

# Fee-Free Construction Fund

## Grant Program Guidelines

ST069 (2026)



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# 1. Aim

Through the Fee-Free TAFE Skills Agreement (formerly known as the 12-Month Skills Agreement), the Australian Government has partnered with state and territory governments to deliver fee-free TAFE and vocational education and training (VET) places across Australia over 2023 to 2026.

As part of the 2024-25 Budget, the Australian Government committed additional fee-free TAFE and VET places for training relevant to the housing and construction sector.

The Fee-Free Construction Fund (the Fund) supports Tasmania's delivery of training places under the Fee-Free TAFE Skills Agreement. The aim of the Fund is to support courses critical to the construction industry and housing supply sector in Tasmania.

The construction sector is recognised as a priority area of current workforce need with projected high-growth and emerging skills demand. This aligns with the National Skills Agreement, which identifies housing supply as a national priority under the National Skills Plan. The Tasmanian Government is also committed to supporting excellence in our building and construction workforce through the Tasmanian Skills Plan (action 1.8).

## 2. Funding available

A total of \$900,000 in funding is available for the Fee-Free Construction Fund in 2026.

A maximum of \$200,000 will be funded per applicant.

Requests for funding may exceed the available budget. This means that not all applications that are recommended for funding will receive the full number of requested training places.

The Fund is administered by Skills Tasmania, a division of the Department of State Growth that manages the Government funded training and workforce development system in Tasmania in partnership with industry, training providers and employers, as set out in the *Training and Workforce Development Act 2013 (the Act)*.

## 3. Eligibility

### 3.1. Eligible applicants

To be deemed eligible, applicants must:

- be a Skills Tasmania endorsed Registered Training Organisation
- have the qualification/s, accredited course/s, skill set/s and/or unit(s) of competency included on the RTO's scope of registration for delivery in Tasmania
- be financially viable (Applicants must provide financial statements for 2022, 2023 and 2024. If you are yet to prepare FY2024 statements, you must provide management accounts from Xero, MYOB or equivalent)
- have a current contract of public liability insurance for at least \$20 million for:
  - each individual claim, and
  - series of claims arising out of a single occurrence.

TasTAFE is an eligible applicant under this Fund where it can demonstrate an existing delivery partnership with a Tasmanian-based participant(s) in the Tasmanian training and workforce development

system (i.e. a Tasmanian based employer or Tasmanian based industry peak organisation) working within the construction industry and housing supply sector in Tasmania.

Applicants must ensure that all eligibility requirements are met prior to submitting the application and for the duration of any subsequent funding agreement. If the eligibility criteria are not met, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be assessed or considered for grant funding.

A financially viable entity is one that is not under external administration, is not being wound up, dissolved, or trading while insolvent nor where a liquidator has been appointed. To demonstrate financial viability the applicant must be able to demonstrate the ability to generate sufficient income to meet operating costs, debt commitments and, where applicable, to allow for growth while maintaining service levels.

Applications submitted by a third party will not be accepted without evidence of permission in the application. Where training is to be delivered under a third-party arrangement, the third-party agreement will be required to be submitted as part of the application process.

## Declarations

Eligible applicants are required to complete numerous declarations in the application form including:

- a declaration against the applicant eligibility criteria.
- a declaration that the applicant has read and will comply with:
  - the Skills Tasmania Learner Eligibility for Government Training Subsidies Policy Statement
  - section 3.2.3 of the Skills Tasmania Grant Agreement and Standard Conditions Manual - School Learner Status.
- a compliance history regarding all RTO regulatory and funding contract obligations (across all jurisdictions).
- a general declaration at the end of the application form to ensure that all grant requirements are understood.

Consideration of applicant responses to all declarations will be incorporated into funding decisions.

You may be asked to provide information or documentation to support your eligibility claims, either as part of the application process, or after you have submitted your application. The information you provide may be subject to authenticity checks.

This program has limited funding. Not all eligible applications will receive a grant.

