

Funding Guidelines – Pre-service teacher Placement Grant program

Encouraging pre-service teachers to undertake teaching placements in remote, regional and specialist Victorian government schools

November 2023

These program guidelines are intended to support pre-service teachers applying to the Pre-service Teacher Placement Grant (**PPG**) program. The guidelines detail how the PPG program will work, including eligibility criteria and the application and payment process. These guidelines also include terms and conditions and a privacy statement. Applicants are encouraged to read this information in full.

1. About the Program

1.1. Background

Demand for teachers in Victorian government schools continues to grow, with particular workforce challenges in remote, regional and specialist schools.

An important part of building the pipeline of teachers in remote, regional and specialist schools is supporting pre-service teachers (**PSTs**) to undertake teaching placements during their teaching degree in these schools. However, the cost of undertaking a placement in remote or regional areas, which can include accommodation and travel, can be a barrier to PSTs considering where to do their placements.

1.2. Funding purpose

The PPG program (the **Program**) is designed to support and incentivise PSTs, including those already living in remote and regional areas, to undertake teaching placements in remote, regional and specialist Victorian government schools. Greater exposure to these settings can help build PST familiarity and connection to schools and communities, increasing the number of graduates seeking employment in these schools, as well as better preparing the workforce for future success in remote, regional and specialist settings.

The Program will provide PSTs undertaking placements in eligible Victorian government schools with a per-day grant for their placement days.

1.3. How the program works

The Program is open to PSTs at any stage of their initial teacher education (ITE) degree with a Victorian course provider, who are undertaking their placements in an eligible school between 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2025. Please see section 4 for full eligibility criteria.

PSTs already based in a regional or remote location can receive the grants if they take up an eligible placement in an eligible school. If a PST undertakes multiple placements in eligible schools, they can receive the grant with respect to each eligible placement.

PSTs will apply for the Program via an online program portal. Once an application is assessed as eligible and following confirmation of the placement by the course provider and/or host school, PSTs will be paid the grant according to Section 2 (below) – Available funding and payment schedule.

Grant payments will be made into an Australian bank account nominated by the eligible PST up to 30 days after confirmation of the placement by the course provider and/or host school.

The grant is funded through the Victorian Department of Education (DE) and will be administered on behalf of the State of Victoria by its departments including the Department of Government Services (DGS) and the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) which are the departments responsible for administering the payments directly to PSTs.

2. Available funding and payment schedule

2.1. Available funding

Teaching placements are paid as follows:

Victorian government school location	Per-day grant
Regional Urban centres and specialist schools in Melbourne	\$140/day
Inner Regional areas (including specialist schools)	\$280/day
Outer Regional and Remote areas (including specialist schools)	\$420/day

2.2. Payment schedule

2.2.1. Where teaching placements commence from 1 July 2023 and are completed on or before 15 November 2023

PSTs who undertake placements in eligible schools commencing on or after 1 July 2023, where the placements are completed on or before 15 November 2023, will receive the grant as backdated payments.

After application to the Program, payments will be made to PSTs following confirmation by the relevant course provider that an eligible teaching placement has been completed.

2.2.2. Where teaching placements commence after 1 July 2023 and are completed on or after 16 November 2023

PSTs who commence placements in eligible schools after 1 July 2023 and complete them on or after 16 November 2023, will receive the grant in two parts:

First Payment

50% of the total grant (calculated by the planned number of placement days) will be paid after successful application to the Program and confirmation by the relevant course provider that a PST placement is proceeding at an eligible host school. DGS or DE will seek confirmation from the relevant course provider of an eligible teaching

placement occurring, no earlier than 4 weeks prior to the placement commencement date.

Second Payment

Following completion of the placement, DGS or DE will seek confirmation from the host school that the placement occurred as per the grant agreement entered into by the PST, and eligible PSTs will receive the remaining 50% of the grant.

Note: Variations to placement location and/or duration after application submission may impact the amount of the grant and timeliness of payments (see section 6 – Payment eligibility).

