

Workforce Skill Sets Fund Program (WSSF) Application Guidelines

The Workforce Skill Sets Fund (WSSF) is a funding program that will invest in targeted training to meet emerging industry needs, as well as specialist and regional needs for employment outcomes. It will complement the Funded Skill Set List (FSSL) launched in February 2021.

WSSF will inspire the testing of new models of developing and delivering skill sets. It aims to encourage a broader cultural shift in training and workforce development by:

- promoting dynamic partnerships between industry and training providers to identify and respond collaboratively to emerging workforce needs
- increasing investment by industry through co-contribution (in-kind or financial).

The objectives of the WSSF are to:

- strengthen the relationship between industry and training providers to ensure delivery of skill sets which provide quality workforce training and skill development
- test skill set offerings to upskill/reskill workforces, building an evidence base to support the development of the Skills First Skill Sets policy
- improve the flexibility and responsiveness of Victoria's training system in meeting industry skill-needs and enterprise training requirements
- contribute to industry confidence/investment and broader economic recovery efforts.

Eligibility

All Victorian training providers that hold a current Skills First VET Funding Contract are eligible to apply. Stream 1 proposals (outlined below) will be limited to TAFEs.

Funding approach

\$13 million in funding is available over 3 years on a rolling basis to projects of varying size, duration, and complexity. Funding will be made available through grants to training providers in partnership with employers and industry groups for the:

- delivery of existing skill sets that may require further support for viability (Stream 1)
- development and delivery of different accredited skill set combinations where there is evidence of a business or broader current or emerging need (Stream 2)
- development and delivery of new skill set training, including the use of non-accredited elements where existing training does not meet the need of industry (Stream 3)

Applications seeking funding for non-accredited elements under Stream 3 will be assessed on suitability for potential to progress to formal accreditation.

Skills First Contract holders are invited to submit project applications which will be assessed against the program criteria for funding types. For all successful applications received by **30 November 2021** the

Department commits that funding contracts will be in place by **15 February 2022** to minimise any delay getting projects started.

Funding types

Funding will be managed under 3 streams to provide targeted investment in identified areas of skill set development and delivery. All streams must demonstrate a partnership with an industry partner, including a co-contribution. The streams will be managed as follows:

	Stream 1	Stream 2	Stream 3
	Grant to support delivery of existing skill sets ¹	Grant to develop and deliver new skill sets from existing accredited units	Grant to develop and deliver new skill sets not met by existing accredited units
Purpose	Supporting TAFEs to deliver existing skill sets potentially in thin markets (regional and specialist skill sets)	Bundling existing accredited units in new ways to form new skill sets which meet local needs	Supporting emerging industry through new training which will be considered for accreditation after successful piloting.
Eligible Grant Recipients	TAFEs	All providers that hold a <i>Skills First</i> VET Funding Contract	All providers that hold a <i>Skills First</i> VET Funding Contract
Funding Type	Payments linked to milestones	Payments linked to milestones	Payments linked to milestones
Other requirements	Industry co-contribution (in kind or financial)		

Duration

Funded projects for delivery of Streams 1 and 2 are expected to be completed within **6 months** of a grant being awarded. Funded projects for development and delivery of Stream 3 are expected to be completed within **12 months**.

Key dates

Grant funding will open on **25 October 2021**. Applications can be lodged at any time.

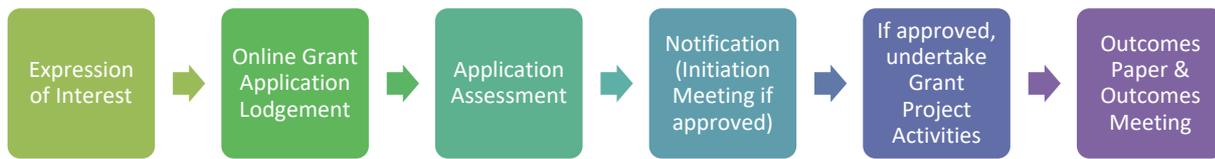
For all successful applications received by **30 November 2021** the Department commits that funding contracts will be in place by **15 February 2022** to minimise any delay getting projects started.