## 3.2. Ineligible applicants

Tasmanian School based RTOs (Schools as defined in the *Tasmanian Education Act 2016*) are not eligible for funding under the existing Skills Tasmania funding arrangements.

## 3.3. Eligible learners

The following learners are considered jobseekers and are eligible to receive subsidised training under the Fee-Free Construction Fund:

1. individuals out of work
2. individuals who are underemployed, which is defined as employed people who would prefer, and are available for, more hours of work than they currently have, including part-time workers.

3. individuals looking to upskill or gain new skills outside of their current employment. For the purposes of the Fee-Free Construction Fund this means training that does not relate to the individual's current employment and is not supported by their current employer.

### **Fee-Free Tafe Skills Agreement priority groups**

Applicants will be asked to describe how they intend to promote training opportunities available under this Fund to the Fee-Free Tafe Skills Agreement priority groups. The priority groups are Aboriginal people, young people (17-24), people out of work or receiving income support, unpaid carers, women facing economic insecurity, women undertaking study in non-traditional fields, people with disability and certain categories of visa holders.

Eligible learners will need to meet any course specific entry requirements, be eligible for a training place regardless of their prior qualifications and can undertake training in more than one Fee-Free Construction Fund qualification, course or skill set per round.

## **3.4. Ineligible learners**

Learners are not eligible for a place under the Fee-Free Construction Fund if they are:

- not a Tasmanian resident
- currently enrolled at a Tasmanian school, as defined by the *Education Act 2016*
- currently funded for the same training by another funding source
- apprentices and trainees with a current training contract
- employees of a Tasmanian government agency as defined in the Skills Tasmania Learner Eligibility for Government Training Subsidies Policy Statement.

Information about eligibility for visa holders is available in the Skills Tasmania Learner Eligibility for Government Training Subsidies Policy Statement.

## **3.5. Eligible expenditure**

Funding is available for the delivery of pre-apprenticeship focussed nationally recognised training and assessment in either Certificate I and II level qualifications, or similar level accredited courses, skill sets, custom skill sets or stand-alone units of competency, that fall under the Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package (CPC).

Learner support services and work placement activities that assist work entry and further training options for eligible learners are also considered eligible expenditure. The costs for these services and activities must be considered by the applicant when determining its subsidy request. The application form will require these costs to be sufficiently justified separate to the training and assessment component of the requested subsidy amount for each training product.

Preference will be given to training that takes a multi-trade approach, and to training that supports significant future Tasmanian workforce needs, such as those linked to major projects like the proposed Macquarie Point stadium or other significant building and construction initiatives.

The training must:

- relate to job entry requirements, support employment outcomes for learners and provide adequate learner support.
- provide learners with the opportunity to strengthen and/or develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the industry that relates to their training as well as to achieve a skill set, accredited course or qualification.

Online training delivery is an eligible activity to deliver the theoretical elements of nationally recognised training. Where online delivery is proposed, applicants must ensure that quality of service is maintained by:

- identifying and providing individual learner support
- addressing all training package requirements (including all practical and work placement aspects), and
- complying with the principles of assessment and rules of evidence embedded in the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* or its successor.

RTO's intending to deliver services online, must specify in their written response to assessment criteria and supporting evidence, what percentage of the overall training delivery will be delivered online and how the delivery methodology/ies will address training and assessment of practically oriented units of competency.

## 3.6. Ineligible expenditure

The following activities are not eligible to be funded under the Fee-Free Construction Fund:

- Non-nationally recognised training
- Training that does not fall under the Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package (CPC)
- Any form of post-trade training for learners with existing qualifications under the under the Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package (CPC).

## 4. Assessment criteria

Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the following assessment criteria.

The SmartyGrants application form requires the applicant to address each criterion individually and to attach relevant evidence to support claims made in addressing the questions.

