

# Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties) Program

Application Guidelines

Round 5 – Course commencing Semester 2, 2026



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# 1. Introduction

Inclusive education ensures students with disability and additional learning needs achieve their full potential, at school and in life. Research shows that strong inclusive education practices benefit all students, academically and socially, and can be transformative for many.

The **Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties) Program** (the program) represents a significant investment in individuals, schools, and the Victorian education system. Its objective is to deepen the disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers and regional , equipping them with the expertise and confidence to effectively support students with learning difficulties, including dyslexia and dyscalculia.

The program covers tuition fees for eligible teachers and regional workforces to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties) offered by the University of Melbourne (the university).

These guidelines are for **Round 5** of the program, which begins in Semester 2, 2026.

To be eligible, applicants must currently be teaching in a Victorian government school or working in a regional role supporting students with learning difficulties or providing intervention and support to schools (see Eligibility on page 12 for more information).

Applicants from diverse backgrounds, orientations, and abilities are warmly encouraged to apply.

## Important

In return for the benefit of receiving sponsorship for postgraduate study, you must continue your employment at the Department of Education (the department) for 2 years after completion of the course and actively work in an eligible role (see Eligibility on page 12).

**In the event you become ineligible or breach your sponsorship obligations, you will be required to repay the course fees (or part thereof) immediately to the department** (see the Debt Recovery policy on page 18).

## Background

In 2020-21, \$1.6 billion was invested in [Disability Inclusion](#) (DI) reforms to ensure every student receives the support they need to learn and thrive.

To foster a culture of continuous learning for teachers and regional workforces, the DI Initiative is committed to providing ongoing, sustainable professional learning. This is achieved through a combination of theory, modelling, practice, and coaching, which significantly improves the transfer of new knowledge into classroom practice.

As part of this reform, the **Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties)** was established to strengthen educators' ability to support students with learning difficulties, and to embed inclusive practices across the system.

By participating in targeted postgraduate study, you can strengthen your skills and capabilities to better meet the educational needs and aspirations of students with disability and additional learning needs, while also enhancing how the education system supports every student to reach their full potential.

Furthermore, the DI reforms increase schools' access to specialist expertise, coaching, professional development, evidence-based guidance and resources, alongside creating additional scholarships for teachers and regional workforces.

Recipients and school leaders should be ready to collaborate with peers, critically examine current practices, and embrace contemporary, evidence-based approaches to inclusive teaching and learning.

## Inclusive Education Scholarships Unit

The program is administered by the Inclusive Education Scholarships Unit (the IESU) in the department. The IESU is located in the Inclusive Education Division, School Education Programs and Support, which coordinates the reforms sitting under the DI umbrella.

The IESU manages the start to end process of annual application rounds, and provides support to recipients during their study journey, including post completion. The IESU is required to report regularly on the program (which includes recipients) to ensure objectives of the program are being met for system wide impact.

### Definitions

- 'Applicant' – a teacher or a regional workforce employee who is applying for a place in the program
- 'Recipient/you' – a teacher or regional workforce employee whose application has been successful
- 'Placement' – your confirmed place in the program
- 'Course' – the Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties).

## Meeting Victoria's needs

The program complements a suite of Disability Inclusion (DI) reform initiatives - including the Diverse Learners Hub, Inclusion Outreach Coaching, Inclusive Education Professional Learning, and the [Master of Inclusive Education](#) program. Together, these initiatives drive systemic pedagogical and cultural transformation across Victorian government schools. As such, recipients and school leaders are encouraged to collaborate actively with peers, critically reflect on current practices, and embrace contemporary, evidence-based approaches to inclusive teaching and learning.

Aligned with the key components of the [Framework for Improving Student Outcomes 2.0](#) (FISO 2.0) and the [Victorian Teaching and Learning Model 2.0](#) (VTLM 2.0), the program ensures that classroom practice and school-wide vision and strategy work in harmony. This alignment supports education workforces to develop and embed strong, evidence-based inclusive practices, improving learning outcomes for all students - particularly those with learning difficulties.



Furthermore, the program directly contributes to the [Education State](#) targets by fostering professional leadership, promoting excellence in teaching and learning, nurturing positive learning environments, and breaking the link between disadvantage and student outcomes.

## 2. Course and tuition fees

The department has made a **significant financial investment** in capability-building for schools and regional workforces to build the skills and knowledge of inclusive education to better support the needs of all students. **Financial obligations for successful applicants are clearly outlined** on the program webpage, in the guidelines and the application form.

If you are **unable to meet the program employment and financial obligations, you will be required to repay to the department the course fees** associated with the course/subjects undertaken, regardless of whether you pass or fail. Please refer to the **Debt Recovery policy** on page 14 for more details.

Table 1 below provides **the cost of the course** - please review this financial information carefully, as you will be responsible for repayment if you do not adhere to the program obligations

**Table 1: Course cost**

University	Course	Delivery mode	Indicative Course Cost
<b>University of Melbourne</b>	<a href="#">Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties)</a> 50 credit points 4 subjects Course code: GC-EDLD	Online 75% attendance hurdle requirement	\$16,865.00  Per subject: \$4,216.00

### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

If you are successful in receiving a scholarship through the program, the department strongly encourages you to ascertain whether you can receive academic credit or RPL.

Receiving RPL will reduce the number of subjects required to complete and could assist you if the Debt Recovery policy is initiated at some point during your study.

### Entry requirements

See below for specific entry requirements.

**Table 2: Entry Requirements**

University	Entry requirements
<b>University of Melbourne</b>	Entry requirements for the course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a 4-year education degree, or equivalent,</li> </ul>

- a 3-year undergraduate qualification and a fourth-year level education qualification.

## Course structure

The course is delivered online by the university's Faculty of Education. The department and the university have co-designed the course to address the Victorian educational context, and literacy and numeracy strategy.

