

EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Victorian Government is investing \$8 million to deliver an Early Childhood Scholarships Program to attract new early childhood teachers to the field and support existing educators who wish to upskill to a teaching qualification or gain a relevant postgraduate qualification.

The number of jobs in the early childhood education sector are growing, so there has never been a better time to consider a career educating our youngest Victorians.

Early childhood teachers and educators play an important role in the first years of children's lives by laying the foundations for lifelong learning and future success

SUPPORT AVAILABLE THROUGH THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM

There are two program options that individuals may apply for:

- **Early childhood scholarships to become a teacher:** This option is available for eligible individuals wanting to study to become a registered early childhood teacher and work in a Victorian approved centre-based early childhood service.
- **Early childhood Aboriginal pathway scholarships:** This option is available for eligible Aboriginal people wanting to become an early childhood teacher or educator and work in the early childhood sector.

Scholarship recipients who gain employment as an early childhood teacher in a specified regional or rural location in Victoria may also be eligible for an additional payment of up to \$3,750.

Early childhood scholarships to become a teacher

Scholarships awarded under **the early childhood scholarships to become a teacher** program option are available to support approved bachelor or postgraduate qualifications. The qualification studied must allow the recipient to teach as an early childhood teacher registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). Another component of this program is the employment milestone incentive.

Recipients will receive up to:

- \$18,750 towards an approved early childhood bachelor degree and employment incentive.
- \$12,000 towards an approved postgraduate teaching qualification and employment incentive.

Early childhood Aboriginal pathway scholarships

Scholarships awarded under the early childhood Aboriginal pathways scholarships program option are available to support approved qualifications from Certificate III through to postgraduate level qualifications. The qualification studied must allow the recipient to teach either as an early childhood teacher (registered with the VIT) or an early childhood educator.

Recipients will receive up to:

- \$2,500 towards the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care and related employment incentive
- \$5,000 towards the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care and related employment incentive
- \$26,500 towards an approved Early Childhood bachelor degree and related employment incentive
- \$16,000 towards an approved Early Childhood postgraduate qualification and related employment incentive.

Scholarship recipients who gain employment as an early childhood teacher in a specified regional or rural location in Victoria may also be eligible for an additional payment of up to \$3,750.

Funding arrangements

This financial assistance is designed to support the individual needs of scholarship recipients to complete their studies. This includes contributing to course fees, study materials such as textbooks and accommodation and living expenses to enable study.

Funding will be paid in instalments with the payment for each milestone to be made following (and subject to) the satisfaction of milestones as follows:

- **Milestone 1:** proof of confirmed enrolment into the course
- **Milestone 2:** proof of successful course completion and attainment of qualification within the required timeframe
- **Milestone 3:** proof of completing a specified period of employment in the early childhood sector. Employment must meet the requirements detailed in the table below.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications open on **1 October 2018**. Applications are submitted through an online platform accessed on the Department's website and will be assessed within 60 days of submission.

If further information is required, the applicant will be advised accordingly about the timeframe for consideration of their application.

OVERVIEW OF SUPPORT AND CONDITIONS

At a minimum, the scholarship recipient must successfully complete the required study component in a relevant course approved by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. Study can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis, although the study component must be completed within the maximum timeframe specified below.

The amount of financial assistance paid by the Department and the amount of the financial assistance to be repaid by the recipient for failing to complete the course within the required period will be determined by the Department in its sole discretion.

The level of support offered and conditions of the scholarship vary by qualification type are detailed below:

Qualification	Support available	Maximum length of time to complete the qualification
Early childhood scholarships to become a teacher		
Early Childhood Teaching Degree	Up to \$18,750	6 years
Postgraduate qualification	Up to \$12,000	4 years
Early childhood Aboriginal pathway scholarships		
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	Up to \$2,500	2 years
Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care	Up to \$5,000	3 years
Early Childhood Teaching Degree	Up to \$26,500	6 years
Postgraduate qualification	Up to \$16,000	4 years

EMPLOYMENT MILESTONE

After successful completion of the approved course, scholarship recipients may be eligible for an additional incentive payment upon completing a minimum continuous period of employment in the Victorian early childhood sector in an approved role.

Continuous employment here means meeting the employment requirements for the required timeframe. A scholarship recipient may work at multiple approved services which meet the Department's criteria for Milestone 3 during the required period.

Applicants are solely responsible for arranging their own employment and the Department does not guarantee that scholarship recipients will obtain employment in the early childhood sector.

