

Secondary Teaching Scholarships Guidelines part 1 – Study Component

Supporting Victorians to study secondary teaching degrees

March 2024

These guidelines are intended to support applicants for the Victorian Government's Secondary Teaching Scholarships. The guidelines outline how the scholarships work, eligibility criteria, the application and payment process, terms and conditions, and a privacy statement.

1. About STS

1.1. Background & Funding Purpose

The Victorian Government's Secondary Teaching Scholarships (STS) are available to students residing in Victoria or designated border communities who are enrolling for the first time in secondary school teaching degrees in 2024 and 2025 (including Bachelor (P-12) and Primary-Secondary degrees). Further payments will be available to students who then work in Victorian government secondary or specialist school settings within 15 months of completing the requirements of their teaching degree.

STS are designed to assist with supporting secondary teaching degree students with the costs of studying and living. Lost income during professional placements and the cost of completing study can be barriers to prospective students choosing to undertake and completing a secondary teaching degree.

1.2. How STS Works

STS is open to individuals residing in Victoria or designated border communities, enrolling for the first time in a secondary¹ school initial teacher education (ITE) degree in 2024 or 2025² that is accredited by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), or an equivalent Australian state or territory regulatory authority and recognised by the VIT.

VIT-accredited ITE degrees are listed at: <https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/providers/new-teacher-ed>. This webpage also contains a link to the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership's (AITSL's) list of degrees accredited by regulatory authorities in other Australian jurisdictions.

¹ Including dual qualification (primary-secondary) and Bachelor of Education (P-12) degrees

² The date of an ITE degree's commencement is determined by the degree's census date. This date in the applicant's year of enrolment must be between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025 for the applicant to be eligible.

Applicants must also meet designated citizenship criteria and confirm that their place of primary residence is in Victoria or in a designated border community during completion of their eligible ITE degrees (see full eligibility criteria in **Section 2**).

Individuals apply for STS via an online program portal administered by the Department of Government Services (DGS). Once an applicant is assessed as eligible and has agreed to STS terms and conditions, DGS will transfer the relevant STS payment to the applicant (see **Section 4 – Available funding and payment schedule** below).

STS recipients who, within 15 months of completing their qualification, seek and retain employment as a teacher³ in a Victorian government secondary or specialist school setting⁴ for 2 years, will receive further payments. More detailed information about the eligibility criteria and application and payment processes for the STS employment component will be provided in Part 2 of the STS guidelines, to be issued in the second half of 2024.

The total potential STS payments from study and employment periods combined are based on the standard student contribution for a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) in an undergraduate or postgraduate secondary ITE degree, as at the date of the scholarship program's announcement.⁵

Eligible undergraduate students who complete an eligible secondary school teaching degree will receive approximately \$9,600 across their 4-year full-time equivalent (FTE) ITE degree and approximately \$8,400 during their first 2 years of teaching in a government secondary or specialist school setting, for a total of approximately \$18,000.⁶

Eligible postgraduate students who complete an eligible secondary school teaching degree will receive approximately \$5,700 across their 2-year (FTE) ITE degree and approximately \$3,300 during their first 2 years of teaching in a government secondary or specialist school setting for a total of approximately \$9,000.⁷

Students who have not been granted a CSP and who meet the STS eligibility criteria receive the same STS amounts as students with a CSP.

STS payments are designed to support secondary ITE students with costs of studying and living. This may include repayment of HELP/HECS loans taken to meet student fee obligations. As STS payments are phased across study and employment periods, STS recipients need to meet upfront student fees required by their ITE provider.

³ A teacher for the purposes of STS is defined as a Department of Education teacher class employee who holds Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) teacher registration and is employed at a minimum of 0.5 FTE.

⁴ The term 'setting' is used to include employment in the secondary section of P-9, P-10 or P-12 schools.

⁵ Note: Maximum student contributions for CSPs are determined by the Commonwealth Government.