The course will develop your understanding of learning difficulties and of interactions between different types of learning difficulties, including dyslexia and dyscalculia. Relevant for those in school-based and regional roles, the course combines existing and new resources to enhance how Victorian educators support excellence and equity in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students.

The program has been explicitly designed to align with the Victorian educational context and integrates the following key departmental frameworks, models and teaching practice principles:

- [School-wide Positive Behaviour Support Framework](#) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- the department's [information guides and resources about learning difficulties](#)
- the department's teaching material and methods (including the [Literacy Teaching Toolkit](#) and [Mathematics Teaching Toolkit](#))
- [the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).

The course is a 50-credit-point postgraduate online course comprising 4 compulsory subjects.<sup>1</sup> Studying on a part-time basis, you will be able to complete the award (the graduate certificate) in 12 or 24 months. (Table 1 lists the 4 subjects and their sequence.)

**Table 3: Subjects**

Subject code	Subject name	Semester offered	Credit points
EDUC91191	<a href="#">Learning Foundations</a>	Semester 2	12.5
EDUC90195	<a href="#">Learning Difficulties in Literacy</a>	Semester 1	12.5
EDUC90194	<a href="#">Learning Difficulties in Numeracy</a>	Semester 2	12.5
EDUC91192 (Capstone subject)	<a href="#">Guiding Change for Inclusive Practice</a>	Semester 1	12.5

### Important

This course has **no** practicum/placement requirements, so no casual relief teacher (CRT) replacement is necessary to cover recipients for this purpose.

<sup>1</sup> Details are indicative and may be subject to change.

## Study workload

The course is offered on a part-time basis only, as it is designed for recipients who are also working. The university's [Courses, Subjects, Awards and Programs Policy](#) (Items 4.164-4.166) estimates that a 12.5-point subject in a 12-week standard semester is generally 170 hours, which requires a commitment of **approximately 14 hours per week over the semester**.

This calculation includes your online contact hours (teaching days) and self-directed study in the form of reading, workshop and class preparation, private study, and completing assessment tasks. You may also be required to complete preparatory reading and other tasks before a subject formally starts. Visit the university's [course page](#) for more information.

It is important to understand the expected weekly study hours and how this may affect your work and personal commitments. **The department does not encourage students to enrol in more than one subject per semester.** Recipients are expected to complete the **minimum study load of one subject per semester**.

This approach helps maintain a healthy balance between study, work, and personal commitments. **If you wish to enrol in more than one subject in a semester, you must contact the IESU to discuss and confirm whether an increased study load is feasible.**

The department provides up to **2 years to complete your course**. Successful Round 5 applicants are required to complete their course by **30 June 2028**.

Each subject has 4 synchronous online teaching days throughout the semester, scheduled on weekends (either Saturday or Sunday) from 9:00 am-4:00 pm. You will be asked to complete self-directed online tasks and readings before and after the teaching day.

As the course is run online, the teaching days are designed specifically to provide opportunities for you to actively interact with your peers and apply your learning and insights from the readings and online tasks leading up to each teaching day.

### Attendance hurdle requirement for online teaching days

You should be aware that each subject in the course has a **75% attendance** [hurdle requirement](#) set by the university.

You are expected to plan ahead in order to attend **all** teaching days – please obtain the dates for the teaching days from the timetable when enrolling to ensure you can attend. Where an absence is unavoidable, you should discuss this in advance with the relevant subject coordinators. Contact details will be available in the Canvas LMS subject site.

### Authentic assessment

In keeping with its theory-to-practice approach, the course's assessment supports you to demonstrate your learning through authentic tasks that draw on your individual teaching and learning context and problems of practice.

Supplementary office hours are offered in the evening across the semester, and you are encouraged to take up these additional opportunities to engage with teaching teams about subject content and preparing your assessment tasks.



### Supporting your transition to postgraduate study

As part of its pre-semester orientation, the university runs a compulsory online induction session each July to facilitate new scholarship recipients make a successful transition to postgraduate study.

The session will provide you with detailed information about accessing academic skills, library and study support, and connects you with staff from [student support](#) and [academic skills](#) units. It is also an opportunity for you to meet the academic teams who teach the course.

To help you get off to a strong start, the IESU hosts an annual induction session for all provisionally accepted recipients. This session outlines your obligations as a recipient of an inclusive education scholarship through the department and introduces practical strategies to support a smooth transition into postgraduate study.

You'll also have the opportunity to connect with peers and ask questions before your course begins.

The induction session date will be included in your Letter of Provisional Acceptance, issued in April 2026.

### Pathway into the Master of Learning Intervention course (Stream A)

The course has been designed to articulate with university's [Master of Learning Intervention \(Stream A\)](#), a special education degree endorsed by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) and offered through the Master of Inclusive Education Program.

After completing the graduate certificate award, you will be eligible for 50 credit points of advanced standing towards the Learning Difficulties specialisation (Stream A non-research pathway) in the Master of Learning Intervention (MLI) course. On receiving this recognition of prior learning, you will need to complete another 50 credit points to be awarded the MLI degree.

The department will continue to fund placements in the Master of Inclusive Education program for recipients who have completed the graduate certificate award and wish to apply for an additional MLI scholarship.

You can decide whether to continue into the MLI without a break or pause your study. If you do not wish to continue into the MLI course, you will simply retain your graduate certificate award.

Please note that scholarships funded by the Department of Education are for the **MLI Stream A pathway only: Stream B is not currently funded by the department.**

## 3. Support and expectations

### Principal or manager support

The program aims to deepen the disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical practice of teachers and regional workforces, equipping them with the skills, expertise, and confidence to meet the needs of all students through contemporary, evidence-based strategies and fidelity of practice.

