# Language Assistants Program 2024

Program Guidelines

## About the program

The Language Assistants Program (LAP) places up to 37 language assistants in selected Victorian government schools from Terms 2 to 4 each year to enrich their languages programs.

Each language assistant is supervised by a qualified language teacher and works across a school cluster comprising a ‘base school’ and one or two other geographically proximate schools. They are sourced from either overseas or within Australia and are fluent in the target language.

Language assistants support language teachers by sharing contemporary knowledge of their language and culture and helping language students to develop fluency and confidence in the target language. They also promote cultural and linguistic appreciation across the broader school community.

Language assistants are employed as part-time (0.8 FTE) Education Support Staff (range 1.2.1) under the *Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2022* (VGSA). The placement usually runs over three terms, commencing on 15 April 2024 and concluding 20 December 2024.

Language assistants work four days a week across their allocated school cluster according to a schedule agreed by the schools.

## Selection of schools

### Program eligibility

A school cluster may apply for an overseas or locally sourced language assistant using the [application form](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/languages-education/guidance/language-assistants-program). To be eligible to host a language assistant, a school cluster must comprise:

* at least one secondary school, and
* one qualified language teacher at each school teaching the target language.

Exceptions:

* Applications from single schools are considered if it is unfeasible to join a cluster (e.g. geographic isolation). However, the school must employ at least one qualified language teacher who is teaching the target language.
* A school cluster may be exempt from including at least one secondary school (i.e. be comprised of up to two primary schools or two secondary schools) based on its individual needs, and would be required to explain why it seeks to apply in this way.

### Application process

Schools interested in participating in the LAP must:

* Apply as a school cluster using the application form. **Schools may only apply once.** Among the schools comprising a school cluster, one must be nominated as the base school (the base school will be responsible for administering the language assistant’s salary and placement).
* State a preference for hosting either an overseas sourced or locally sourced language assistant. Schools are encouraged to apply for overseas sourced language assistants as the recruitment and onboarding of assistants from overseas is supported by the Department’s LAP delivery partner. In contrast, locally sourced assistants are entirely administered by the host schools.
* Nominate whether the application is for full (100 per cent) or partial (70 per cent) subsidisation of the cost of employing a language assistant.

### Placement of language assistants in schools

Applications will be assessed against the criteria for program eligibility and ranked by quality. Shortlisted clusters will then be offered either a fully or partially funded language assistant depending on the preferences in their application (see Funding section below).

Clusters opting for:

* **an overseas sourced assistant** will be supported by the Department’s delivery partner to identify and onboard a suitable candidate
* **a locally sourced assistant** will need to identify their own candidate (who meets the selection criteria) and undertake all recruitment and onboarding processes at the school level.

The Department is solely authorised to appoint language assistants. Schools are not permitted to offer employment to candidates until approved to do so by the Department.

## Selection of language assistants

Language assistants must:

* hold a bachelor’s degree (majoring in the relevant target language) and/or possess mother tongue proficiency in the relevant target language
* have a level of English proficiency equivalent to an IELTS score of no less than 6
* hold a valid Working with Children Check at the commencement of their role, and
* be prepared to work a minimum of 7.6 hours daily for four days a week.

### Visa requirements

Overseas sourced assistants must hold a Temporary Activity visa (subclass 408) for the duration of their employment in 2023.

Locally sourced assistants must be a citizen or permanent resident of Australia or a temporary resident on an appropriate visa that allows for working privileges for the duration of their employment. Candidates on a Permanent Partner visa (subclass 801) or Temporary Partner visa (subclass 820) are eligible to work as a locally sourced assistant.

## Funding

Language assistants are either fully or partially funded by the Department through the Student Resource Package as shown in the table below. Funding will be provided to the ‘base school’.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DE contribution**  | **School cluster contribution**  | **Number of assistants available** |
| Full funding (100 per cent)Department pays approximately $32,300 | Nil | 12 |
| Partial funding (70 per cent)Department pays approximately $22,610 | 30 per centSchool cluster pays approximately $9,690 | 25 |

### Eligibility for full funding

In allocating fully-funded places, the Department will consider the cluster’s:

* socio-economic disadvantage (Student Family Occupation and Education)
* bank balances (a financial assessment of each school’s bank balance, operating reserves, existing financial commitments, and prior year SRP credit balances)
* history of compliance with the language education requirements set by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority, and
* specific languages needs (e.g. schools without a native-speaking language teacher).

## Key roles and responsibilities

Language assistants are supported by key school and departmental staff, including school principals, language assistant coordinators, language teachers, school business managers and the Department.

### Language assistants

* Participate in classes and activities as determined in consultation with their school’s language assistant coordinator
* Participate in planning activities with their school’s language teacher(s) or languages faculty
* Provide information and support for the delivery of their schools’ languages program
* Assist with the development of resources, including teacher professional learning, to support the delivery of their school’s language programs, and
* Participate in professional development activities provided by the Department.

### Principals at base schools

* Nominate a school staff member as the language assistant coordinator to supervise and guide their language assistant
* Onboard the assistant through a school-based orientation and induction
* Ensure that the assistant does not assume the role of a qualified language teacher or undertake teaching duties without supervision
* Ensure that the assistant is aware of the Child Safe Standards and their mandatory reporting obligations (under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*), and is appropriately trained to undertake mandatory reporting
* Oversee the welfare of the assistant and respond to any issues in a timely manner
* Provide the assistant with a personal workspace at the school.

### Language assistant coordinators

* Assist the assistant to apply for a Working with Children Check and complete any forms
* Liaise with the assistant to provide them with information about the school cluster and its communities
* Ensure that the assistant is aware of DE’s conflict management approach
* Monitor the welfare of the assistant and respond to any issues in a timely manner
* Coordinate the day-to-day work activities of the assistant, including the establishment of a manageable timetable across the school cluster
* Ensure lesson planning and preparation with the assistant occurs on a weekly basis
* Facilitate opportunities for the assistant to integrate into the broader school community (such as invitations to functions and excursions outside of scheduled language lessons)
* Liaise with teachers at other schools to ensure the assistant is receiving support to perform their role
* Provide feedback to the Department at the conclusion of the assistant’s placement.

### Business managers at base schools

Business managers at base schools are responsible for administrating the language assistant’s employment, including collecting and appropriately retaining their Working with Children Check. In employing language assistants, business managers must note that:

* overseas sourced language assistants are employed through the Department’s central office to enable them to be sponsored for a Temporary Activity visa (subclass 408). Base schools will be advised once their language assistant’s employment paperwork has been finalised so that they can finalise onboarding using their typical recruitment and onboarding procedures
* locally sourced language assistants may be directly onboarded by base schools using their usual recruitment and onboarding procedures, provided the Department has approved their nominated candidate.

## Key dates

| Activity | Date |
| --- | --- |
| Application period ends | **11 August 2023** |
| Notification of application outcome  | **5 September 2023** |
| Confirmation of schools having sourced a language assistant | **24 October 2023** |
| Language assistants onboarded | **12 December 2023** |
| Language assistants commence placement | **15 April 2024** |
| Language assistants conclude placement | **20 December 2024** |

## Resources

For recruitment-related enquiries, please contact Schools Recruitment via schools.recruitment@education.vic.gov.au or on 1800 641 943.

For assistance regarding leave and payroll as well as the Student Resource Package, please contact School People Services on 1800 641 943.

## Application submissions

Please provide an electronic copy of your completed application form to Thi Nguyen (Thi.Nguyen2@education.vic.gov.au) by close of business on **Friday 11 August 2023**.

For further information and enquiries please contact Thi by email or on (03) 7022 1378.