

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

# Skill Up

Guidelines for funding 2025–26

The *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative continues to achieve on social, economic and fiscal fronts, with an ongoing annual investment of \$80 million to support up to 15,000 Queenslanders into work each year.

The initiative represents a commitment to increasing workforce participation, driving job growth and strengthening the performance of the Queensland economy by improving skills development and work opportunities for disadvantaged Queenslanders.

Ever evolving, *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* is flexible in design and delivery and has been revitalised to accommodate the changing labour market conditions as a result of COVID-19.

The initiative comprises the following suite of programs:

- Community Work Skills
- Work Skills Traineeships
- Get Set for Work
- Ready for Work
- Youth Skills
- Community Foundation Skills
- Skill Up
- First Start

## Overview and objectives

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of support for those in the community most vulnerable to reduced employment opportunities.

*Skilling Queenslanders for Work* is the proactive means for increasing Queensland's workforce participation and the overall performance of the Queensland economy by directly and positively engaging those outside of or disadvantaged in the labour market.

*Skilling Queenslanders for Work* represents the Queensland Government's commitment to support strategies that encourage equitable participation by a broad range of marginalised groups that generally

face barriers or challenges to their participation in skills development and the labour market.

In 2025-26, disadvantaged Queenslanders will benefit from targeted training pathways that help to ensure they gain the skills they need to find new jobs. The Queensland Government is working to identify current and future sustainable employment and skills needs, aligned to economic and social development and creating relevant training opportunities to meet those needs.

Training that improves an individual's skill level, employment prospects and social inclusion is a priority for the Queensland Government.

## Skill Up

Skill Up is one of eight programs that make up the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative. The program provides tailored assistance and industry focussed training to adult job seekers to help them get started on new career paths. It will also ensure that individuals who have traditionally been disadvantaged in the labour market, develop the skills, attitudes and experience that will assist them to either retrain or source employment in less favourable economic conditions.

Skilled workers support industry to increase productivity, drive innovation and improve workplace performance.

Skill Up complements the [Certificate 3 Guarantee](#), Queensland's training entitlement program, by providing supported training places.

Industry and local employers will be engaged to determine what industry-specific vocational training and new and existing labour is required to meet local employment demands.

In 2025-26, up to \$4 million will be available to support up to 1,250 adults 25 years and older to upskill or reskill in entry level positions in high priority industries to maximise existing and future job opportunities.

Skill Up is administered by the Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET).



## Where will the program be delivered?

Skill Up will be available throughout Queensland however, priority will be given to identified areas of high need or where access to services may be limited due to market failure.

## Who can apply for funding?

Non-profit community-based organisations are eligible for funding. Applicant organisations must be registered for GST.

Applicant organisations must be able to demonstrate a commitment to access and equity principles, as well as an ability to provide appropriate support services.

Applicant organisations must have experience in delivering services in the location for which they are applying.

## Who will the funds support?

Skill Up primarily targets Queensland adults 25 years and over who are ineligible for Australian Government employment services or assistance.

Individuals accessing Australian Government services are eligible if they are disadvantaged and require complementary services, regardless of the length of time they have been unemployed or in receipt of assistance.

To be eligible, disadvantaged Queenslanders must also be:

- aged 25 years and older,
- an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident (includes humanitarian entrant), temporary resident with the necessary visa and work permits on the pathway to permanent residency, or a New Zealand citizen.

Existing or prior qualifications are not a barrier, as Skill Up provides a second chance for participants to retrain and gain new qualifications.

## Identified disadvantaged groups

Adult job seekers to be targeted include:

- recently retrenched or displaced workers as a result of COVID-19
- women re-entering the workforce
- mature age job seekers 45 years and over
- veterans
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- migrants and refugees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people with disability
- recently released prisoners and individuals with criminal records

- under-utilised workers, including workers who are marginally attached to the labour force or under-employed.

The selection of disadvantaged participants for assistance is at the discretion of the funded organisation, subject to the above eligibility criteria and in consultation with DTET.

Permission to recruit participants (including young people aged 15-24 years) outside of the above criteria needs to be sought from DTET.

Skill Up is to be delivered at no cost to participants.

## What assistance can be funded?

Skill Up has a project-based delivery model and funds organisations to deliver customised training places to disadvantaged job seekers.

Tailored support and assistance is provided to eligible participants to gain a qualification (including foundation skills) up to certificate III level, with accompanying integrated learner support, including career advice, job preparation skills and case management.