Upon completion of the program, you will be well-prepared to champion, plan, and implement inclusive practices that support students with diverse learning needs. You will also be positioned to drive cultural change and embed the attitudes and values essential for high-impact, contemporary inclusive teaching.

If you receive a scholarship, the support agreement signed by your principal or manager as part of your application will become active for the duration of your study and beyond. This agreement outlines the department's expectation that participating principals or managers will support recipients in their study and encourage them to apply their learning to maximise impact within their schools.

**It is expected that the principal or manager will:**

- Incorporate recipients' study plans in school Annual Implementation Plans (AIPs)
- Support recipients to include their study in their Professional Development Plan (PDP)
- Identify clear links between recipients' study and school priorities
- Provide recipients opportunities to lead their peers in practice change
- Monitor recipients' progress through regular engagement and discussion
- Ensure recipients have the resources and materials needed to implement their learning in classrooms
- Be aware of the **Debt Recovery** policy requiring graduates to stay employed by the department and in a role that supports students with learning difficulties for 2 years post completion of study.

*You will be required to repay the funds associated with your course if you fail to meet your employment obligations (see the Debt Recovery policy on page 14).*

### Benefits for schools and regional workforces

**As a program participant, you are expected to use your learning to:**

- Make a significant contribution to how schools apply contemporary, evidence-based teaching practices to adapt learning environments that support all students, including those with learning difficulties, including dyslexia and dyscalculia
- Support schools in assessing and identifying student needs, selecting appropriate interventions and teaching methodologies, and monitoring and evaluating student progress using evidence-based practices

- Design, implement, and evaluate pedagogical interventions aimed at improving learning outcomes
- Engage, collaborate with, and lead peers to develop effective inclusive teaching and learning practices
- Develop and apply strategic improvements at whole-school and system levels to support inclusive education targets and initiatives
- Influence and champion inclusive education change through collaborative professional networks within and between schools.

**Important:** Participating in the program does not guarantee an increase in remuneration or success in recruitment processes for new roles or promotions.

Recruitment and role creation are managed at the school level, and the department's role is to implement centrally driven initiatives.

**In supporting you as a program recipient, your principal or manager will:**

- Assist you to develop the skills and experience needed to support students with learning difficulties, including dyslexia and dyscalculia
- Collaborate to strengthen and embed whole-school inclusive education practices
- Consolidate the implementation of DI system initiatives and inclusive education strategies within the school setting.

## 4. Criteria

### Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for Round 5 of the program, you must:

- Be an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or eligible to work indefinitely in Australia
- Be currently employed by the department (not directly by a school) in a part-time or full-time capacity
- Be either:
  - **a qualified practising teacher with full registration with the VIT** and actively working in an eligible role in a Victorian government school supporting students with learning difficulties, including dyslexia and dyscalculia

#### OR

- **a regional workforce employee\*** in a role that supports DI reform, supports students with learning difficulties, and/or providing intervention supports to create a more inclusive learning environment in schools.

#### **\*Important**

As the course has a high degree of educational pedagogy and practice in its content and assessment tasks, regional workforce applicants **must** also meet the eligibility requirements for having an approved ITE qualification from an accredited tertiary institution, and full VIT registration.

- Acknowledge and agree that you must continue your employment with the department for the duration of the course and for 2 years post completion of your course. If this cannot be met, the Debt Recovery policy will apply
- Start your course in Semester 2, 2026 (unless you are already engaged in the course and are transferring to the scholarship program in which case the department will cover the cost from Semester 2, 2026 onwards)
- Be willing and able to complete your course **within** 2 years of enrolling
- **Not** be a previous scholarship recipient through this program or the Master of Inclusive Education program
- Understand and adhere to the program's employment and financial obligations of the program (see page 14).

**Important:**

- **Teachers working in non-government schools are not eligible for the program, nor are Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs), Education Support (ES) staff,** or individuals holding other categories of VIT registration (including provisional registration, non-practising registration, or permission to teach).
- **To remain eligible for the program** while studying, you must be supporting students with learning difficulties or diverse learning needs or working in a role that supports DI reform. **Changes to your role during the course of your studies may render you ineligible to continue in the program.** You will no longer be eligible if you transition to CRT while studying or within 2 years post-completion and you will be required to repay the course fees (or portion thereof) to the department (see the Debt Recovery policy on page 14).
- **Recipients on expiring fixed-term contracts must secure alternative employment immediately to remain eligible for the program.** Failure to do so will require repaying any funds associated with units undertaken, whether passed or failed.

**Common questions:**

**Can I take study leave while undertaking the course?**

Applications for study leave, paid or unpaid, may be approved in accordance with the [department's study leave policy and guidelines](#). It is expected that a principal or manager will grant you with a reasonable number of paid study leave days to attend examinations (if applicable), plus one day of paid study leave (or part thereof) to attend your online course completion celebration event. Any further applications for study leave, paid or unpaid, may be approved as required and in accordance with the policy and guidelines (see link above).

**Can I apply for the program if I am currently on extended leave, such as long service leave or parental absence?**

No. You must be actively working in your role as a teacher or a regional workforce employee at the time you apply. Applications cannot be accepted from individuals currently on extended leave, such as long service leave or parental absence.

**Can I apply for extended leave, such as long service leave or parental absence and continue my studies?**

Yes, as long as you remain employed by the department, you may continue your studies while on extended leave.

**Can I change schools while I am studying?**

Yes, absolutely. You can move between Victorian government schools within the department during the application process or after receiving a scholarship. In these cases, you must seek endorsement from the principal of your new school. Please contact the IESU for the necessary paperwork.



