

# EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Department of Education (the department) offers scholarships to people pursuing a rewarding career in early childhood education in Victoria.

## About the program

Early Childhood Scholarships are available for people who are commencing study, or are already studying, an approved course to become a registered early childhood teacher. This includes educators who are looking to upskill.

The following scholarships are available under this program (all amounts listed are **before tax**):

- For Bachelor degrees: up to **\$22,000** for current students and up to **\$25,000** for new students
- For Graduate diplomas: up to **\$9,000** for current students and up to **\$12,000** for new students
- For Masters degrees: up to **\$15,000** for current students and up to **\$18,000** for new students

**To note:** new students are people who have not yet commenced any units or subjects in the course for which they are seeking this scholarship.

Students can use these scholarships to cover cost-of-living expenses while studying and working, particularly while on placement. This could include, but is not limited to, contributing to course fees, study materials, or accommodation and living expenses to enable study.

## Eligibility requirements

To apply for a scholarship for any course under this program, applicants must:

- be an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen or the holder of a permanent residency visa
- be a Victorian resident
- have been accepted into an approved course OR be studying an approved course since 1 January 2017 (see [Approved courses](#))
- not be receiving any other scholarship, financial support or grant from the department for the approved course they are accepted into OR are studying
- if the applicant previously withdrew from an approved course supported by the Early Childhood Scholarships Program, Early Childhood Aboriginal Pathways Scholarships Program, Certificate III Upskill Support Program, or a scholarship for [an early childhood innovative initial teacher education course funded by the department](#), have repaid any funds as per the former agreement before applying
- if the applicant received support under the Certificate III Upskill Support Program to complete a CHC50121 – Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, they must have completed all milestones under that program before applying.

**To note:** you can only receive support under the Early Childhood Scholarships Program for **one** tertiary course (Bachelor degree, Diploma, or Masters degree).

## Approved courses

An approved course is understood to be a qualification on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)'s list of [approved early childhood qualifications](#) that allows the holder to teach as an early childhood teacher registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

This does not include courses that lead to dual qualifications in early childhood and school teaching. Qualified early childhood teachers may also be eligible for support to study a postgraduate qualification that extends their skills and knowledge of early childhood education and care.

## Application process

This program is administered by Busy At Work on behalf of the department. Applications for scholarships must be lodged online with Busy At Work at: <https://bawecsip-cp.enquire.cloud/rounds>.

As part of the application process, applicants will need to provide Busy At Work with evidence to show they meet the eligibility requirements listed above.

Applications will be assessed within 10 business days of submission. If further evidence or information is required to support an application, the assessment timeframe may be extended.

## Scholarship Agreements

Successful applicants must accept and sign a Scholarship Agreement to receive the scholarship. The Scholarship Agreement is a legal document that contains the recipients' rights and obligations, **so please read it carefully before signing**.

The scholarship amounts listed in these guidelines are paid in the form of Scholarship Funding Payments.

The Scholarship Agreement includes:

- the milestone conditions (including evidence required) that a recipient must meet to receive each Scholarship Funding Payment
- the repayment requirements for a recipient if they do not meet these milestones.

Scholarship Funding Payments are divided into payments during a recipient's study period and payments during a recipient's employment period. Refer [Appendix 1](#) and the [Milestone Conditions and payments](#) for more information.

## Considerations before applying

- Please consider personal financial circumstances as the scholarship recipient will be responsible for paying all additional costs associated with their approved course, above the amount awarded by the department.
- The scholarship amounts listed in these guidelines are before tax. Please seek independent advice regarding the impact of a scholarship on taxation and Government benefit schemes, including, but not limited to, those administered through Centrelink.
- Scholarship recipients are solely responsible for obtaining employment to meet employment milestones under this program. The department does not guarantee employment in the early childhood sector; however, it does provide further supports to help find work (refer [Further information](#)).

## Milestone conditions and payments

The scholarship amounts listed in these guidelines are paid in the form of Scholarship Funding payments during a recipient's study period and employment period. Payments vary depending on the qualification being studied (refer [Appendix 1](#)).

To receive each payment, a recipient will need to provide Busy At Work with evidence to show they have met the milestone conditions outlined in their Scholarship Agreement.

## **A failure to meet milestone conditions may result in an obligation to repay some or all Scholarship Funding Payments.**

The evidence required to meet milestone conditions in the study period and employment period are different. At a high-level, milestone conditions include:

- for the study period – evidence to show the recipient first enrolled in, and later completed, an approved course at an approved university or training provider
- for the employment period – evidence to show the recipient commenced work within 6 months of completing their approved course, and then continued to be employed, in an approved role at an approved employer.

Recipients can continue to receive Scholarship Funding Payments if they change employment, but they must first notify Busy At Work to confirm their new role and employer is approved. Additionally, approved roles are fixed term or ongoing roles; however, the department will consider requests to receive Scholarship Funding Payments for casual roles, on a case-by-case basis.

The timing of milestone payments can be found at [Appendix 1](#), and detailed information about milestone conditions (including evidence) is provided in the Scholarship Agreement.

## **Compassionate consideration**

Where unforeseen exceptional circumstances have prevented a recipient from meeting their milestone conditions, they may request (via Busy At Work) that the department waive some, or all, of the repayment obligation.

The department will assess such requests on a case-by-case basis and may require evidentiary documentation.

## **Update of guidelines**

These guidelines, including program settings and eligibility, may change. Updated guidelines will be published on the [department's website](#).

## **Further information**

### **About the program**

- Information about the Early Childhood Scholarships Program is available at <https://www.vic.gov.au/financial-support-study-and-work-early-childhood>.
- Applicants and scholarship recipients can contact Busy At Work for more information (including help checking your eligibility) at [EC.Financial.Support@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:EC.Financial.Support@education.vic.gov.au) or 1300 161 396.

### **Department initiatives to support searching for employment**

- Use the Early Childhood Jobs site to find roles in Victorian early childhood services: <https://jobs.earlychildhood.education.vic.gov.au/>
- Get in touch with the panel of specialist recruitment agencies are working with the department to fill new roles across Victoria : <https://www.vic.gov.au/register-recruiter-find-early-childhood-jobs>

## Appendix 1: Milestone Conditions and Scholarship Funding Payments

The table below lists the Scholarship Funding Payments that will be paid after the recipient submits the evidence required to meet milestone conditions.

**Some milestone conditions do not trigger immediate payments, but are needed for future payments.**

The evidence required is detailed in the Scholarship Agreement and is received, and verified, by Busy At Work.

Qualification	During study period		During employment period			Total value (up to)
	Milestone Condition 1 (Signing the Scholarship Agreement)	Milestone Condition 2 (Course completion)	Milestone Condition 3 (Commenced employment)	Milestone Condition 4 (At the start of year 2)	Milestone Condition 5 (At the start of year 3)	
New students						
Bachelor degree	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$0	\$6,250	\$25,000
Graduate diploma	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000	\$12,000
Masters degree	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000	\$18,000
Current students						
Bachelor degree (current students)	\$3,250*	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$0	\$6,250	\$22,000
Graduate diploma (current students)	\$1,000	\$0	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000	\$9,000
Masters Degree (current students)	\$3,000	\$0	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000	\$15,000

\* Bachelor degree students who apply for a scholarship in the final year of their course are not eligible for this payment