



Australia Awards

Australia Awards
Papua New Guinea
Higher Education
Partnership Grants



Introduction

Australia Awards PNG's Higher Education Partnerships grants scheme supports selected PNG universities to strengthen their teaching and learning, research and innovation, leadership and management, and to develop partnerships with Australian Universities.

Objectives

The objectives of the Higher Education Partnerships Grants are to:

- Strengthen inclusive teaching and learning, student services and research capacity in PNG's universities.
- Contribute to people-to-people and institution-to-institution linkages between PNG and Australia.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles inform the design and implementation of HEP Grants:

- Projects should provide tangible outputs that contribute to meaningful outcomes and deliver a significant 'value-add' for PNG and Australian universities.
- Project objectives and impact should address either capacity development and/or engagement building.
- Projects are expected to take place at the faculty, department or student service area level, although applicants should demonstrate how project outcomes and impact has broader university implications where applicable. A group of staff from each university, including both senior and junior members, is expected to participate in each project.
- PNG universities should seek to enhance the capabilities of their current academic and/or professional staff, who will need to commit time to the project.
- Australian universities should approach the funding as a grant activity rather than a commercial consultancy.
- Both the PNG and Australian university partners must demonstrate commitment to each project.
- Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) principles should be integrated into all projects, with deliberate consideration given to women's empowerment, the inclusion of people with disabilities and participation by students from remote and rural areas of PNG.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible you must:

- Be a registered PNG university with the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) or an Australian university registered with Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

- Submit a proposed project of a maximum 1-year duration that addresses the needs for improving research capacity, teaching and learning, student welfare and safety, curriculum upgrade or professional development opportunities.
- Contribute to the inclusion of women, persons with disability and individuals from remote areas in the proposed projects.

The Application Process

Both universities should complete and submit the online application form by 11:59pm 17th October 2026, through the SmartyGrants portal using this link: [Login or Register - Australia Awards PNG \(smartygrants.com.au\)](https://smartygrants.com.au).

Each application must include the following:

- Details of the proposed project, including the academic faculty, department or student service area it will focus on.
- The proposed project activities, outputs and duration (maximum one year).
- The intended outcomes for the university.
- The project's contribution to the university's strategic plan.
- The project's contribution to the DHERST's National Higher and Technical Education Plan (for PNG universities only).
- Clear indication of how the project will address Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) in its management, design and delivery, participation and outputs, and outcomes.
- Consideration of project risks and mitigation strategies.
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) activities that will be used to monitor progress towards the intended outcomes, evaluate project performance and capture lessons throughout implementation.
- How the project addresses sustainability and is designed to deliver lasting results or benefits that will continue beyond project completion.
- Evidence of the university's commitment to the project, including formal approval and championship by the Vice-Chancellor/President.

The Selection Criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed by the Higher Education Partnerships Grants Review Panel using the following criteria:

Criteria	Details
Context and Strategic purpose	Does the application provide sufficient context/background about the intended project and is it aligned with the university's strategic focus areas.
Project Scope	Is there a clear distinction and alignment between the intended project outcomes, outputs and activities? Are the proposed activities likely to achieve the intended outcomes?

	• Activities are the actions undertaken during the project, such as workshops, curriculum reviews, staff exchanges or training. • Outputs are the immediate products or deliverables resulting from those activities, such as revised curricula, teaching resources, new systems or trained staff. • Outcomes are the changes or improvements expected because of the project, such as improved teaching practice, strengthened institutional capability or enhanced student learning.
Timeline	Does the project have a realistic timeline?
Budget	Is the proposed budget within the grant limit, and is each requested budget item clearly and reasonably justified?
In-kind contribution	Does the application demonstrate buy-in and outline clear in-kind support of at least 20% of the requested budget?
Capacity	To what extent does the application demonstrate the university's capacity to successfully deliver the project through its existing resources, relevant past projects/experience (if any), and expertise within the university?
GEDSI	Does the project demonstrate inclusive design and delivery, including meaningful participation by women, people with disabilities, and people from remote and rural areas, across project implementation, outputs and outcomes?
Monitoring and Evaluation	Are appropriate MEL activities proposed to monitor progress against intended outcomes, evaluate project performance and support learning throughout implementation?
Partnerships	Does the project between the two universities demonstrate a coherent partnership?
Sustainability	To what extent does the application outline measures and plans to continue, sustain or build on the project after the grant cycle ends?

Support

Applicants may email questions or request a 60 minute discussion about their application by contacting the Australia Awards PNG Higher Education Partnerships component at hep@australiaawardspng.org by 2nd October 2026.

Funding Guidelines and Agreement

Project Funding

The **maximum** financial support for a project is up to PGK200,000 for PNG universities and AUD200,000 for Australia universities. Suggested collaborative projects may include:

- Research project.
- Designing and/or reviewing academic programs.
- Developing and/or implementing systems for enhancing operations and/or service delivery.
- Designing teaching and learning resources.
- Establishing academic centres or student support services.
- Designing systems that enhance learning, teaching, and research.