⁶ These figures represent payments in 2024. STS payments will be indexed at the standard Victorian Government rate of 2.5% per annum.

⁷ These figures represent payments in 2024. STS payments will be indexed at the standard Victorian Government rate of 2.5% per annum.

2. Eligibility

2.1 To be eligible for STS, an applicant must be:

2.1.1 a Victorian or designated border community resident domestic student.

For the purposes of the STS, this is defined as:

- an Australian citizen
- an Australian permanent resident
- a New Zealand citizen living in Victoria, or
- an Australian permanent humanitarian visa holder,

and

- someone whose place of primary residence is in Victoria or a designated border community during completion of their eligible ITE degree (see **Appendix 1** for a list of approved border communities);

2.1.2 enrolled in a secondary or dual qualification (primary-secondary) school ITE degree accredited by the VIT, or an equivalent regulatory State or Territory authority and recognised by the VIT, with a first census date between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025;⁸

2.1.3 commencing their first year of study of an eligible ITE degree in the 2024 or 2025 cohort, and have commenced their degree at the time of application; and

2.1.4 undertaking the eligible ITE degree at a minimum of 50% study load (equivalent full time study load – EFTSL) at the time of assessment

2.2 Further eligibility considerations

2.2.1 Eligible types of ITE degrees to receive STS payments include VIT or equivalent accredited 4-year (FTE) undergraduate and 2-year (FTE) postgraduate degrees that are:

- secondary school ITE degrees
- dual qualification (primary-secondary school) ITE degrees
- Bachelor of Education (P-12) degrees
- accelerated secondary school ITE degrees
- employment-based secondary school ITE degrees, including [Teach Today and Teach Tomorrow](#) programs (see details in Definitions section, Appendix 2).

2.2.2 Students of non-Victorian degrees may be required to provide further evidence to confirm their degree enrolment, and Victorian or designated border community residency status. If further evidence is required, the Department of Education will contact students about their application.

⁸ Victorian residents who enrol in a secondary or primary-secondary school ITE degree at a non-Victorian ITE provider, and meet all other eligibility criteria, may apply for STS. Eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Department of Education.

- 2.2.3** Students who change ITE providers will remain eligible for the study component of STS funding, providing they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.
- 2.2.4** Students who change to a different secondary ITE degree with the same ITE provider will continue to receive their scheduled STS payments, providing they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.
- 2.2.5** Previous partial or completed study of other degrees (i.e. programs that are not accredited secondary ITE degrees) do not affect an applicant's eligibility for STS.
- 2.2.6** To be eligible for the employment component of funding, STS recipients must:
- commence employment in a Victorian government secondary or specialist school setting within 15 months of completing their ITE qualification and prior to June 2029; and
 - be employed in a Victorian government secondary or specialist school setting at a minimum of 0.5 FTE.

3. Ineligible applicants

3.1 Individuals with the following profiles are not eligible for STS:

- 3.1.1** Students whose place of primary residence is not in Victoria or a designated border community during their study period.
- 3.1.2** Students enrolled as international students.
- 3.1.4** Students who enrol in an accredited secondary ITE degree with a first census date before 1 January 2024 or after 31 December 2025.
- 3.1.5** Students who are enrolled in degrees that are not accredited by the VIT, or by an equivalent Australian regulator and recognised by the VIT.
- 3.1.6** Students enrolled in a VIT-accredited primary or dual (early childhood-primary) qualification ITE degree.

Note: recipients of the STS study component who do not enter employment in a Victorian government secondary or specialist school setting within 15 months of completing their secondary ITE degree will not be eligible to receive the employment component of STS.

4. Available funding and payment schedule

4.1 Available STS payments

The maximum STS payments (including study and employment components) for eligible undergraduate and postgraduate recipients are set out below. Please note that the dollar figures stated in Section 4 represent amounts in 2024 only. STS payments in future years will be indexed at 2.5% per annum.