Every participant under Skill Up must be enrolled in nationally recognised training. Vocational education and training provides an essential pathway to further education and work.

Skill Up will fund the tailored support that must accompany the delivery of training within a community-based setting, as well as the student co-contribution fees. Training and assessment services under Skill Up are funded under the Certificate 3 Guarantee.

Skill Up focuses on the attainment of certificate III qualifications however, certain skill sets and lower level qualifications may be recognised as an appropriate entry level pathway in some industries.

Under Skill Up training projects, every participant must be enrolled in priority training as listed in the [Priority Skills List](#), or in other training that has been approved by DTET as a priority through the application and assessment process.

It is recognised that integrated learning support measures and foundation skills development is needed to provide disadvantaged Queenslanders with the opportunity to achieve training outcomes and transition into employment.

Organisations are encouraged to offer flexible projects that can be customised to meet individual needs. This can include partnerships with local employers for work experience opportunities. Projects are also expected to target high priority industries with entry-level skill shortages.

## Training and support plans

A training and support plan is to be developed for each participant and, where appropriate, individually tailored for the acquisition of foundation skills embedded in the learning support. The plans must be developed based on an upfront skills assessment and available training options.

## Scope of registration

Registered training organisations (RTOs) must be Skills Assure suppliers ([SAS](#)) approved by DTET to deliver training.

Applicant organisations will need to partner with a RTO that has SAS status for the accompanying delivery of training and assessment services.

Qualifications and units of competency to be delivered must be nationally recognised and included in the RTO's scope of registration at the time of submitting the application for funding.

## What outcomes are expected?

Funded organisations will be required to identify what employment, further education and/or training targets will be achieved throughout the project.

Skill Up has standard key performance indicators (KPIs) that organisations are expected to meet or exceed.

KPIs:

- Completion outcome – 65 per cent of participants successfully gain the required outcome of a qualification or statement of attainment
- Employment outcome – 55 per cent of participants successfully gain employment.

## What is the application process?

Generally, there are two funding rounds each year under a transparent contestable application process.

Applicant organisations are encouraged to contact their local DTET regional office to discuss their project proposals.

One lead organisation is to apply for and manage the funding for each project. Applications are capped at ten per organisation, per funding round, across all programs.

Projects that address emergent needs or government priorities may be funded by DTET outside of the published funding rounds.

The application and selection process, and assessment criteria, may be varied or discontinued by DTET as required at any time and for any reason, in its sole discretion.

Without limitation, DTET may, in its sole discretion:

- apply such criteria and weightings as DTET sees fit
- for applications considered ambiguous, erroneous or incomplete, refuse to consider the application or request further information from the applicant, as DTET sees fit
- not accept any application.

DTET may also decide to accept, suspend or not proceed with, or carry out itself, all or any part of the project proposals included in an application. Funding rounds will be announced on the [Skill Up webpage](#). Interested organisations are advised to check this page regularly.

Organisations should apply online via the [Skill Up webpage](#) by the closing deadline. Incomplete applications and applications received after published closing dates will be ineligible for consideration.

## How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed in two stages.

### Stage one

The stage one assessment will involve the assessment of applications by DTET against the 'capacity to manage' criteria. An applicant must demonstrate a 'capacity to manage' for the application to be determined by DTET as eligible to proceed to stage two assessment.

### Stage two

The stage two assessment involves assessing eligible applications against the assessment criteria below by DTET and locally-based SQW Advisory Committees comprising of representatives from the community, industry, government and unions.

The role of these committees will be to discuss, prioritise and recommend applications for funding to DTET. Applicants should note that:

- the order of the list of assessment criteria is not to be taken as an order of precedence or an indication of weighting which will be given to any particular criteria; and
- the list of assessment criteria is not necessarily exhaustive and DTET may also consider other criteria in its sole discretion.

Following the completion of both stages of assessment for a funding round, DTET will notify each applicant of its decision in relation to the application.