<b>Criterion 1 – Need for training, alignment with construction industry and housing supply sector priorities, and Fee Free Construction priority cohorts (50%)</b>	
<b>1A. How did you identify that the training is needed in Tasmania? (10%)</b> <b>1B. How did you determine the requested number of training places? (10%)</b>	
<p><i>Assessment elements for this criterion include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rationale for need for each training product or group of training products requested is clear.</li> <li>• There is a clear explanation of the communication process with stakeholders that the RTO has consulted with to determine the need for the training requested.</li> <li>• The number of training places requested for each training product is clearly supported by stakeholders or other evidence.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Evidence for this criterion may include (noting the list is not exhaustive, nor prescriptive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters from employer/s, industry groups, Regional Jobs Hubs supporting the need for the training and the number of training places requested.</li> <li>• Results from consultative processes.</li> <li>• Verifiable data on workforce circumstances and or issues, and/or evidence of data analysis</li> <li>• Data extrapolated from previous years.</li> <li>• Learner waitlists.</li> </ul>

<b>1C. Describe which construction industry and housing supply sector priorities the RTO is trying to address through delivery of the requested training. (15%)</b>	
<p><i>Assessment elements for this criterion include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with Government priorities, including the Tasmanian Skills Plan, industry compacts, sectors and occupations of high value to the Tasmanian economy.</li> <li>• The level of alignment between the requested training products and places and the various sources detailing government and industry priorities.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Evidence for this criterion may include (noting the list is not exhaustive, nor prescriptive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of the Tasmanian Skills Plan, and Industry compacts</li> <li>• Tasmanian Government projects and commitments</li> <li>• Australian Government priorities</li> <li>• Industry priorities.</li> </ul>
<b>1D. Describe how you intend to promote training opportunities available under this Fund to the Fee-Free Tafe Skills Agreement priority groups. (15%)</b>	
<p><i>Assessment elements for this criterion include:</i></p> <p>There is a clear explanation of how the applicant intends to promote the requested training to the priority groups – Aboriginal people, young people (17-24), people out of work or receiving income support, unpaid carers, women facing economic insecurity, women undertaking study in non-traditional fields, people with disability and certain categories of visa holders.</p>	<p><i>Evidence for this criterion may include (noting the list is not exhaustive, nor prescriptive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of the applicant's previous experience in promoting training opportunities to the target cohorts</li> <li>• Evidence of the applicant's existing promotion and recruitment activities or experience that would assist to target these cohorts.</li> </ul>
<b>Criterion 2 – Quality delivery (40%)</b>	
<b>Learner outcomes – (15%)</b>	
<b>2A. How do you intend to identify individual learner needs?</b>	
<b>2B. Once a learner's needs are identified, what will you do to support them?</b>	
<b>2C. How do you monitor the support provided to ensure it is working for the learner?</b>	
<b>2D. How do you intend to measure learner satisfaction?</b>	
<p><i>Assessment elements for this criterion include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a clear understanding that learner support is not limited LLN.</li> <li>• There is a clear explanation of how individual learner needs are identified; what the RTO implements to meet identified needs and how the RTO monitors the efficacy of the support being provided.</li> <li>• The explanation of how support needs are identified, implemented and monitored clearly show who is responsible for what, when, where and how.</li> <li>• There is a clear explanation of how the RTO checks learner's satisfaction with all training, assessment and support services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Your supporting evidence must demonstrate how you have done this previously.</b></p> <p><i>Evidence for this criterion may include (noting the list is not exhaustive, nor prescriptive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of completed training support plans for individual learners, file notes detailing support activities implemented for individual students, changes made to individual support plans based on monitoring activities identifying a lack of progress., before and after test results showing learner improvement post support.</li> <li>• Schedule/s showing the times and dates for additional support classes.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samples of qualifications held by RTO staff enabling the enhancement of learner support</li> <li>• Contracts/agreements with third party support providers.</li> <li>• NCVER Student Outcomes Survey Results.</li> <li>• Summary of student responses to internal surveys.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note that any evidence which includes a learner's name must have the learners name redacted.</i></p>
<p><b>Employer outcomes – (15%)</b></p> <p><b>2E. What strategies have you and will you implement to identify individual employer needs for the requested training products?</b></p> <p><b>2F. How have you and will you monitor and measure that what you have implemented is meeting individual employer needs?</b></p>	