## Exclusions

The program does **not** cover:

- Course costs for subjects undertaken prior to Semester 2, 2026. (If successful, the department will only cover course costs from Semester 2, 2026 onwards.)
- Additional expenses associated with completing an approved course (for example: textbooks, stationery, travel expenses, practicum expenses, accommodation, graduation costs, and equipment).
- Teacher replacement costs beyond what is required to support practicum placements. (Refer to page 36 for placement information.)
- Re-enrolment costs incurred as a result of failed subjects.
- Costs incurred from withdrawing from a subject after the university census date (the final date to withdraw without financial penalty).
- Subject costs associated with withdrawing from the course entirely, regardless of whether any subjects were passed or failed.
- Any course costs incurred more than four years from commencement of study (unless the Sponsorship Agreement is formally extended by the department).
- Course costs for recipients seeking to transfer to an alternative course offering through the program. Please carefully select the course that best suits you and your school's needs before applying.

**Please note:** if you do not meet your scholarship obligations, you will be liable to repay all costs associated with your course.

## Debt Recovery policy

If you breach your scholarship obligations - including the employment and financial obligations below - you will be required to repay the course fees (or part thereof). The debt will immediately become an amount owed to the department, and you will be contacted by the department to commence the debt recovery process.

### Important

You will be immediately required to repay the course fees (or part of) while studying or during the 2 years post completion if you:

- Are deemed ineligible for the course.
- Defer prior to or during the first semester of study.
- Withdraw from the course without prior approval from the department.
- Fail to complete the course.

- Voluntarily cease employment with the department.
- Voluntarily leave an eligible role that supports students with learning difficulties, or a role that strengthens inclusive practices.
- Fail to secure continuous employment in an eligible role if your fixed-term contract expires.
- Breach the Sponsorship Agreement and the department subsequently terminates the agreement.
- Ongoing failure to respond to IESU communications may be considered a breach of the Sponsorship Agreement and could trigger the department's debt recovery process. In addition, failure to engage may constitute a breach of expected employee conduct and may be referred to your principal, manager, or relevant People Services team for further action.

Terms and conditions outlining debt recovery are contained in the **Sponsorship Agreement** that you will sign when accepting your scholarship. You will be asked to acknowledge your awareness of the **Debt Recovery policy and process** when you apply and formally agree to it as part of the sponsorship agreement's terms and conditions.

The application form also includes multiple declarations highlighting the scenarios that could trigger debt recovery. You are strongly encouraged to familiarise yourself with these before applying.

**Please carefully consider the potential financial impact** this may have on you. If a breach occurs, you will be invoiced for the total value of scholarship funds paid by the department on your behalf up to that point. Repayments can be made either in full or through an agreed periodic instalment plan.

If you are awarded a scholarship, you are responsible for meeting all obligations outlined in your **Sponsorship Agreement**, as summarised in these guidelines.

## Employment and financial obligations

As a scholarship recipient, you must sign a **Sponsorship Agreement** setting out your employment and financial obligations.

### 1. Employment

You will be required to repay course fees (or part thereof) in line with your agreement if you:

- **Voluntarily leave the department within 2 years after completing your course.**

OR

- **While studying, voluntarily move into a role that no longer supports students with disability and additional learning needs or no longer contributes to DI reform.**

**You must** be directly employed by the Victorian Department of Education (not solely by an individual school council or third-party employer) in order to be considered compliant with the employment obligations of this scholarship.

## 2. Changes to your professional circumstances

The Master of Inclusive Education Program and Graduate Certificate Initiative represents a significant investment in building the department's capability to effectively support diverse learners. The Inclusive Education Support Unit (IESU) monitors program participation to evaluate its quality, effectiveness, and workforce impact.

- You must promptly notify the IESU of any changes in your professional circumstances, such as a change of school, role, principal, or manager.
- You are required to request a new Support Agreement form, which must be endorsed by your new principal or manager.
- The IESU actively monitors changes to recipients' employment status and will attempt to contact you by phone and email.
- You are expected to respond within 24–36 hours.
- Failure to respond may result in the IESU contacting your principal or manager and initiating employee conduct procedures.
- Ongoing non-responsiveness or failure to engage with the IESU may be treated as a breach of the Victorian Public Sector Code of Conduct.
- It is important to understand that you are accountable to the Department of Education as a whole, not just your local school or immediate workplace.
- The Support Agreement highlights your core obligation to prioritise inclusive education improvements for students with disability and additional learning needs, and to foster a culture of inclusion within your school and wider networks.
- This is a fundamental expectation in return for the department's investment in your professional development.

## 3. Failed subjects

If you fail or are required to repeat any subjects, **you will be responsible for all associated costs**, including any re-enrolment fees.

## 4. Enrolment

You must ensure you are enrolled for the next semester's subjects at the end of each study period. **Failure to enrol on time may result in the university withdrawing you from your course.**

## 5. Withdrawal

If you withdraw from a subject after the university census date, **you will be liable for the costs of re-enrolment in that subject.**

If you withdraw from your course entirely, you must notify the IESU immediately, even though the university will also notify us. Prompt notification by you helps ensure timely support and accurate processing. **You will be liable** to repay the costs associated with subjects already undertaken, whether passed or failed. All withdrawal requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

**Important:**

Withdrawing from a subject after census date typically results in a 'fail' grade being recorded. In this case, **you will be responsible for the costs of completing the course.**

Please carefully note university census dates each semester to avoid unexpected fees. These dates are listed in subject information within each university's handbook. Universities will arrange re-enrolment in failed subjects **at your expense.**

**Common questions:**

**What happens if I receive a Fees Statement from the university?**

Some universities may automatically generate and send Fee Statements to recipients. If this happens, forward the Fee Statement email to the IESU. They will notify the university and resolve any errors.

If you are required to pay re-enrolment fees for a failed subject, you must manage the payment of that Fee Statement directly with the university.

**Will I incur a Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS-HELP) debt for my course?**

No. This program covers tuition fees for a **domestic full fee-paying place only**, not a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP). You will not incur a HECS-HELP debt for course fees covered by the department.