Details of the employment requirements are below:

Qualification type	Period of continuous employment to receive employment incentive	Required setting	Required role
Early childhood teaching degree or postgraduate qualification	Payment made after 12 months of continuous employment. May be paid annually for up to three years	Victorian centre-based early childhood service(s)*	Early childhood teacher or equivalent

Certificate III or Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care	Once-off payment made after 12 months of continuous employment.	Victorian early childhood setting(s)+	Early childhood Educator or equivalent role
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*Victorian approved centre-based early childhood service refers to kindergartens and long day care services delivering a kindergarten program. This excludes family day care and outside school hours care services.
+This excludes outside school hours care services.

EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVE FOR TEACHING IN REGIONAL OR RURAL LOCATIONS

Scholarship recipients who gain employment as an early childhood teacher may be eligible for an additional employment incentive of \$3,750. This employment incentive is paid after 12 months of continuous employment has been undertaken in an approved regional or rural location.

An 'approved regional or rural location' refers to locations that the Department has identified as needing further support to assist kindergarten programs in securing high-quality teachers. The Department has a list of relevant postcodes that are updated at least every six months. The list will be available to Scholarship recipients as they approach graduation and recipients are encouraged to consider these locations when applying for employment opportunities.

CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE APPLYING

Eligibility

Applicants may be school leavers, career changers, bilingual speakers and those already working in early childhood who meet the eligibility criteria. Applicants do not have to already be working in the early childhood sector to apply.

Those who have commenced an equivalent early childhood qualification prior to 1 October 2018 are not eligible to apply.

To apply for a scholarship, you must:

- be an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen or the holder of a permanent visa and meet the relevant citizenship and residency requirements
- for all applicants studying a bachelor degree or postgraduate qualification, have been accepted into a course leading to an approved early childhood teaching qualification
- for Aboriginal applicants studying either the Certificate III in ECEC or Diploma of ECEC, have been accepted into a Victorian TAFE or other compliant registered training organisation
- be enrolled in each unit for the first semester (at a minimum) at your registered training organisation or tertiary institution by the relevant census date, unless otherwise agreed by the Department
- not be receiving any other scholarship or grant in relation to the course you intend to study.

Eligible courses

For a full list of approved early childhood education qualifications from Certificate III through to postgraduate qualifications, see: [Approved early childhood qualifications](#)

Those studying to become an educator through the Early childhood Aboriginal pathways component must enrol in CHC30113 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care or CHC50113 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (or the relevant qualifications that supersede these). These applicants are encouraged to consider studying at their local TAFE or alternative compliant registered training organisation approved by the Department.

Program requirements

Applicants who are offered a scholarship will be required to accept and sign a Scholarship Agreement with the Department which sets out the terms on which the Department is willing to make the Scholarship available to the applicant. The Scholarship Agreement must be signed and the relevant milestone completed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Department before any funding can be paid to the scholarship recipient.

The Scholarship Agreement will detail the successful applicant's and Department's responsibilities in connection with the scholarship including further detail on the payment structure and the outcomes that must be achieved.

Applicants will be required to notify the Department in the event of a proposed or actual change to their study or employment arrangements.

Repayment of scholarship funding

Recipients that do not complete their qualification within the required timeframe or otherwise breach their obligations in the Scholarship agreement may be required to repay to the Department part of, or the full amount of, the scholarship funding received.

The scholarship recipient will be responsible for paying all costs associated with the course in excess of the amount of the scholarship amount awarded to the recipient by the Department.

Before applying for a scholarship, applicants should consider their personal financial circumstances and ensure that undertaking the required study will be financially feasible having regard to the relevant applicant's financial circumstances.

Tax implications

The receipt of funding may have taxation implications and implications in respect of other Government benefit schemes. This includes, but is not limited to, those administered through Centrelink. Applicants are advised to seek their own independent taxation advice and liaise with relevant organisations to find out about these implications before applying for the Scholarship program.

Compassionate grounds

Where unforeseen exceptional circumstances have prevented the Recipient from completing the Course in the required timeframe, the Department may have regard to such exceptional circumstances in determining whether to waive some or all of the Recipient's repayment obligation. Compassionate or compelling circumstances will be assessed by the Department on a case by case basis and evidentiary documentation may be required to support a Recipient's request for a waiver of the Recipient's repayment obligation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about the Early Childhood Scholarships Program and to apply, please visit www.education.vic.gov.au and search for **early childhood scholarships**. For further information, applicants can also email early.years.workforce@edumail.vic.gov.au or call 1300 651 662.