3. Program dates

Activities	Key Dates
Portal launches and program opens to applications	16 November 2023
Program closes	1 December 2025

4. Eligibility

4.1 To be eligible for the grant a PST must:

4.1.1 be enrolled in an accredited Victorian primary or secondary school ITE degree with one of the following approved Victorian course providers:

- Australian Catholic University
- Deakin University
- Eastern College Australia
- Federation University Australia
- La Trobe University
- Melbourne Polytechnic
- Monash University
- RMIT University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- The University of Melbourne
- Victoria University;

4.1.2 be undertaking a teaching placement in an eligible primary or secondary Victorian government school, as confirmed by the placement coordinator from the PST's course provider;

- 4.1.3 be commencing a teaching placement from 1 July 2023 and completing it on or prior to 31 December 2025;
- 4.1.4 be a domestic student enrolled in an accredited Victorian ITE degree with an approved Victorian course provider. For the purposes of this Program, domestic student is defined as:
- an Australian citizen
 - a New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand)
 - an Australian permanent resident
 - an Australian permanent humanitarian visa holder; or
- hold an Australian Government-issued visa which permits the PST to study in Australia, and be enrolled in an accredited Victorian ITE degree with an approved Victorian course provider; and
- 4.1.5 have a valid Victorian Working with Children Check – either an Employee or Volunteer Check.

In the application, the PST must:

- confirm that they will make all reasonable efforts to complete the teaching placement as required by their course provider.

4.2 Further eligibility considerations:

- 4.2.1 For teaching placements completed in 2023, PSTs can apply to the Program until 31 January 2024.
- 4.2.2 For teaching placements commenced on and from 1 January 2024, PSTs can apply to the Program before or during the placement period and must apply to the Program no more than 30 days after placement completion.
- 4.2.3 Applications to the program will be accepted until 1 December 2025. If a PST is undertaking a placement in November or December 2025, they must apply by this date.
- 4.2.4 PSTs are eligible for the same per-day grant amount whether studying full-time or part-time.
- 4.2.5 If a PST is already based in a remote or regional location they can receive the same grant for the teaching placement as a PST who specifically moves to a remote or regional location for their placement.
- 4.2.6 PSTs will receive a per-day grant amount, rather than a maximum reimbursement limit for actual costs incurred.

- 4.2.7 A PST can undertake multiple teaching placements in eligible schools and can receive the grant with respect to each eligible placement.
- 4.2.8 If enrolled in an employment-based teaching degree (see Appendix 1) a PST is eligible to receive the grant during the intensive study phase of their degree, but not eligible while they are concurrently paid an employee salary.

5. Ineligible applicants

5.1. The following students are ineligible for the grant:

- 5.1.1 PSTs who are undertaking a teaching placement at a non-eligible Victorian school;
- 5.1.2 Students who are not enrolled in an accredited Victorian ITE degree with an approved Victorian course provider (see section 4.1);
- 5.1.3 PSTs commencing teaching placements before 1 July 2023 or completing placements after 31 December 2025;
- 5.1.4 PSTs enrolled in an employment-based teaching degree are ineligible to receive the grant during the employment phase of their degree; and
- 5.1.5 PSTs employed as a paraprofessional with a 'Permission to Teach' registration required to complete their placements are not eligible to receive the grant while being paid an employee salary.

6. Payment eligibility

- 6.1. To be eligible for grant payments, PSTs must meet the eligibility criteria as defined in section 4.
- 6.2. The grant a PST is eligible for will be defined by the location of the host school and the number of teaching placement days.
- 6.3. If the placement occurred between 1 July and 15 November 2023 (inclusive), the PST will be paid the full grant following successful application to the Program and approval by their course provider.
- 6.4. For placements commenced or completed on or after 16 November 2023, following successful application to the Program and approval by the course provider, the PST will be paid the first grant payment (50% of total grant).

For placements commenced or completed on or after 16 November 2023, following completion of the placement and confirmation by the host school that the placement took place, the PST will be eligible to claim a second grant payment (remaining 50% of total grant).

- 6.5. Changes to teaching placement location or placement duration following application submission may impact grant eligibility and timeliness of payments.