<p><i>Assessment elements for this criterion include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a clear explanation of how individual employer needs are identified, what the RTO implements to meet identified needs, and how the RTO monitors the employer's satisfaction with the service provided.</li> <li>• The explanation of how employer needs are identified, implemented and monitored clearly shows who is responsible for what, when, where and how.</li> <li>• There is a clear understanding of how the training outcomes will impact workplace activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Your supporting evidence must demonstrate how you have done this previously.</b></p> <p><i>Evidence for this criterion may include (noting the list is not exhaustive, nor prescriptive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Populated needs analysis templates.</li> <li>• Meeting minutes / notes.</li> <li>• Examples of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ industry consultation plans and summary of results.</li> <li>○ Partnerships / collaboration.</li> <li>○ contextualisation.</li> <li>○ flexibility.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Employer Quality Indicator data.</li> <li>• Summary of employer responses to internal surveys.</li> <li>• Summary of employer responses to independent third-party surveys contracted by the RTO.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Responsive to industry – (10%)</b></p> <p><b>2G. Which industry bodies do you have a relationship with and how has this influenced your training delivery?</b></p> <p>(Note that this criterion relates to industry bodies and not individual employers. Industry bodies in this context are defined as organisations whose membership is made up of numerous organisations with allied interests. Membership to the industry body can be free, or fee based).</p>	
<p>Note that this criterion relates to organisations whose membership is made up of smaller organisations with allied interests (not just single employers). Membership can be free, or fee based.</p> <p><i>Assessment elements for this criterion include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a clear explanation of which relevant bodies the RTO has a relationship and contact with.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Evidence for this criterion may include (noting the list is not exhaustive, nor prescriptive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry body membership</li> <li>• Holding positions in the governance structure of industry bodies</li> <li>• Contributions to consultative processes</li> <li>• Attendance at industry events</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The explanation clearly shows a strong breadth and depth of connections with relevant industry bodies.</li> <li>• There is a clear explanation of what the RTO is doing differently based on understanding industry need and trends.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tables summarising changes made to service delivery (before and after status) based on industry feedback</li> <li>• Letters of thanks or recognition from industry bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Criterion 3 – Capacity to deliver (10%)</b>	
<p><b>3A. Describe the RTO’s capacity to deliver the training in the context of the RTOs other funding and training commitments.</b></p> <p><b>3B. How do you plan to enrol learners, deliver training and ensure successful completions (Is there a delivery schedule, timetable, project plan etc?)</b></p> <p><b>3C. How will you ensure appropriate facilities, equipment and resources are available for the number of learners being delivered to?</b></p> <p><b>3D. How do you intend to manage any barriers to achieving the training, assessment and support services delivery? (Do you have a risk management plan, or similar, for the program?)</b></p>	
<p><i>Assessment elements for this criterion include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a clear plan to enrol learners, deliver training and ensure completions that is realistic and achievable.</li> <li>• There is a clear explanation as to how the RTO will ensure access to the facilities and equipment (including learning materials), required to deliver the services the specific number of learners.</li> <li>• In the context of the requested training products and number of training places, please describe how the RTO will ensure enough: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ recruitment staff.</li> <li>○ appropriately qualified trainer assessors.</li> <li>○ support staff.</li> <li>○ administration staff to process certification.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There is a clear explanation of how the requested training can be delivered in the context of other funding and training commitments.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Evidence for this criterion may include (noting the list is not exhaustive, nor prescriptive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project plan/s.</li> <li>• Training delivery schedule/s.</li> <li>• Facilities and equipment list/s (appropriate for the specific training product and number of students)</li> <li>• Staffing allocation plan.</li> <li>• Risk management plan.</li> <li>• Training staff skills/experience/qualification matrices.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note that RTO’s do not have to own all the facilities and equipment but must be able to demonstrate timely access to the required facilities and equipment for the specific training product and number of learners.</i></p>

## 4.1. Supporting evidence

Applicants should attach evidence to support any claims made.