Undergraduate STS recipients:

| Funding component | Duration | Amount* | Total* |
|--|----------|---------|----------|
| Study – Undergraduate VIT- (or equivalent) accredited secondary ITE degree | 4 years | \$9,600 | \$18,000 |
| Employment – Employment within a Victorian government secondary or specialist school setting | 2 years | \$8,400 | |

Postgraduate STS recipients:

| Funding component | Duration | Amount* | Total* |
|--|----------|---------|---------|
| Study – Postgraduate VIT- (or equivalent) accredited secondary ITE degree | 2 years | \$5,700 | \$9,000 |
| Employment – Employment within a Victorian government secondary or specialist school setting | 2 years | \$3,300 | |

**noting that these figures are rounded and may vary following indexation.*

4.2 Applicant outcome and Payment – study component

Undergraduate STS recipients

4.2.1 STS recipients commencing a VIT-accredited undergraduate secondary ITE degree in 2024 or 2025 may receive payments at 2 points in the calendar years of 2024 and 2025 once their eligibility is verified.

Postgraduate STS recipients

4.2.2 STS recipients commencing a VIT-accredited postgraduate secondary ITE degree in 2024 or 2025 may receive payments at 2 points in the calendar years of 2024 and 2025 once their eligibility is verified.

Applicants with a census date between 1 September to 31 December in 2024 and 2025

4.2.3 Applicants with a degree census date within this period will be assessed and receive their payment following the assessment period in the following year.

All STS recipients

4.2.4 From 2026, STS recipients will receive a once yearly payment mid-year until their maximum eligible amount is reached.

Application, assessment and outcome periods will be published on the [STS website](#) prior to each round.

STS payments conclude in June 2029.

Processing times

4.2.5 The department will endeavour to notify all applicants of the outcome of their completed applications and facilitate payments in accordance with the above timelines.

There may be longer processing and assessment times and delays in notification of the outcome for applicants if:

- the applicant is not undertaking a degree with a Victorian provider
- further information is required to verify or validate the application
- the applicant does not initially provide sufficient information for the department to establish that the applicant satisfies the eligibility criteria
- the application is incomplete or contains incorrect information
- there is difficulty in reaching the applicant or the applicant does not respond in a timely manner.

Variations to the payment schedule

4.3 Accelerated postgraduate secondary ITE degrees:

For their third payment, eligible students of accelerated postgraduate secondary ITE degrees will receive both of their final 2 STS study component payments at the same time. For example, an eligible student commencing an accelerated postgraduate secondary ITE degree in February 2024 would receive payments in each of July and December 2024, and a single payment of the full second year amount in July 2025.⁹

4.4 Recognition of prior learning (RPL):

STS recipients granted RPL for one or two semesters of their secondary ITE degree will not receive retrospective payments for study completed prior to entering their accredited secondary ITE degree, including the study that led to their grant of RPL. Once an STS recipient commences an accredited secondary ITE degree, they will receive the standard STS payments for the duration of their secondary ITE FTE study period. For example, this means that an undergraduate STS recipient granted RPL for one semester will be eligible to receive up to a total STS study component of approximately \$8,400 paid across 3.5 years, and an undergraduate STS recipient granted RPL for two semesters will be eligible to receive up to a total STS study component of approximately \$7,200 paid across 3 years.¹⁰

4.5 Part-time study:

Undergraduate STS recipients who study their secondary ITE degree part-time (at a minimum of 50% study load at the time of assessment) will receive payments on the same schedule as full-time students, for the first 4 years of their study period.

⁹ noting that these figures are rounded and may vary following indexation.

¹⁰ noting that these figures are rounded and may vary following indexation.

4.6 Leave of Absence (LOA):

STS recipients may take LOA of up to 12 months where their ITE provider grants the LOA for compassionate reasons. STS payments are paused during the LOA period. Once the STS recipient resumes their secondary ITE degree, their STS payments will continue until they have received their maximum eligible payments or until June 2029, whichever occurs earlier.

