research.

# FUNDING APPROACH

In 2017, an initial allocation of \$40 million for workforce training innovation is available to industry and training provider partnerships to improve the quality and relevance of training to industry.

This will assist industry or business to develop and deploy new skills required for productivity improvement.

Grant funding is available across four interrelated categories:

- Future growth sectors
- Workforce training and skills development
- New training programs and methods
- Applied research.

Table 1. Workforce Training Innovation Fund Categories provides a breakdown of the categories and includes examples for reference.

**Table 1. Workforce Training Innovation Fund Categories**

<b>WORKFORCE TRAINING INNOVATION FUND CATEGORIES</b>	
<p><b>Future growth sectors</b></p> <p>Design of skills development approaches for new and emerging industries and key priority growth industries</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design of new programs and training offerings for new and emerging industries, and priority sectors</li> <li>• Course material development for new and emerging industries, and priority sectors</li> <li>• Flexible and responsive training to meet industry needs, i.e., bespoke training delivery and blended learning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>New training programs and methods</b></p> <p>Innovation in course development, product design and delivery in support of training and TAFE system improvement</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New approaches to course development and product design</li> <li>• Extension of existing partnerships/ course delivery practices across the training and TAFE system, including bespoke delivery</li> <li>• Minor capital works and equipment purchases that maximise the utilisation of existing facilities and other physical assets in conjunction with innovation in training delivery.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Workforce training and skills development</b></p> <p>Improving delivery of workplace skills to support business productivity</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of new study modes and delivery options (with a particular focus on new approaches to workplace training)</li> <li>• Use of new technologies to improve workforce skills and/or business productivity</li> <li>• Initiatives that are designed to support innovation in workplace training and skill development including workforce training that leads to productivity increases.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Applied research</b></p> <p>Research solving 'real-world' industry and business productivity challenges, that leads to innovation in training product development, design and delivery</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity that addresses a 'real world' industry or business problem with economic benefits and increased VET provider workforce/student capabilities in new product and technology development</li> <li>• Research that demonstrates a clear, evidence-based alignment with innovation in training and workforce skill development.</li> </ul>

# FUNDING TYPES

## GRANT FUNDING

Grant funds will be made available to projects of varying size, duration and complexity. Refer to Table 2. Eligibility and Applications sections on page 4. Grant proposals for a maximum of \$5 million will be accepted for consideration.

Funds will be available proportional to the scale of the project.

## SEED FUNDING

Seed funding is also available to support development of WTIF grant funding proposals. This funding may be used for activities such as scoping studies, research, consultancy and workshops.

A separate application process applies to requests for seed funding. Seed funding applications for a maximum of \$50 000 will be accepted for consideration. Refer to Application Requirements on page 7. A successful request for seed funding does not guarantee automatic approval of grant funding.

# OUTCOMES

The Department invites applications for projects that will improve productivity and effectiveness for the training and TAFE system and industry, and/ or employment outcomes. Successful applicants are required to outline how they will measure achievement of the expected project outcomes.

WTIF is also intended to strengthen the relevance of training to the needs of industry and business, and to promote improvements in training delivery.

Proposals are to include processes for sharing lessons learnt from the projects and how these are to be communicated back to the training system.

Outcomes for WTIF include:

- the training and TAFE system delivers high-quality skills training that is relevant and responsive to evolving industry needs and business training requirements
- partnerships between training providers and industry or employers are strengthened
- workforces are equipped with the skills needed for identified future growth sectors and new and emerging industries
- industry and/ or business productivity is improved through training and TAFE system involvement in industry-based applied research.

Proposals should demonstrate how they will achieve the outcomes and may include:

- new training approaches
- course and curriculum development
- innovative approaches to skills development to lift productivity, competitive ability and economic growth of project participants
- new training programs and methods, i.e., courses with a clear link to workforce productivity improvements and training to address workforce development needs
- application of new technologies in production and service processes with a clear link to improved sector and/or business productivity
- new learner cohorts entering the training and TAFE system
- apprenticeship and traineeship training models created in new sectors
- research partnerships between industry and training providers that solve 'real-world' industry or business challenges with economic benefits and increased training provider workforce or student capabilities
- identification of potential training system improvements for the training and TAFE system or industry to deliver industry skill needs.

# ELIGIBILITY

Grant funding is only available for partnerships between industry and training providers.

Table 2. Grant Funding Eligibility Criteria provides a breakdown of applicant eligibility requirements.