## **6. Making the best study decision for you and your school**

Changing courses because a course does not meet your expectations is **not supported by the program**. If you choose to withdraw or transfer courses without departmental approval, **financial consequences and the Debt Recovery policy will apply.**

To ensure you select the right course for both you and your school, the IESU can arrange discussions between applicants and universities prior to application.

## **General program obligations**

### **7. Intermission, deferral and leave of absence**

**Enrolment deferrals for the first semester are not permitted.**

However, after successfully completing at least one unit in your initial study period, you may apply for an intermission or leave of absence. It is important that you familiarise yourself with your university's policies, as they vary. Some institutions may automatically withdraw you from the course if your leave exceeds 12 months, requiring you to reapply for future enrolment. Extended leave due to exceptional circumstances may require a formal extension request and approval through your university's faculty or student administration.

During any period of leave, you must keep your contact details up to date and regularly check your university student email. You'll retain access to university services such as the library, student wellbeing and careers services. If you wish to shorten your leave or re-enrol, you can submit an enquiry via your university's student portal.

**IESU approval is required before requesting any intermission, deferral or leave of absence from your university.** Intermissions are typically limited to 12 months, with exceptions considered for special circumstances such as illness or natural disasters. Consult your university's specific guidelines for more details.

## **8. Post completion of Study: Obligations Within and Outside the Return of Service Period**

As a recipient of a scholarship funded by the Victorian Department of Education, you have been given a unique opportunity to acquire valuable postgraduate qualifications to support Disability Inclusion, a key driver of inclusive change in Victoria's education system. This scholarship is more than just free education; it comes with specific obligations designed to maximise its effectiveness and impact.

### **During Your 2-Year Return of Service:**

As a Victorian public sector employee benefiting from this scholarship, you are required to remain employed by the department for the full period of your return of service obligation.

You must advise the IESU immediately if you are considering leaving the department as this will trigger the Debt Recovery policy being implemented.

We also encourage you to notify the IESU of any significant employment changes. This ongoing communication helps us evaluate the program's long-term impact and inform improvements for future participants.

Additionally, the IESU may contact you to verify your employment details using EduPay records. Keeping your employment information up to date is essential for maintaining the program's integrity and ensuring its continued success.

### **Beyond Your 2-Year Return of Service:**

After your return of service period, the IESU will continue to monitor and assess the program's long-term outcomes, including workforce capability, return on investment, and contributions to inclusive education reform. You may be contacted for participation in evaluations or to provide feedback on your experience and its ongoing impact.

## **9. DI reform activities**

As a scholarship recipient, you play a vital role in strengthening inclusive education practices within the context of the fully implemented Disability Inclusion reform. To help the department evaluate the program's impact, quality, and contribution to inclusive education, recipients are required to provide feedback on their experiences and outcomes.

Your insights are essential to ensuring this program continues to build workforce capability and improve learning outcomes for students with disability and additional learning needs.



The department, your university, or a third-party evaluation team engaged by the department may invite you to participate in evaluations, surveys, or interviews. These requests will be **reasonable, timely, and designed to be manageable alongside your professional commitments**.

In addition, **we encourage you to participate in relevant Communities of Practice and professional networks** that focus on inclusive education and system priorities. These collaborative opportunities are valuable for sharing expertise, strengthening practice, and supporting continuous improvement across schools and regions.

You may also be invited to:

- Engage in communities of practice focused on inclusive education priorities and workforce capability.
- Contribute to written or video case studies, sharing your experiences, challenges, and successes.
- Discuss how the course has enhanced your professional practice and how you have applied your learning to strengthen inclusive practices in your school, network, or regional setting.

Your active participation will help the department continue to measure the program's long-term value and inform future capability-building initiatives in inclusive education.

## Scholarship Eligibility and Prioritisation Criteria — Inclusive Education Workforce Strategy

A key objective of this program is to ensure that **every Victorian government school has a qualified inclusive education teacher on staff** who can create and lead more inclusive school environments.

To maximise the program's impact, **priority is given to schools that do not currently have, and have not previously had, a scholarship recipient** (whether currently studying or graduated).

### Guaranteed Scholarships

The following schools are guaranteed scholarships as part of our commitment to supporting inclusive education:

- **Specialist schools:** guaranteed 2 scholarships each
- **Supported inclusion schools:** guaranteed 2 scholarships each

### Additional Eligibility Guidelines

Schools meeting the criteria below may also qualify for additional scholarships:

- **Multiple campuses:** each campus qualify for an additional scholarship
- **Large enrolments:** schools with over **500 students** are eligible for **1 scholarship per 500 students**, with an additional scholarship available for every **250 students beyond that**.

## Regional workforces

**Regional workforce applicants** interested in applying must follow the process below:

- **Contact your Regional Nomination Coordinator (RNC)** to express your interest in the program.
- **Discuss your application** with your **Disability Inclusion Implementation Manager** to confirm eligibility and program expectations.
- **Prepare a written justification** outlining your reasons for applying.
- **Obtain support and endorsement** from:
  - your manager
  - your Disability Inclusion Implementation Manager
  - the relevant executive (either the **Area Executive Director** or **Student Wellbeing and Engagement**)
- **Work with your RNC** to complete the nomination form.
- The **RNC will submit the completed nomination form** to the IESU for further review

Region	Regional Nomination Coordinators (RNCs)
SWVR	Dianne Ryan
NEVR	Marco Gallucci
SEVR	Judi Milano
NWVR	Belinda Smith

*\*Details current 31/07/2025*

Regional workforce employees must be actively working in a role that directly supports students with learning difficulties, and/or provides intervention support to create a more inclusive learning environment in schools.

Regional workforce applicants should be aware that **dual qualifications apply**, typically an allied health qualification plus full VIT registration.