Where there is no evidence to support claims made or the information provided in the application, the assessment score will be affected.

Any evidence provided must be attached to the relevant criterion, should have a clear document title and be referred to in the text in the application addressing the related criterion.

## 4.2. Learner support needs

Skills Tasmania considers that learner support needs are split into two types of need. The first is educational support and the second is wellbeing support needs. Educational support requires tailored instructions strategies to support the learner's engagement and progression through to successful completion of the training product.

Wellbeing support needs relate to providing services and resources to assist the learner's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Examples of support strategies for each type of need are provided below, noting that the lists are not prescriptive or exhaustive:

- Educational support
  - Tutoring
  - additional classes
  - customising resources
  - practice tests
  - regular touch points with delivery staff, checking progress
  - assistive technology
  - reasonable adjustments
  - delivering sessions on learning how to learn, and
  - Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) support.
- Wellbeing support
  - referrals to external providers for things such as mental health, addiction, financial support, domestic violence, youth support networks etc
  - adjusting training delivery times to accommodate child rearing responsibilities
  - subsidising transport (cab charges, bus fares, courtesy bus etc), and
  - providing culture-specific or demographic-specific supports in their local community (e.g. youth support networks).

## 5. Timeframes

No applications will be accepted after the closing date and time.

Applicants are advised to submit applications well before the closing date and time. This allows time for applicants to raise any concerns when submitting their application and to increase the likelihood of any issues that may impact lodgement being resolved prior to the closing time.

Applications lodged before the closing time can be reopened by Skills Tasmania to allow applicants to make amendments. A reopened application must be resubmitted before the closing time to be eligible for consideration for funding.

Description	Date/time
Fund opens for applications	19 November 2025
Fund closes	6 February 2026, 5:00PM (AEDT)
Applications assessed	February 2026
Applicants notified	February 2026

## 6. Contact details

For information about the Fee-Free Construction Fund, contact:

- Grant Program Manager, Skills Tasmania
- [jobseekerfund@skills.tas.gov.au](mailto:jobseekerfund@skills.tas.gov.au)
- 03 6165 6037

## 7. How to apply

Applications must be submitted using the SmartyGrants online grant management system.

Applicants must register with SmartyGrants before making an application. There is a Help Guide for Applicants available from Smarty Grants. This can be accessed via the SmartyGrants website at:

<https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>

This is a competitive, merit-based process. Meeting the eligibility criteria will not automatically result in a successful outcome.

These are the steps:

- 1. Prepare:** Read the Grant Program Guidelines before starting your application. The application form is designed to help structure applicants' responses to the eligibility and assessment criteria as set out in these Guidelines.
- 2. Start:** The application form is available in [SmartyGrants](#).
- 3. Confirm:** Ensure all information and documentation is accurate and attached. You may not be able to change an application or provide additional information after you submit your application.
- 4. Submit:** You will receive an email notification after you submit your application. Keep this notification as confirmation of your submission.
- 5. Notification:** We will notify you with the outcome of your application in writing.

You may be asked to provide information or documentation after you have submitted your application. You must provide this information within three working days, unless otherwise advised. Failure to provide the information within the timeframe may result in the application being unsuccessful. The information you provide may be subject to authenticity checks.

Applicants are limited to one application in this grant round.

### Unsuccessful applicants

Applicants will be deemed ineligible if they do not meet the applicant eligibility requirements.

Applicants will be deemed unsuccessful if they do not adequately address and evidence the assessment criteria or do not meet the minimum quality benchmark score.

Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with an opportunity to receive written feedback on their application.