5. STS dates

| Activities | Details | Key Dates |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| EOI | Expression of interest (EOI) form opens | 11 December 2023 |
| STS round 1 Semester 1 2024 | <i>New applicants</i> Students commencing eligible ITE degrees with a census date between 1 January 2024 and 31 March 2024 | Applications open <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27 March 2024 Applications close <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 May 2024 Assessment period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May – June 2024 Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2024 |
| STS round 2 Semester 2 2024 | <i>New applicants</i> Students commencing eligible ITE degrees with a census date between 1 April 2024 and 31 August 2024 <i>STS recipients from round 1</i> Successful STS recipients from round 1 will continue to receive payment following verification of their continued ITE degrees enrolment. | Application period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aug – Sep 2024 <p><i>Timetables for application, assessment and outcome periods will be published on the STS website prior to each round</i></p> |
| STS round 3 Semester 1 2025 | <i>New applicants</i> Students commencing eligible ITE degrees with a census date between 1 September 2024 and 31 March 2025 <i>STS recipients from rounds 1 & 2</i> Successful STS recipients from rounds 1 & 2 will receive payment following verification of their continued ITE degree enrolment. There is no need for STS recipients to resubmit their application | Application period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feb – Mar 2025 <p><i>Timetables for application, assessment and outcome periods will be published on the STS website prior to each round</i></p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>STS round 4 Semester 2 2025</p> | <p>New applicants</p> <p>Students commencing eligible ITE degrees with a census date between 1 April 2025 and 31 August 2025</p> <p>STS recipients from rounds 1, 2 & 3</p> <p>Successful STS recipients from rounds 1, 2 & 3 will receive payment following verification of their continued ITE degree enrolment. There is no need for STS recipients to resubmit their application</p> | <p>Application period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug – Sep 2025 <p><i>Timetables for application, assessment and outcome periods will be published on the STS website prior to each round</i></p> |
| <p>STS payments 2026–2029</p> | <p>From 2026 STS recipients assessed as still eligible will continue to receive STS payments with no further application required until the point where they have received their full eligible amount, or until June 2029, whichever is earlier.</p> <p>Note: Applicants whose course census date falls between 1 September and 31 December in 2025 will receive their first payment in 2026.</p> | <p><i>Timetables for application, assessment and outcome periods will be published on the STS website prior to each payment round</i></p> |

Specific dates for future application rounds will be published on the [STS webpage](#) each year. Dates may be subject to change at the discretion of the Department of Education.

6. Conditions for payment

- 6.1** To be eligible for STS payments, an applicant must meet the eligibility criteria set out in Section 2.
- 6.2** To claim each STS payment, STS recipients must maintain their eligibility. STS recipients must, on request, provide updated information to confirm their continuing eligibility for payments. This could include (without limitation) resubmitting proof of enrolment in an eligible ITE degree, proof of current study load at or above the 50% threshold, and/or proof of a Victorian primary residence address.
- 6.3** STS recipients who withdraw from the eligible ITE degree following the census date must notify DGS and cannot claim a payment for that semester.
- 6.4** Applicants are responsible for updating any changes to their registration details (e.g. withdrawal from ITE degree, change of primary address, or update to bank details) as soon as possible. Changes may impact recipient eligibility.
- 6.5** Applicants may only apply for the STS once they have commenced their ITE degree. Applicants who do not apply for STS at the commencement of their degree will be eligible for payment only from the semester of application. Retrospective payments will not be provided.
- 6.6** All STS payments must be claimed by June 2029, when all funding for STS ceases.

7. How to apply

7.1 Applicants must apply for STS payments via the STS portal.

7.2 The link to the STS portal will be provided on the Victorian Government's STS webpage. Applications must be submitted during the STS application rounds (i.e. the dates the STS portal is open) as published in Section 5 of these guidelines.