## 5. How to apply

Please apply to the IESU using an online application form.

The application form will be live and accessible from 9:00 am on **Monday 2 February 2026** via a link posted on the [program webpage](#).

**Application Round 5 opens at 9:00 am on Monday, 2 February 2026**

**Applications close at 11:59 pm on Monday, 16 March 2026**

### Application advice

The IESU coordinates all aspects of the program in conjunction with the university - from assisting you with the application process through to supporting you to complete the course.

Use the checklist below to make sure your application is complete. Each item is explained in detail in the following sections.

#### Application checklist

Have you:

- ☐ Addressed all selection criteria in the application form?
- ☐ Provided well-considered responses to all the selection criteria questions?
- ☐ Included a signed Support Agreement from your principal or manager?
- ☐ Submitted your application before **11:59 pm on Monday 16 March?**

#### Important:

You will be able to save a draft of your online application and return to it before submitting. However, once your application is submitted, you cannot make changes or add information. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

**Before applying, please check with the IESU to confirm your school's eligibility for a Round 5 scholarship, as your school may already have a current or past recipient in the program.**

### Selection criteria

Your application will be assessed against the following selection criteria:

1. Experience addressing needs of students with learning difficulties
2. Commitment to improving practice
3. Capability to influence and foster change
4. Alignment of the program with school or regional priorities.

Your responses to the application questions, based on the selection criteria, allows you to explain why you are applying for the program and how you intend to use the knowledge and skills gained by completing the course.

Well-considered responses are key to writing a strong application.

You will be asked to explain:

- How you intend to implement the knowledge and skills from your preferred course in your current role within schools and/or regional workforces
- How professional learning has enhanced your capability to address the needs of students with learning difficulties
- How you have contributed to changes in teaching and learning at the cohort or whole-school level
- How your preferred course aligns with your school or regional priorities, such as the Strategic Plan, Annual Implementation Plan (AIP), and other key goals

### **Important**

You must provide your completed selection criteria responses to your principal or manager before submitting your application. This step ensures you receive valuable feedback and support to make your responses clear, well-written, and impactful.

## **Support Agreement**

You must submit a signed Support Agreement from your principal or manager via the online application form. By signing, your principal or manager confirms their endorsement of your suitability for the program and acknowledges the expectations of schools participating in the program, including their commitment to support you during your studies, should you be successful.

Endorsement from your principal or manager is a prerequisite for teachers and regional workforce employees to be considered for sponsorship. Principals applying for sponsorship must obtain endorsement from their regional leadership.

## **Application assessment**

The IESU will first conduct an initial check to confirm your application meets the eligibility criteria.

Following this, your application will be assessed against the selection criteria listed above between 17 and 26 March 2026.

Members of the selection panel may contact you, your principal, or your manager to discuss your application. You may also be contacted after the closing date to clarify any information.

## Application Outcomes

All applicants will receive a notification of their application outcome by **Thursday, 23 April 2026**.

The IESU will inform both successful and unsuccessful applicants during this notification process. Applicants who wish to receive feedback on unsuccessful applications are encouraged to [contact the IESU](#).

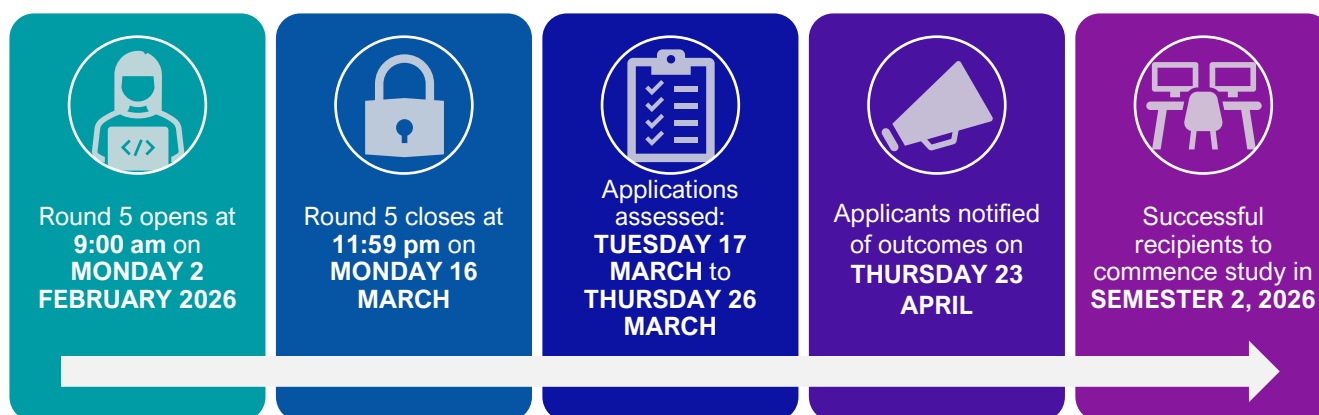
Figure 1 below provides an overview of the key dates for the application, assessment, and selection phases.

### Unsuccessful applications

The IESU will notify unsuccessful applicants at the end of the assessment process. For unsuccessful applicants seeking further feedback, please [contact the IESU](#).

To avoid disappointment, we encourage you to check with the IESU beforehand to confirm your school's eligibility for a scholarship in Round 5, as your school may already have a current recipient or graduate of the program.

**Figure 1: Application and assessment – Key dates**





## 6. Finalising your placement

This section explains how to finalise your placement should your application be successful.

**There are 3 key steps:**

- Step 1:** Read through your induction pack
- Step 2:** Apply to enrol at your university
- Step 3:** Return completed documents to the IESU

**Your acceptance into the program is ‘provisional’ until you have completed all 3 steps.**

### Step 1: Read through your induction pack

If your application is successful, you will be emailed an induction information pack that includes:

- A letter of provisional acceptance
- a Sponsorship Agreement
- A Recurring Expense Payment Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) form and policy overview, and FAQ sheet
- A copy of these Round 5 Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties) program guidelines.