Assessment criteria	How will this be assessed – including but not limited to:
Capacity to manage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• financial viability of the lead organisation</li> <li>• lead organisation’s structure, governance, risk management and reporting framework</li> <li>• relevant experience, and current and past performance, in managing government funds and delivering similar services</li> <li>• staff with appropriate experience and qualifications for supporting and mentoring disadvantaged adult job seekers and learners</li> <li>• recruitment strategies</li> <li>• commitment to an inclusive learning framework</li> <li>• training delivery outside an institutional setting and in a community-based environment</li> </ul>
Servicing community and industry needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear articulation of how the project will address gaps in or complement existing local services</li> <li>• level of community benefit</li> <li>• no duplication with other programs or services</li> <li>• evidence to support the organisation’s strong community presence within the local area</li> <li>• links to local employers, industry or other stakeholders to identify local skills shortages and future employment opportunities</li> <li>• demonstrated industry demand and benefit</li> <li>• clear rationale for linking adult job seekers to specific job types and industries where there is evidence of skills shortages or labour needs</li> </ul>
Strategies to assist participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support mechanisms that specifically address the individual’s learning needs and goals and encourage completion of qualifications and skill sets</li> <li>• specialist assistance or links with other agencies to help disadvantaged adult job seekers overcome barriers to learning and employment</li> <li>• support strategies to build on existing skills, experience and interest of participants (including overcoming fragmented work histories) to help them become job ready</li> <li>• ability to provide effective training and realistic learning pathways in terms of method, location and timing of delivery</li> <li>• volume of learning sufficient to ensure disadvantaged adult learners gain all relevant skills and knowledge</li> <li>• assessment strategies that support the needs of adult learners</li> <li>• strategies to motivate participants to improve their job search skills and techniques and take up local job opportunities</li> <li>• level of job search activities and post-placement support methods</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• level of qualification completions, further education or training and employment outcomes forecasted, and demonstrated evidence of ability to achieve quality outcomes</li> <li>• past employment outcomes</li> <li>• capacity to meet skills shortages and local labour market needs – extent of support and links with local employers and industry that will facilitate placement into employment</li> </ul>
Cost/value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cost effectiveness – cost of proposal and overall cost per participant and outcome</li> <li>• ability to deliver proposed outcomes over the period being applied for, and any identified innovative ways to reduce the costs of service delivery</li> <li>• level of complementary funding and assistance accessed from other sources and in-kind resources.</li> </ul>

## What level of funding is available?

The funding available under Skill Up is for a maximum 12 month term.

The level of funding is dependent on the type of project and nature of the training and assistance to be provided, as well as the number of participants targeted by the project.

## What can project funds be used for?

Project funds can only be expended on costs directly associated with the delivery of the project including:

- wages and on-costs for project coordinator and other delivery staff
- co-contribution fees which may also cover training costs for approved qualifications and skill sets not funded on the Priority Skills List
- administration costs such as rent, accommodation, venue hire, office supplies, advertising, travel costs, vehicle hire/lease
- support costs such as learner driver training, subsidised travel, personal grooming or counselling services
- materials and equipment excluding capital equipment or assets
- overheads or operating costs (with the management fee not to exceed five per cent of total funds up to a maximum \$15,000).

## Ineligible costs

Project funds cannot be used:

- to purchase assets/capital equipment e.g. IT equipment, buildings or vehicles
- for interstate travel, training or conferences for project staff
- for any recurrent or normal business costs such as established positions within the organisation or core functions of the organisation.

Funding from other sources must also be disclosed to DTET.

To avoid duplication of services, funding is not available for the same services being delivered through other initiatives or programs.

Any third party contributions must be specified in the project application to enable clear consideration of all funding, resources and in-kind support provided. Any addition of resources or subcontracting of learner support measures post project approval must be approved in writing by DTET.

## What are the funding conditions?

Successful applicants must enter into a formal Services Agreement with DTET, which will include standard key performance indicators.

A first payment will be made once the Services Agreement has been executed, and no sooner than 30 days prior to the start of the project. Subsequent payments are made upon satisfactory compliance with all reporting requirements and the acquittal of expenditure of the previous payment. Monthly reports will be required throughout the life of the project.

All projects must be fully acquitted after completion and any unexpended or surplus funds returned to DTET.

A copy of the Services Agreement, which is performance based and outlines the standard terms and conditions of funding, is available on the [Skill Up webpage](#).

## Appeals process

Organisations may request a review of a decision made by DTET in relation to the provision of funding under Skill Up.

The appeals process has been established to help identify any problems in the application process, ensuring these processes continue to improve, and to assist with future applications.

Appeals must be lodged in writing to:

Appeals Officer  
Investment Division  
Department of Trade, Employment and Training  
PO Box 15483  
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Organisations will be notified in writing of the appeal outcome within 21 business days from receipt of the appeal.

## More information

For more information about Skill Up:

Phone: 1300 369 935  
Email: [training@desbt.qld.gov.au](mailto:training@desbt.qld.gov.au)  
Visit: [desbt.qld.gov.au/training/community-orgs/funded/sqw/skill-up](https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/community-orgs/funded/sqw/skill-up)

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