How to apply

Applications are to address the Program Criteria as set out in this document. All applications are to be lodged using the Department's on-line application form. A link to the application form will be provided **after an EOI has been submitted and reviewed**.

¹ training.gov.au

Enquiries can be submitted by email to: Workforce.Skill.Set.Fund@education.vic.gov.au



Expression of Interest (EOI)

1. Lodge your interest in developing a grant funding application by completing the online [EOI form](#)
2. If you have any issues or queries in preparing your EOI and/or application, please email the WSSF inbox workforce.Skill.Set.Fund@education.vic.gov.au
3. A representative from the Department will contact you within 5 business days to discuss your EOI and suitability for the fund.
4. Should the EOI be deemed appropriate, **a link to the online grant application form will be sent to you.**

Application lodgement

5. Complete the online WSSF application and submit to the Department's online portal.
6. On submission of your online application, you will receive an automated response to acknowledge receipt of your application.

Assessment of applications

Applications will be assessed by the Department of Education and Training against the program criteria.

1. Industry need and impact / partnerships– 30%
2. Training delivery capability, capacity and approach – 30%
3. Student attraction and retention – 15%
4. Cost to delivery, value for money and sustainability – 15%
5. Evaluation and outcomes – 10%

Preference will be given to applications that demonstrate strong industry backing and clear employment pathway for training participants. There is an expectation that a co-contribution will be made by industry.

If the Department receives an application that has the potential to duplicate an existing submission or project, the Department may recommend that applicants collaborate on the project/idea to obtain the best outcome for the project.

WSSF Grant Assessment Criteria Checklist

Background and context

	Which stream of funding are you applying for?	<input type="checkbox"/> Stream 1 – Grant to support delivery existing skill set <input type="checkbox"/> Stream 2 – Grant to develop and deliver new skill set from existing accredited units <input type="checkbox"/> Stream 3 – Grant to develop and deliver new skill sets not met by existing accredited training units
	What is your project/idea?	<input type="checkbox"/> Outline the proposed skill set providing detail of proposed units and delivery mode. <input type="checkbox"/> Detail the scope of your project.

		<input type="checkbox"/> Clearly define the objectives and proposed outcomes.
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Criteria 1: Industry Needs and Impact – 30 %

	Criteria questions	How will this be assessed
1.1	What is the industry need for this skill set? What are the reasons for the current skills gap? Why are current options for training not meeting this demand? List the occupations specific to industry/employer consultation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe the current skill gaps and how the gaps arose. <input type="checkbox"/> Describe how existing skill sets and training do not meet the needs identified by industry. <input type="checkbox"/> Outline how the skill set outcome aligns with the skill need. <input type="checkbox"/> Detail how your proposal will be successful in meeting the demand, compared to other options. <input type="checkbox"/> Describe the expected outcomes / impact of this proposal will have for the employer / industry. <input type="checkbox"/> Describe how the expected outcomes will drive workforce training and skill development in the training and TAFE system (i.e. capacity for sector-wide benefits) Stream 2 and 3 only <input type="checkbox"/> Describe how existing skill sets do not meet identified industry needs
1.2	How will the industry/business partner satisfy a co-contribution towards the training proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Outline the proposed co-contribution by industry <i>*Note: it is expected that a co-contribution by industry will be appropriate to the project's stream and scale.</i>
1.3	What consultation have you undertaken in the development of this proposal to ensure it will deliver the expected training benefits? What consultation have you undertaken to ensure that the project outcomes are sustainable in the future?	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate industry linkages and industry support for the provision of this training <input type="checkbox"/> List the stakeholders that you have consulted with and the nature of the consultation <input type="checkbox"/> Provide evidence of consultation such as industry letters that provide information about job vacancies, the need for trained candidates, current and future employment opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Provide evidence of endorsement and recognition of the skill set for industry

Criteria 2: Training Delivery Capability, Capacity and Approach – 30%

	Criteria questions	How will this be assessed
2.1	Describe your strategy to meet the proposed timeline of your proposal.	<input type="checkbox"/> Detail the readiness of the project <input type="checkbox"/> Upload a completed project plan