7.3 Applicants must provide the following information and documentation in support of their application:

- the name of their ITE provider
- the ITE degree course code
- the name of the ITE degree
- their student ID number (from their ITE provider)
- their Unique Student Identifier (USI) number. USI numbers can be found here: <https://www.usi.gov.au/PSTs/find-your-usi>
- their part-time or full-time study status
- their address of primary residence (i.e. where the applicant is living while studying) and contact details
- Australian bank account details for where they would like the funding paid.

7.4 Proof of Identity:

The applicant must be the intended STS recipient and must provide information from one of the following current proof of identity documents on the application form:

- Australian passport, *or*
- foreign passport for those issued with an eligible Australian visa type, *or*
- Medicare card, *or*
- Australian-issued driver licence or learner permit.

7.5 Successful applicants will be notified via email. This email will form an agreement between the STS recipient and the Victorian Government based on the terms contained in these guidelines and the terms and conditions of STS in the application form on delivery of the successful email notification.

8. Terms and conditions

8.1 The applicant will be required to confirm they meet the eligibility criteria at the time of application and must meet the eligibility criteria when DGS or DE assess their application prior to each payment period.

8.2 Applicants will be required to attest that they will exercise their best efforts to meet the requirements to complete their ITE degree.

8.3 Applications and claims will be assessed using the information and evidence the applicant provides. As part of this process, any information the applicant provides to DGS may be shared with and is subject to verification by the applicant's ITE provider, the Australian Government Department of Education and Department of Home Affairs, and Victorian

Government departments including DE and the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR).

- 8.4** The applicant may be requested to provide further information to assist in the assessment of their application or claim. DGS and DE reserve the right to refuse an application or claim where eligibility criteria are not met, or where the applicant does not or cannot provide sufficient information in the required timeframe to assess whether eligibility criteria have been met, or where a claim cannot be supported.
- 8.5** As part of the application process, STS recipients must accept and agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of STS as stated in the application form and these guidelines.
- 8.6** If allocated funding for STS is exhausted before the announced STS end date, DE reserves the right to end STS payments before the end date.
- 8.7** The provision of incorrect bank details means that payment may not be received, and the Victorian Government will be under no obligation to remake any payment.
- 8.8** If an applicant enters into the STS agreement and does not comply with its terms and conditions, the applicant may be required to refund any amount paid to them.
- 8.9** DE reserves the right to reclaim or offset payments to STS recipients who withdraw from their secondary ITE degree or fail to meet other eligibility criteria.
- 8.10** Applications and claims may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives for a period of up to 3 years following completion of STS to determine whether the application and information provided during the term of STS was compliant.
- 8.11** The administering department may, at any time, remove an applicant from the application assessment process or terminate an agreement if, in the department's opinion, association with the applicant may bring the department, a minister or the Victorian Government into disrepute.
- 8.12** Program surveys and evaluation: STS recipients will be requested to participate in the Victorian Government's monitoring and evaluation of STS by completing survey questions, which may be for a period of up to 6 years after applying to STS. This information will be treated in accordance with the privacy statement detailed below.
- 8.13** Declaration of claim: By submitting an application form, an applicant declares that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true, accurate and not misleading about a material fact.
- 8.14** If any information in the application or claims for payment is found to be false, misleading or fraudulent (as determined by DGS or DE in their discretion), the STS will be repayable on demand and the Victorian Government reserves the right to take further action, including referring the applicant to the relevant law enforcement agency. Providing inaccurate, untrue, or misleading information may result in an offence being committed and serious penalties may apply.