## 8. Calculating training subsidies

Applicants must use the Fee-Free Construction Fund – Subsidy Request Spreadsheet (SRS) to detail their funding request. The SRS file is available within the SmartyGrants application form and must be uploaded with your application.

Note: in the SRS, applicants will be required to manually calculate the Government Subsidy Amount and apply any applicable loadings. If you require support for this element of your application, please contact the Grant Program Manager.

### 8.1. Government Subsidy Amount

Skills Tasmania subsidies are set in accordance with the *Skills Tasmania Policy Statement – What we pay for training (Subsidy Policy)*. This Policy Statement is for use by Skills Tasmania and for reference by RTOs applying for funding.

The Policy provides that Skills Tasmania subsidises training and assessment services to reduce the cost to learners and employers for the services provided by RTOs. This encourages greater levels of participation in training than would occur without government support.

The Government Subsidy Amount is the total amount in (\$) that the Government will contribute towards the cost of training and assessment services per learner, which includes any applicable loadings.

Training and assessment services must be provided fee-free for learners under this Fund.

The Government Subsidy Amount for the Fund will therefore be 100% of the Skills Tasmania Estimated Cost, plus applicable loadings, as explained in the following formula: Fee Free Construction Fund Government Subsidy Amount (\$) = Estimated Cost at 100% + Loadings = (\$) Total.

#### **Applying set loadings**

Set loadings are available to deliver to particular learner cohorts or locations. The loading types and rates are set out in the Subsidy Policy and in the SRS. Applicants can select more than one applicable loading per training product as part of the application process.

When requesting location loadings, applicants are required to provide detailed evidence to support the increased cost of delivery, based on the location's delivery setting. Applications for location loadings that are not sufficiently evidenced through the application process are unlikely to be approved.

Applicants need to be aware that successful applications for any loading types, including location loadings, will be reviewed by Skills Tasmania as part of our increased focus on monitoring RTO compliance with all contractual obligations. If approved, Skills Tasmania may require successful applicants to provide evidence of learners meeting the parameters of whatever loading has been approved.

### 8.2. Requests for subsidies higher than the Government Subsidy Amount

As the Government Subsidy Amount is only a contribution to the cost of training, requests for subsidies higher than the Government Subsidy Amount are treated as an exception. The exception instances are

described in the Subsidy Policy. You will be required to identify the applicable exception in the Subsidy Request Spreadsheet.

Requests for a subsidy higher than the Government Subsidy Amount will only be considered where a clear and detailed rationale is provided in the SmartyGrants application, with strong supporting evidence.

Note: loadings will not be applied to higher subsidy requests in the Subsidy Request Spreadsheet. You will need to account for these in your rationale.

The following assessment elements will be used to scrutinise higher subsidy requests. The assessment elements align with the exceptions statement in the Policy and include:

- ensuring the higher subsidy request is not part of business-as-usual RTO operational costs (i.e. the expense will be borne by the RTO even if the grant application is unsuccessful)
- the rationale provided for the request is clearly linked to the training products and the number of training places requested
- there is sufficient detail to determine exactly what any increased costs are attributed to
- evidence is provided to justify additional costs (i.e. quotes, invoices, payslips (redacted), pricing advertisements, etc)
- comparisons with the subsidies requested by other applicants proposing to deliver similar training products
- consideration of delivery to Fee-Free Tafe Skills Agreement priority groups
- consideration of where the requested training products fit in the Skill Tasmania Snapshot of Training Needs or the Skills Tasmania Qualification Priority Course list, and
- Skills Tasmania checking the accuracy and reliability of any evidence provided to support requests for higher subsidies.

Successful requests for higher subsidy requests in the past will not form part of the considerations for higher subsidy requests in this grant round.

## 8.3. Eligible learner contributions to the cost of training

**Training and assessment services must be provided fee-free for learners.**

Learners can be asked to pay for learning materials (such as textbooks or protective clothing) not covered by the training and assessment component. These fees (and any other fees e.g. administration fees) must be minimal and not exceed the provider's existing requirements.