**Table 2. Grant Funding Eligibility Criteria**

APPLICANT TYPE	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
<b>Training Provider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victorian TAFE institution or dual sector, Learn Local organisation registered with the Adult, Community and Further Education Board, or a training provider that delivers in Victoria</li> <li>Demonstrable track record in working with industry or clear evidence of industry partnership and collaboration</li> <li>Clear commitment to innovation in training either in existing practice or as part of future strategic directions.</li> </ul>
<b>Industry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry Associations or Peak Bodies with significant Victorian business representation</li> <li>Individual businesses with a large employee base in Victoria that:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have an Australian Business Number (ABN)</li> <li>are registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST)</li> <li>have operated in Victoria and are able to demonstrate ongoing trading in Victoria in at least three consecutive years</li> </ul> </li> <li>Partners with a training provider</li> <li>Priority will be given to businesses in new and emerging industries, and Victorian priority sectors. Refer to Eligible Activities on page 5 and Assessment Criteria on page 6.</li> </ul>
<b>Other (Consortia)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A training provider and industry partnership plus other organisations with relevant expertise, capability and participation in workforce and skill development. For example: State Government, Local Government, regional bodies, dual sector universities, research centres, community organisations or not-for-profit organisations.</li> </ul>

To be eligible for facilitation support and seed funding a partnership does not have to be established at the point of application.

A partnership needs to be established before a grant funding proposal can be submitted.

# FACILITATION

The Department will support training providers, industry and relevant stakeholders to engage with WTIF.

Available support includes:

- information sessions
- consultation with industry groups on training needs, possible projects and partnerships

- activities to connect appropriate partners and establish collaborative relationships in support of grant funding proposals
- seed funding of up to \$50 000 to support development of grant funding proposals. For example: scoping studies, research, consultancy and workshops. This excludes proposal writing services.

# GRANT FUNDING

## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Grant funding will be provided to support partnership projects that align with one or more of the fund categories outlined in Table 1. Workforce Training Innovation Fund Categories on page 2.

Proposals can be linked to accredited or pre-accredited and non-accredited training. A link to future accreditation, embedding industry practice or training system alignment, is required for pre-accredited and non-accredited training. The training delivery portion will be funded through the *Skills First* Contestable Training Market.

The Department will consider proposals that seek *Skills First* eligibility exemptions individually.

There is no minimum length of period for funded projects, the maximum project length is 24 months unless otherwise negotiated.

Successful grant funding projects **must be implemented** as outlined in approved project plans and funding agreements.

Priority will be given to new and emerging, and key priority growth industries; including priority sectors as identified by government. This will be achieved through leveraging Victorian Government investment in TAFEs, implementing industry-led initiatives, and supporting workforce development activities.

Current priority sectors include:

- Food and Fibre
- Defence Technology
- Construction Technology
- Transport Technology
- International Education
- Professional Services
- New Energy Technology
- Medical and Pharmaceuticals
- Retail
- Tourism
- ICT
- Logistics

Priority areas may be updated to reflect changing demands resulting from social, economic or broad state-level developments.

## INELIGIBLE ACTIVITES

Funding will not be provided to:

- new asset projects
- redevelopments or refurbishments
- projects that require ongoing funding from WTIF.



# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Department will negotiate a funding agreement with successful grant applicants following an assessment of the proposals against the criteria.

Table 3: Grant Funding Assessment Criteria provides a guide of minimum information that must be included in the proposal.