9. Privacy statement

- 9.1** Information provided by applicants for STS, which includes personal information, will be collected and used by the Victorian Government. DGS is a program administrator and collects personal information of applicants for the purpose of assessing eligibility and to administer claims and payments.
- 9.2** By applying for STS, applicants consent to the sharing of information as outlined in the Terms and Conditions. DGS or DE may contact an applicant to clarify the submitted information for program review, reporting, monitoring, audit and evaluation purposes, and to communicate information about future Victorian Government funding and job opportunities.
- 9.3** DGS will complete a range of eligibility assessments that may include data matching to clarify the accuracy and quality of information supplied by applicants. The data matching may occur following submission of an application to DGS and may involve personal information provided in an application, an applicant's supporting evidence and any claim or payment forms.
- 9.4** For either verification and/or payment processing purposes, DGS will share applicants' personal information with Victorian Government departments including DE and DJSIR, and the Australian Government departments of Education and Home Affairs.
- 9.5** If there is an intention to include personal information about a third party in the application, the applicant applying must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.
- 9.6** As an administering department, DGS collects demographic information for economic reporting purposes on behalf of the Victorian Government. No personal information is used in outcomes reporting. These reports present data that is de-identified and at aggregate levels only.
- 9.7** Any personal information about the applicant applying or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred and stored in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.
- 9.8** A copy of our privacy statement is located at: www.vic.gov.au/privacy-policy-department-government-services.

For concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, email privacy@dgs.vic.gov.au

10. Other information

- 10.1** It is strongly recommended that individuals considering applying to STS obtain professional advice on any impact the STS payments have on their tax liability or any other benefits paid under an Australian Government scheme, such as Austudy, ABSTUDY, pensions, or aged, disability or carer allowances.

10.2 DE reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application of the eligibility criteria and terms and conditions at any time (subject to appropriate notice being given either by publication on the STS webpage or by email to applicants and recipients).

10.3 If an applicant or recipient considers that their application or claim has been incorrectly assessed or paid, they may lodge a complaint. The complaint must be received within 60 days from the date DE or DGS notifies the applicant of the outcome of their application or claim. If a complaint is not received within 60 days, the decision will be final. Contact DGS at sts@grants.vic.gov.au.

11. Contact

Please contact school.teaching.scholarships@education.vic.gov.au with any STS eligibility queries.

Please contact sts@grants.vic.gov.au with any queries about access to the application platform, application process, verification of identity, status of an application and confirmation of payment.

12. Appendix 1: Designated border communities

| Term | Definition |
|-----------------|---|
| New South Wales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balranald Shire • Bega Valley Shire • Berrigan Shire • City of Albury • City of Broken Hill • City of Wagga Wagga • Edward River Council • Federation Council • Greater Hume Shire • Hay Shire • Lockhart Shire • Murray River Council • Murrumbidgee Council • Snowy Monaro Regional Council • Snowy Valleys Council • Wentworth Shire. |
| South Australia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berri Barmera Council • City of Mount Gambier • District Council of Grant • District Council of Loxton Waikerie • District Council of Robe • Kingston District Council • Naracoorte Lucindale Council • Renmark Paringa Council • Southern Mallee District Council • Tatiara District Council • Wattle Range Council. |

13. Appendix 2: Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|--|---|
| CSP (Commonwealth Supported Place) | A Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) is a place at a university or higher education provider where the Commonwealth Government subsidises a student's tuition fees. This subsidy does not cover the entire cost of study. The remaining portion of the tuition fees which the student is liable for is referred to as the 'student contribution amount'. |
| EFTSL | Equivalent Full-time Student Load (EFTSL) is a measure of the study load based on a student undertaking an ITE degree on a full-time basis over an academic year. To be eligible for STS an applicant must be undertaking an eligible ITE degree at a minimum of 50% study load at the time of assessment, which could be equivalent to 0.25 EFTSL per semester |
| Employment-based secondary teaching programs | A teaching degree involving direct employment in a Victorian government school where an employee salary is received. Victorian secondary ITE degrees known as Teach Today and Teach Tomorrow programs, including Teach For Australia and Latrobe Nexus, are examples of employment-based teaching degrees. |
| ITE degree | An initial teacher education degree accredited by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) as a relevant and sufficient qualification for entry into the teaching profession. |
| ITE provider | A Victorian tertiary education institution that provides a teacher education degree accredited by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) as a relevant and sufficient qualification for entry into the teaching profession. |