# 9. Application assessment and funding allocation

Applications that meet the eligibility criteria undergo a two-stage process before a funding recommendation is made to the General Manager, Skills and Workforce: first, an assessment of the application against the assessment criteria, followed by the allocation of funding.

## 9.1. Assessment process

The assessment process is conducted by independent assessors using a structured framework and scoring methodology that aligns with the assessment criteria and the weightings outlined in Section 4 of these Guidelines. This process is overseen by the Grant Program Manager.

Stage 1 of the assessment process is where each assessor independently evaluates every criterion for each application, employing the approved methodology and data recording tools.

Following the individual assessments, the assessors convene to discuss the applications and their respective scores. The total score for each application is calculated as an average of the scores provided by all assessors.

A benchmark score, representing an acceptable minimum standard of quality determined by the scoring rubric is established by the Grant Program Manager in accordance with the scoring rubric. Applications that do not meet this benchmark are unlikely to be considered for funding. Those that achieve the benchmark score proceed to Stage 2 of the process (the funding allocation) for further consideration, although this does not guarantee funding of all training places requested.

Requests for subsidies higher than the Government subsidy amount are also scrutinised during the assessment process. The justification provided by the applicant is assessed using a decision-making tool aligned with the scoring rubric.

## 9.2. Funding allocation

Skills Tasmania aims to maximise public benefit and positive outcomes for the Tasmanian community in any funding round. The funding allocation will consist of an equitable and diverse mix of applications that align with Tasmania's building and construction workforce needs, underpinned by the quality standards established by the assessment benchmarking process.

Given the finite availability of funding, there is no guarantee that every high-quality application will secure funding for the full number of training places requested. Skills Tasmania reserves the right to offer applicants an adjusted number of training places, particularly in cases where the demand for funding exceeds the allocated budget.

In the funding allocation process, an allocation methodology, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analyses is applied to the applications that met the benchmark score set by the selection panel. This determines the recommended funding allocation. The method considers:

- the Fee Free TAFE priority groups
- the Government Funded Priority Courses list
- the economic value of the qualifications, skill sets, and occupations to the Tasmanian economy and alignment with government priorities
- the estimated demand for training places in specific industry qualifications, and
- the applicant's previous enrolment performance under Skills Tasmania grant deeds.

Applicants may be offered a lower number of places where:

- Multiple training providers request funding for similar training.
- There is a significant number of training places to be offered in one (or adjoining) regions.
- A single training provider has requested funding for a large number of training places, or a large number of training places for one training product.

The recommendation is then compiled into a selection report that details the assessment process and the steps taken in the funding allocation stage to determine the training products and training places. The recommendations are then considered for approval by the appropriate delegate.

# 10. Funding agreement, reporting and payments

## 10.1. Funding agreement for successful applicants

Applicants that are approved for a Fee-Free Construction Fund will be required to enter either a *Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania) Grant Deed* on behalf of the Crown in Right of Tasmania or a direct Purchasing Agreement. Breaches of a grant condition/s may lead to amendment or cancellation of the RTO's grant agreement.

The details of all successful applicants will be published on the Skills Tasmania website.

## 10.2. Training commencement

It is a condition of the Fund that training in all places must commence within six months of execution of the Grant Deed.

Training places that have not been allocated to a learner by 31 December 2026 will be withdrawn by Skills Tasmania. For the purposes of the agreement, 'allocation' means that the learner has commenced training.

The 'training can commence from' and 'training must commence by' dates will be identified in the Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania) Grant Deed

## 10.3. Reporting and payments

### 10.3.1. Reporting

RTOs with a *Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania) Grant Deed* are required to report training activity data to Skills Tasmania monthly.

The training activity data submitted by the RTO must be in accordance with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS). This section of the Skills Tasmania website provides more information regarding reporting: [Reporting my activity](#).