2.2	<p>What is your capability/capacity to manage the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide information on previous projects you have undertaken that demonstrate capability and capacity to deliver this project <input type="checkbox"/> Detail project risks and mitigation strategies. (Section in the Project on a Page template). <input type="checkbox"/> Indicate whether a trainer and assessor² (streams 1 & 2) has been allocated or will be recruited. If recruited, outline your recruitment strategy including timelines <input type="checkbox"/> What strategies / tools will you use to manage the project and the project partnerships to deliver the project on time and on budget? <p>Stream 3 only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide details on the approach you will take to develop new units and/or training components including who will project manage, subject matter expertise, engagement of course developers, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide details how potential trainer and assessors will meet the Standards for RTO's Clause 1.13 (a, b and c) when the Skill Set is eventually accredited.
2.3	<p>How will the delivery of this skill set meet industry needs?</p> <p>What is the rationale for your proposed mode of delivery for the selected course?</p> <p>What is the rationale for any components of on-the-job and campus-based delivery?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Upload a copy of the Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS) for the WSSF application. The TAS should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ when you intend to commence training ■ a percentage breakdown of the mode of delivery (e.g., Classroom/practical/on-line/self-supervised study) ■ details of any units where there is a requirement of mandatory work placement or structured workplace training. Please include how many hours are required and the arrangements that you will implement for work placement or structured workplace training. <input type="checkbox"/> Outline the expected impact on workplace productivity

Criteria 3: Student Attraction and Retention – 15%

	Criteria questions	How will this be assessed
3.1	<p>Who will be the target student cohort/s for this training?</p> <p>How will you attract students to this training?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Define the target student cohort/s. (You will need to report on this number regardless of the type of funding applied for) <input type="checkbox"/> Detail the student recruitment strategies that you will use for this proposal. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partnerships with industry ■ An existing student pipeline from industry ■ Promotion through industry associations
3.2	<p>What strategies will you put in place to ensure students remain engaged in the training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Outline any wrap around services that you will provide to students including language literacy numeracy (LLN) support, counselling services, special needs support, inclusiveness

² Standards for RTO's Clauses 1;13 – 1.16

	and high retention rates are achieved?	policy and strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Detail any pathway opportunities or entry and exit points for students
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Criteria 4: Cost to deliver, value for money and sustainability – 15%

	Criteria questions	How will this be assessed
4.1	What are the costs for this proposal? How do they provide value for money? What is your sourcing strategy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide breakdown on costings. Complete the Grant Budget Template and upload in the online portal. <input type="checkbox"/> Detail the extent of any co-investment <input type="checkbox"/> Provide detailed evidence of costs associated with course delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Once established, will this course remain sustainable beyond the initial WSSF funding <input type="checkbox"/> Explain how you have ensured that the costs are delivering value for money for the Victorian community <input type="checkbox"/> Have you aligned to Victorian Government procurement policies, if so, which? (Procurement Policies and Framework)
4.2	Over what period of time will this training meet the needs of industry? Will there be a continued need after the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Detail whether the training is to meet an immediate industry need <input type="checkbox"/> If there is a continued need, over what time period do you expect the need to continue <input type="checkbox"/> Detail sustainability methods and strategy for provision of this course beyond the initial WSSF funding period <input type="checkbox"/> Explain how the project provides new learnings for the training and TAFE system, industry and government

Criteria 6: Evaluation and Outcomes – 10%

	Criteria questions	How will this be assessed
5.1	How are you going to measure the impact of your project? Describe how you will capture lessons learnt from the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Explain how the project, taken as a whole, will be evaluated, including the measures of success and outcomes. Examples of evaluation questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How has industry benefited from the project? ▪ How many students gained employment or were upskilled at the end of their training? ▪ Have student and employer satisfaction increased? ▪ Are the project outcomes sustainable? ▪ Has the program been delivered within its scope, budget and expected timeframe? <p>Attach the completed Evaluation Plan Template</p>

Ineligible activities

Funding will not be considered for:

- proposals that create an ongoing liability for Government
- proposals that are deemed more suitable for consideration under the Department's other funding programs e.g. Regional and Specialist Training Fund (RSTF) or Workforce Training Innovation Fund (WTIF)
- business as usual costs included in the "course overheads fees"