Please read the induction pack documents carefully, noting which forms need to be signed by you and your principal.

An approved delegate acting in the principal or manager role at the time of application may sign the Sponsorship Agreement; however, approval by your usual principal or manager is preferred.

If your principal or manager changes during your scholarship—whether due to a return from an acting role or a new appointment- you are responsible for keeping the current principal or manager fully informed and regularly updated. In some cases, a new Sponsorship Agreement may need to be signed to reflect this change.

### Step 2: Apply at the university

1. Once you have received and read your induction pack, **you will need to apply for your course** through the relevant university. You will be required to provide **original transcripts or supporting documentation** for application purposes.

#### Documentation required to support applying to your university

As part of the university application process, you will be asked to provide supporting documentation such as official academic transcripts for any prior tertiary study you have undertaken.

Obtaining official documentation can be time-consuming, so the IESU advises you to start this process as soon as you submit your application. Failure to provide relevant supporting documentation may cause significant delays in your enrolment.

Supporting documentation includes:

- **Official academic transcripts:** you will need to provide transcripts for all attempted prior tertiary study. [My eEquals Australia](#) is a good place to start locating and accessing your previous transcripts.
  - **Your Unique Student Identifier (USI)** is your lifelong education number and must be provided to the university. You can visit the USI website (<https://www.usi.gov.au>) to check if you already have a USI or need to create one. The website also explains what identification is required to create a USI and how to update your personal details (such as name changes). It's important that your personal details on your USI match those on your university application to avoid delays in enrolment.
  - **Proof of identity documentation**, if your name has changed since your last university enrolment.
  - **Statement of Service:** depending on the chosen course, you may need to provide a Statement of Service which can be extracted from EduPay.
2. Once your application has been approved by the university, you will receive a formal Letter of Offer. At this point, **accept and enrol** in your first subject.
  3. Enrol into the **minimum number of subjects (ONE)** required for the course.
  4. As part of your preparation for study, you should ensure you have set up your student email and checked your timetable, so you are aware of teaching days and assignment deadlines.

## Academic credit

Academic credit acknowledges comparable study based on previous study or work experience. It is also known as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), 'credit for prior learning' or 'advanced standing'.

RPL is awarded at the university's discretion. Program recipients may be eligible through the university for up to 50% of the program based on:

- prior studies undertaken as part of a complete or incomplete university-level award course
- studies undertaken in non-award and non-accredited programs at the university (such as Melbourne MicroCerts in Learning Difficulties).

If you are interested in academic credit, you should read the university's [information on advanced standing](#) and submit an application. You may be asked to provide further information and detail about the studies you have completed to help the university assess your application.

### Step 3: Return completed documents to the IESU

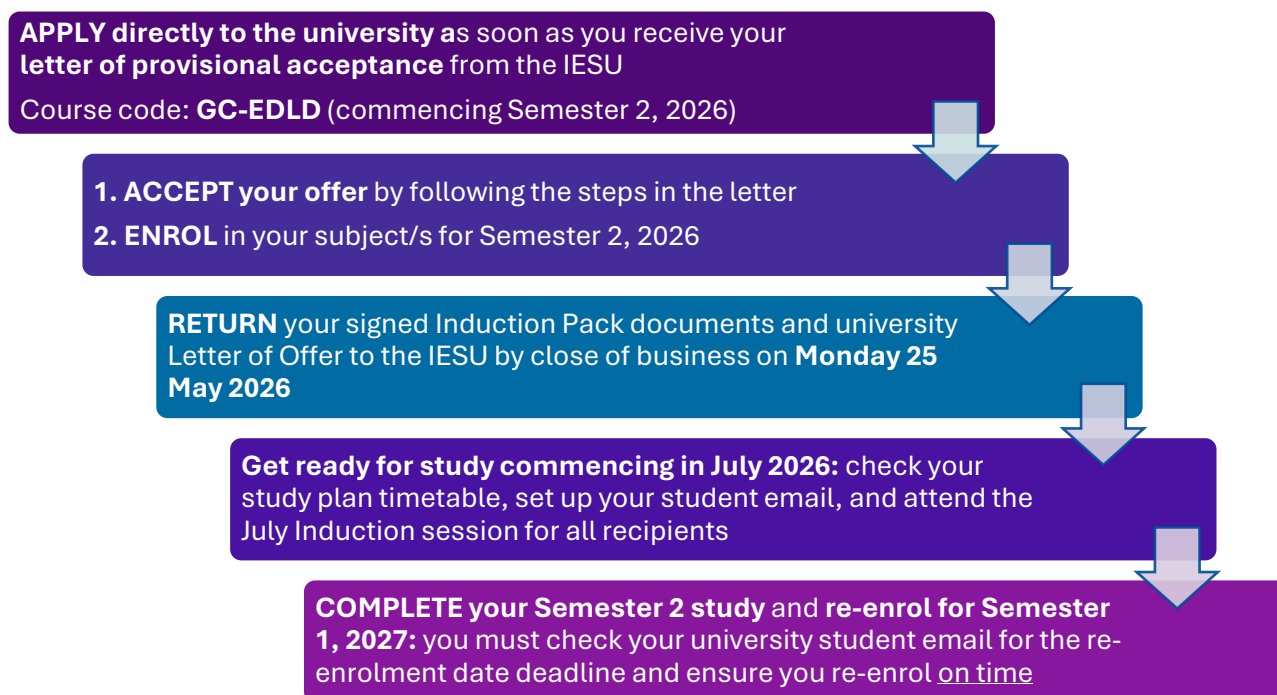
The following documents must be returned to the IESU by no later than close of business, **Monday, 25 May 2026**:

1. Signed Sponsorship Agreement (sign on last page and return **all** pages)
2. Signed Recurring Expense Payment Fringe Benefit Declaration (return page 1 only).