For the purposes of the Fee Free Construction Fund, RTOs must report the '85 — Not yet started' Outcome identifier — national data element in its monthly reporting (where applicable) to capture learners who are enrolled but not yet commenced. This is a requirement to enable Skills Tasmania to meet the Australian Government's Fee-Free TAFE Skills Agreement reporting requirements.

If an RTO receives funding for a custom skill set, this must be reported in the same manner as a full Qualification or Training Package Skill Set (i.e. activity must be reported in both the NAT00120 and NAT00130). To facilitate reporting, Skills Tasmania will allocate a name and code for all custom skill sets, which is to be reported in the same way as a qualification code (e.g. CHC33015 - Certificate III in Individual Support). This means that custom skill set completions must be reported in the NAT 130, as well as the corresponding NAT 120.

### 10.3.2. Grant payments

Grant payments are based on RTOs submitting validated AVETMISS learner activity data to Skills Tasmania. Details on payment arrangements can be found in the AVETMISS Payments, Reporting and VET Research and Evaluation section of the *Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania) Grant Deed*.

Payment arrangements for custom skill sets are identical to the payment structure for a full qualification and training package skill sets.

## 11. Appealing a decision

If your application is unsuccessful, you may appeal the decision.

The appeals process ensures that all applicants have been treated fairly.

We will consider appeals that relate to administrative process issues in grants management.

All requests must be in writing and addressed to Director Purchasing, Policy and Programs, Skills Tasmania. Your request must be received within 28 days from the date of State Growth notifying you of the decision about your application.

For further information about the process, contact the Grant Program Manager via email at [jobseekerfund@skills.tas.gov.au](mailto:jobseekerfund@skills.tas.gov.au) or phone (03) 6165 6037.

## 12. Taxation and financial implications

Grants that deliver vocational education and training services are not subject to Goods and Services Tax (GST). For more information, contact the Australian Tax Office.

Grants distributed under this program may be treated as income by the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

We strongly recommend that, prior to applying, you seek independent advice from a tax advisor, financial advisor and/or the ATO, about the possible tax implications for receiving the grant.

Information on invoices can be found on our Business Tasmania website:

[www.business.tas.gov.au/manage\\_a\\_business/invoices](http://www.business.tas.gov.au/manage_a_business/invoices).

## 13. Publicity of grant assistance

State Growth is accountable for its spending of public funds, including providing grants. As part of the accountability process, State Growth may publicise, without further notice, information about the grants provided, including the level of financial assistance, the identity of the recipient, and the purpose of the financial assistance.

If you have received a grant from State Growth:

- despite any confidentiality or intellectual property right subsisting in the grant funding agreement or deed, a party may publish all or any part of the grant funding agreement or deed without reference to another party, and you consent to the disclosure of your name in this context.
- all obligations under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* (Tas) still apply.

The details of all successful applicants will be published on the Skills Tasmania website.

### **Acknowledgement of funding**

All advertising and materials provided to learners must include this statement:

Fee Free TAFE is a jointly funded initiative of the Australian and Tasmanian Government's.



## 14. True and accurate information

You must take care to provide true and accurate information. Any information that is found to be false or misleading may result in action being taken and grant funds, if already provided, may be required to be repaid to State Growth.

## 15. Right to information

Information provided to State Growth may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the *Right to Information Act 2009*.

## 16. Information collection and usage

Personal information will be managed in accordance with the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*. This information may be accessed by the individual to whom it relates, on request to State Growth.

State Growth may use and disclose the information you provide for the purposes of discharging its functions under the Program Guidelines and otherwise for the purposes of the program and related uses. State Growth may also use information received in applications and during the delivery of the project for reporting purposes.

## 17. Disclaimer

Although care has been taken in the preparation of this document, no warranty, express or implied, is given by the Crown in Right of Tasmania, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information it contains.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage that may arise from anything contained in or omitted from or that may arise from the use of this document, and any person relying on this document and the information it contains does so at their own risk absolutely.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania does not accept liability or responsibility for any loss incurred by an applicant that are in any way related to the program.



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