**Table 3. Grant Funding Assessment Criteria**

CRITERIA	INFORMATION TO INCLUDE
<b>Industry partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• detailed information about the partnership, e.g. formal relationship protocols, governance arrangements, previous joint activities and outcomes, if applicable</li> <li>• applications involving industry associations should include evidence of business participation in the project</li> <li>• for training providers, their track-record of quality training delivery and the strength of relationships with industry and/ or enterprise</li> <li>• business in new and emerging industries, and Victorian priority growth industries. Refer to priority sectors on page 5.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic and/or social Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details on how the project will lead to increased employment and/ or productivity outcomes</li> <li>• new service offerings with economic and/ or social benefits</li> <li>• the framework that will be implemented to measure the economic and/ or social impact.</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear articulation of business need and/ or opportunity for innovation; nature and scale</li> <li>• how the proposal deals with the identified problem and/ or opportunity</li> <li>• how the desired outcomes will drive innovation in workforce training and skill development and/or innovation in the training and TAFE system, e.g. a capacity for sector wide benefits</li> <li>• how the proposal will manage the inherent risk of failure associated with innovation discovery</li> <li>• how insights and lessons learnt will be communicated to the training system to improve knowledge and understanding of best practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Student/ Learner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the project will lead to skill development and improved employment opportunities of the related workforce and individual learners</li> <li>• how the project will improve student retention and completion outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>Value for money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• detailed explanation with evidence of why the proposal is good value for money</li> <li>• other funds that are being sought and how they will be used</li> <li>• total budget breakdown; including any partnership or consortium member contributions, grant funding sought, and anticipated or secured grants from other funding sources.</li> </ul>
<b>Capability and capacity to manage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear explanation of how the proposal will be managed, e.g. detailed project management strategy, details of governance structures and deliverables</li> <li>• where applicable, evidence of prior experience completing proposals of similar size and/ or complexity</li> <li>• ability to deliver evaluation of the project in line with the WTIF Performance and Evaluation Framework</li> <li>• plans for capability building, e.g. case studies or lessons learnt.</li> </ul>

## PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT

Proposals for grant funding will be assessed against the eligibility and assessment criteria by a Departmental review panel. Following evaluation, successful applicants will be recommended based on the assessed score as well as the overall mix of projects to be funded. This will take into account geographic spread, mix of project types and sizes, and sectors covered.

In considering proposals that meet eligibility and assessment criteria, the Department reserves the right to enter into further discussions regarding the timing and implementation of projects.

A guide on the grant funding assessment process will be released in January 2017, visit [www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au](http://www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au)

## CONSIDERATIONS

The level of information and evidence required for each assessment criterion is proportionate to the size of the grant requested. For example, proposals seeking a larger value grant will be expected to provide fully developed proposals.

Within assessment of proposals, there will be a preference to proposals that include a financial or in-kind contribution and a strategy for ongoing activity post grant funding.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Grant funding recipients will be required to report against agreed output and outcomes indicators and measures outlined in the grant agreements.

The Workforce Training Innovation Fund Performance and Evaluation Framework will provide guidance on the process and outcomes. The framework will be released in January 2017, visit [www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au](http://www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au)

Where appropriate, existing reporting mechanisms will be used to monitor progress of projects.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

### GRANT FUNDING

Proposals must:

- use the WTIF Grant Funding Proposal Form [www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au](http://www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au)
- include evidence supporting the need for the activity, and expected outcomes
- be consistent with WTIF Guidelines
- clearly and explicitly address the Grant Funding Assessment Criteria on page 6
- include a detailed budget consistent with proposed activity.

Proposals must be endorsed by an Authorised Officer of each member in the partnership or Consortia.

Engagement with any Departmental representative will not constitute endorsement of any proposal for grant funding.

Grant funding proposals must be submitted to [wtif@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:wtif@edumail.vic.gov.au)

All proposals received within the open application period will be acknowledged within 3-5 business days.

### SEED FUNDING

Applications must:

- use the WTIF Seed Funding Application Form, visit [www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au](http://www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au)
- include information about the proposed project intent and potential partnerships
- be consistent with WTIF Guidelines
- include a detailed budget consistent with proposed activity.

Seed funding applications will be assessed by the Department as they are received. Within assessment of seed funding applications, there will be a preference to applications that include a financial or in-kind contribution.

A successful application for seed funding does not constitute automatic approval of grant funding.

Seed funding applications must be submitted to [wtif@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:wtif@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Seed funding applications will be acknowledged within 3-5 business days.

# KEY DATES

DATE	ACTION
January 2017	Release of the Guidelines
January 2017	Open for seed funding applications; after the release of the Guidelines
January 2017	Open for grant funding proposals
30 April 2017	Begin grant agreements negotiations
May 2017	Commence funding distribution

*Dates are subject to change.*

*The Department reserves the right to invite applications at any time.*

## FURTHER INFORMATION

*The Workforce Training and Innovation Fund Key Terms and Definitions* should be read in conjunction with these guidelines.

For a copy of the Key Terms and Definitions, Frequently Asked Questions and summary factsheet, visit [www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au](http://www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au)

For general queries, information on facilitation support or to register for email notifications and updates email [wtif@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:wtif@edumail.vic.gov.au)

For more information, visit [www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au](http://www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au)



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