The IESU will confirm receipt of your documents by email. All documents will be stored securely on the department's SharePoint drive.

Figure 2 summarises the key actions and dates\* once you have accepted your offer of a placement in the program.

**Figure 2: Summary of key actions for successful recipients**



*\*Dates are indicative and may be subject to change.*

### Re-enrolment

At the end of each semester/trimester, you must ensure you re-enrol for the next semester/trimester subjects. Failure to re-enrol on time may result in the university withdrawing you from the course. To avoid this, simply log into your Student Portal at the end of each semester/trimester, check your student email for re-enrolment deadlines, and complete the re-enrolment by the specified date.

The department and participating universities encourage you to enrol in the minimum required subjects (one per semester/trimester). However, if you need to enrol in 2 subjects to meet practicum requirements, please do so. Alternatively, speak with your lecturer to understand how this may affect subject sequencing.

**Please note** that some universities may automatically enrol you in two subjects per semester/trimester by default. This does not align with the department's recommended subject load. You are responsible for reviewing your enrolment and adjusting it to one subject per semester/trimester unless you have a specific need to take more.

If you experience any issues enrolling in the necessary subject/s, please contact the IESU for assistance.

### Key university dates for 2026

Please note that **enrolment opens** from **Friday 24 April 2026**.

**Table 4: Key university dates**

University	Enrolment closes*	Course commences	Census date***
University of Melbourne**	31 May 2026*	27 July 2026	31 August 2026

**\*You MUST accept your Letter of Offer and enrol in subjects promptly** – before the listed enrolment closing date. The official enrolment deadline is 31 May 2026, though this may be extended for departmental scholarship recipients if needed.

**\*\* Please note:** The University of Melbourne has different census dates for each subject. Be sure to check the census date for every subject you enrol in, as some may fall earlier than the deadline above.

**\*\*\* Census date** = the last day to withdraw from a subject without incurring a fee.

## 7. Contact information

### Department of Education

For help with:	Contact
Applying to the program	<b>The IESU</b> Phone: (03) 9084 8496 Email: <a href="mailto:inclusive.ed.scholarships@education.vic.gov.au">inclusive.ed.scholarships@education.vic.gov.au</a>
Managing leave requests and approvals	<b>HR regional teams</b> Phone: 1800 641 943 (select option for region) or email: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="mailto:schools.hr.nev@education.vic.gov.au">Schools HR – NEVR</a> (schools.hr.nev@education.vic.gov.au)</li> <li>• <a href="mailto:schools.hr.nwv@education.vic.gov.au">Schools HR – NWVR</a> (schools.hr.nwv@education.vic.gov.au)</li> <li>• <a href="mailto:schools.hr.sev@education.vic.gov.au">Schools HR – SEVR</a> (schools.hr.sev@education.vic.gov.au)</li> <li>• <a href="mailto:schools.hr.swv@education.vic.gov.au">Schools HR – SWVR</a> (schools.hr.swv@education.vic.gov.au)</li> </ul>

### The University of Melbourne | Faculty of Education

For new recipients:	Contact/information
Course and entry requirements, and the application process	Contact or phone <a href="tel:136352">STOP 1 phone 13 MELB (13 6352)</a> Access <a href="https://unimelb.edu.au/graduate-certificate-in-education-learning-difficulties">Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties) : How to apply - The University of Melbourne (unimelb.edu.au)</a>
Your student portal	Access <a href="https://my.unimelb.edu.au/">https://my.unimelb.edu.au/</a>
Your timetable (dates for teaching days)	Access <a href="https://unimelb.edu.au/create-your-class-timetable">Create your class timetable : The University of Melbourne (unimelb.edu.au)</a>

For enrolled recipients:	Contact/information
General student administrative queries	Contact or phone <a href="tel:136352">STOP 1 phone 13 MELB (13 6352)</a> Ask FAQs: <a href="https://ask.unimelb.edu.au/">https://ask.unimelb.edu.au/</a> Access your student portal: <a href="https://my.unimelb.edu.au/">https://my.unimelb.edu.au/</a>
Help with study skills	Email the Academic Skills Unit at <a href="mailto:academic-skills@unimelb.edu.au">academic-skills@unimelb.edu.au</a> For resources and guides, visit the <a href="https://unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills-unit">Academic Skills Unit site</a>
Academic queries and issue	Email the Course Coordinator, Dr Anne Bellert: <a href="mailto:mgse-gceld@unimelb.edu.au">mgse-gceld@unimelb.edu.au</a>



## Support and reasonable study adjustments

The University of Melbourne is committed to providing support and reasonable study adjustments for all students who register they have a disability or a condition that may impact their study.

You can explore the university links below for more detail about the types of support available, including developing an Academic Adjustment Plan and setting up individual study adjustments.

### **The University of Melbourne**

Student Equity and Disability Support | Disability Liaison Officer

<https://students.unimelb.edu.au/student-support/student-equity-and-disability-support>

## Updating professional and personal details

You have the right to access or correct your personal information. To do so, please contact the IESU on (03) 9084 8496 or [inclusive.ed.scholarships@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:inclusive.ed.scholarships@education.vic.gov.au).

To ensure our records are current and to support program effectiveness, the department will regularly contact scholarship recipients to update their contact and employment details.

### **Important:**

As this initiative is government-funded, the IESU actively monitors recipients and graduates to evaluate the program's impact, quality, and return on investment for system-wide change. You are **required** to inform the department promptly of any changes to your employment details (including location and role). Failure to update this information may affect future scholarship applications, as program data would be inaccurate.