- 6.6. If the PST completes at least 50% of their teaching placement but then varies the duration of the placement, the PST may still claim the second payment. However, the payment amount the PST is eligible for may be varied at the discretion of DE or DGS based on the number of placement days completed (see section 2.1 – Available funding).
- 6.7. The PST will be responsible for the successful completion of their teaching placement. PSTs who do not complete the placement may be required to refund all or part of their grant payment as determined by DE, in its absolute discretion.
- 6.8. Furthermore, DE reserves the right to reject, reclaim or offset the full or partial value of the grant payments to PSTs who do not complete the requirements of their placements as agreed to at the time of application submission.

7. How to apply

- 7.1. PSTs must contact their course provider to consider eligible teaching placement locations.
- 7.2. PSTs must apply online via the program portal. The link to the program portal will be provided by the course provider. Applications must be submitted between the Program open and closure dates published in these guidelines.
- 7.3. PSTs must provide the following information and documentation in support of their application:
- name of the course provider and course code, degree of study and location of study
 - student ID number from the course provider
 - Unique Student Identifier (USI) number
 - USI numbers can be found here: <https://www.usi.gov.au/students/find-your-usi>
 - part-time or full-time study status
 - calendar year of study
 - host school where the PST will undertake the teaching placement and dates of placement
 - current residential address (i.e., where they are living while they study) and contact details
 - Australian bank account details for where they would like the grant paid.

7.4. Proof of Identity

The eligible PST must be the person who applies for the grant and must provide information from one of the following current proof of identity documents on the application form:

- Australian passport or New Zealand passport
- Medicare card
- Australian-issued driver licence or learner permit

- foreign passport for those issued with an Australian visa.

7.5. If a PST's application is successful, they will be notified via email. This will form an agreement between the PST and Victorian Government on the terms contained in the application, these guidelines and the conditions of the grant in the application form on delivery of the successful email notification.

8. Terms and conditions

- 8.1. The PST will be required to confirm they meet the eligibility criteria at the time of application. The PST must meet the eligibility criteria when DGS or DE assess their application.
- 8.2. Applications and claims will be assessed using the information and evidence provided by the PST. As part of this process, any information the PST provides to DGS may be shared and subject to verification by the eligible course provider, host school, the Australian Government Department of Education and Department of Home Affairs, and Victorian Government departments including DE and DJSIR.
- 8.3. The PST may be requested to provide further information to assist in assessment of their application or claim. DGS or DE reserves in its absolute discretion the right to refuse an application or claim where eligibility criteria are not met, or where the applicant does not or cannot provide sufficient information in the required timeframe to assess whether eligibility criteria have been met, or where a claim cannot be supported.
- 8.4. As part of the application process, applicants must accept and agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the Program as stated in the application form and these guidelines. By submitting the application and confirming the teaching placement is going ahead, applicants are making an offer to the Victorian Government and will be bound by the terms of the offer if accepted by the Victorian Government.
- 8.5. If allocated funding for the Program is exhausted before the announced Program end date, the DE reserves the right to end the Program before the aforementioned date.
- 8.6. The provision of incorrect bank details means that payment may not be received, and the Victorian Government will be under no obligation to remake any payment.
- 8.7. If the PST enters into the grant agreement and does not comply with its terms and conditions, the PST may be required to refund any amount paid to them.
- 8.8. PSTs must promptly advise DE via PPGprogram@education.vic.gov.au if they do not intend to complete their teaching placement. In such an event, DE may require refund of all or part of the grant as it determines appropriate, in its absolute discretion.
- 8.9. By submitting an application form with the intention of entering into the Grant Agreement, the PST consents to DGS sharing information provided by them within the Victorian Government, and between the Victorian Government and external parties for the purposes of validating enrolment, placement and other eligibility requirements. These parties are:
- the PST's course provider

- the PST's host school
 - the Australian Government Department of Education
 - the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs
 - Victorian Government departments including DE and DJSIR.
- 8.10. Applications and claims may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives for a period of up to three years following completion of the Program to determine whether the application and information provided during the term of the Program was compliant.
- 8.11. The administering department may, at any time, remove an applicant from the application assessment process or terminate an agreement if, in the department's opinion, association with the applicant may bring the department, a minister or the Victorian Government into disrepute.
- 8.12. Program surveys and evaluation
- PSTs will be requested to participate in DE's performance monitoring and evaluation of this Program by completing survey questions, which may be for a period of up to three years after applying to the Program. This information will be treated in accordance with the privacy statement detailed below.
- 8.13. Declaration of claims
- By submitting an application form, PSTs declare that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true, accurate and not misleading about a material fact.
- If any information in the application or claims for payment is found to be false, misleading or fraudulent (as determined by DGS or DE in their discretion), the grant will be repayable on demand and the Victorian Government reserves the right to take further action, including referring the applicant to the relevant law enforcement agency. Providing inaccurate, untrue, or misleading information may result in an offence being committed and serious penalties may apply.

9. Privacy statement

- 9.1. Information provided by the PST for this Program, that includes personal information, will be collected and used by the Victorian Government. DGS is a program administrator and collects personal information of the PST for the purpose of assessing eligibility and to administer claims and payments.
- 9.2. By applying for a grant, applicants consent to the sharing of information as outlined in the Terms and Conditions. DGS or DE may contact the PST to clarify the submitted information, and for program review, reporting, monitoring, audit and evaluation purposes.
- 9.3. DGS will complete a range of eligibility assessments that may include data matching to clarify the accuracy and quality of information supplied by PSTs. The data matching may occur on enrolment or teaching placement information and personal information provided in the PST's application, their supporting evidence and any claim or payment forms.

- 9.4. For either verification and payment processing purposes, DGS will share the PST's personal information with Victorian Government departments DE and DJSIR, and the Australian Government Department of Education and Department of Home Affairs. As part of the verification process, DGS will also contact the PST's course provider and host school to confirm their placement, enrolment and student status as noted in these Program guidelines section 7 – How to apply.
- 9.5. If there is an intention to include personal information about a third party in the application, the applicant applying must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.
- 9.6. As an administering department, DGS collects demographic information for economic reporting purposes on behalf of the Victorian Government. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated data.
- 9.7. Any personal information about the applicant applying or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred and stored in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.
- 9.8. PSTs can enquire about access to, or correction of, their personal information by contacting ppg@grants.vic.gov.au. A copy of our privacy statement is located at www.vic.gov.au/privacy-policy-department-government-services. For other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information email privacy@dgs.vic.gov.au

10. Other information

- 10.1. It is strongly recommended when considering applying to this Program that PSTs obtain professional advice on any impact the payment of a grant has on their tax liability or any other benefits paid under an Australian Government scheme, such as Austudy, ABSTUDY, pensions or aged, disability or carer allowances.
- 10.2. DE reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time (subject to appropriate notice being given either by publication on the Program website or by email to applicants and recipients).
- 10.3. If a PST considers that their application or claim has been incorrectly assessed, they can lodge a complaint. The complaint must be received within 28 days from the date DE or DGS notifies the PST of the outcome of the application or claim. If a complaint is not received within 28 days, the decision will be final. Contact the Program at PPGprogram@education.vic.gov.au.

11. Contact

Please contact PPGprogram@education.vic.gov.au with any Program eligibility queries.

12. Appendix 1: Definitions

Term	Definition
Host school	A Victorian primary or secondary school where a PST undertakes their teaching placement.
Course provider	A Victorian university, TAFE or other accredited post-secondary institution that provides a course of higher education study as approved by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).
Employment-based teaching degree	A teaching degree involving direct employment in a Victorian government school where an employee salary is received.
ITE degree	An accredited initial teacher education degree taught by a course provider as approved by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).
Teaching placement	<p>A compulsory component of an ITE degree which leads to teacher registration where PSTs are engaged in the teaching and learning process with school students under the supervision of a registered teacher in a primary and/or secondary school.</p> <p>Under this Program, as agreed between the course provider, PST and host school, the placement means the first day the PST commences a teaching placement in the school through to the final day on which the PST completes placement in the school. The placement period excludes weekends, public holidays and school holidays. Weekdays not spent under supervision at or with a school are also excluded.</p>
Pre-service teacher (PST)	Someone who is undertaking an approved Victorian initial teacher education (ITE) program to become a primary or secondary school teacher.