Grant Agreement

- The PNG and Australian universities will be funded separately as per the approved budget.
- A funding agreement with each university will be signed by Tetra Tech International Development as the managing contractor for Australia Awards PNG.
- Payments will be made as per the funding agreement, subject to the reasonable achievement of project milestones.
- Payments will be made in a minimum of 2 tranches. Payment duration with respective milestones will be determined in consultation with each university. For example,
 - First tranche 80% of payment upon signing the service agreement,
 - Last tranche of 20% after submission and approval of the final report.
- Payment and acquittal schedules will be confirmed by Australia Awards PNG, determined by the project timeline.
- Funds will be managed by each university and will need to be fully acquitted with evidence, such as the project hours of activity undertaken by academics recorded in a log and verified.

Ineligible activities and budget items

Budget Items

- Proposals must include an itemised budget.
- All budget items must have justification.
- Details for items must be provided where possible. For example, 'workshop' should be broken down into: catering for 30 people to attend 3 day workshop, venue hire etc.

Ineligible Activities

- Any form of partisan political activity.
- Subsidies for formal studies in PNG, Australia or elsewhere, including costs associated with graduation ceremonies.
- Religious activities.
- Student travel.
- Activities for which applicants already receive funding from the Australian Government or another funding body, including research funding bodies.
- Paying allowances or salaries to current full-time staff for project input.
- Capital expenditure.
- Venue hire costs for facilities at or owned by the organisation.
- Community projects.

- Any donations.
- Gifts of any kind.
- Procurement of personal protective equipment.
- Recurrent costs such as office rental, office supplies, transportation costs or vehicle running expenses, insurance, electricity and other utility bills including cleaning costs.
- Salaries, allowances, overtime pay for staff, volunteers or other personnel employed full-time by the organisation except those approved by Tetra Tech, not exceeding 30% of the total proposed budget.
- Payment of personal travel, honorarium and other form of gifts.
- Administration fee of no more than 20% of total funding budget.
- Standard office equipment such as computers, photocopiers, general stationery, cameras and mobile phones to deliver the project.
- Construction of new facilities.
- Expenses involving the procurement of land and/or compensation payments of any type.
- Tuition fees and related costs for formal study at certificate level or higher.
- Catering costs exceeding 30% of the total proposed budget.
- Any other budget item deemed by Australia Awards PNG as not appropriate for project funding.

In-kind contributions from PNG and Australian universities

Each university is expected to provide an in-kind contribution as outlined below.

- Each university must contribution staff time to the project. This may include:
 - academic staff contributions not covered by sessional teaching staff or overtime claims
 - professional staff spent providing direct input to the project during standard university hours and with no overtime claims
 - staff time spent participating in project workshops or training, where staff directly benefit from professional development.
- Indirect administrative contributions, including governance and other project support.
- Other in-kind contributions, such as the use of onsite venues for workshops and training, equipment or consumables.

Reporting and Accountability

Reporting Requirements

Universities must attend all scheduled quarterly meetings, determined by the project timeline, and submit a completion report at the end of the project. The project lead should attend each quarterly meeting, with other project members where relevant.

The quarterly meeting will cover:

- Activities undertaken and completed against the Grant Agreement.
- Actual expenditure against quarterly activities.
- Risks and barriers that affected implementation, and how these were addressed.

- Outputs achieved against the Grant Agreement.
- M&E activities undertaken.
- Plans for the next quarter.

The completion report will include:

- Activities undertaken and completed, against the project plan and timelines.
- The impact of grant activities on the university staff and students.
- How women, persons with disability and individuals from remote and marginalised communities were included.
- Barriers that slowed or restricted project implementation and how these were addressed.
- Results of M&E activities undertaken and lessons learnt.
- How project support will continue beyond the grant period.
- Photos with captions.
- A financial report section showing actual expenditure and acquittals verified by the university bursar or a suitable alternative delegate.

If there is a dispute or substantial delays in project implementation, Australia Awards PNG may seek additional reporting from the university.

Cancelation or Termination of Project Funding

Australia Awards PNG may suspend immediately and then terminate the grant funding if it reasonably believes that either university has breached the terms and conditions of the funding agreement, including any performance or reporting requirements; provided false or misleading statements in their application for the grant; or engaged in serious misconduct including acting illegally, negligently, or fraudulently.

Compliance with Laws, Guidelines and Policies

- Both universities must have regard to and comply with, relevant and applicable laws, guidelines, regulations and policies, including those in Australia and in PNG.
- Both universities must **comply** with DFAT and Commonwealth Government policies and guidelines applicable to the Services, including where relevant:
 - (a) *Child Protection Policy* and in particular, the child protection compliance standards at Attachment 1 of DFAT's *Child Protection Policy*, accessible on the DFAT website at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/pages/child-protection-policy>; Recipients must sign a Child Protection and PSEAH Code of Conduct
 - (b) *Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy*, accessible on the DFAT website at: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/preventing-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment>
 - (c) *Disability Inclusive Development Guidance Note*, accessible on the DFAT website at: [Disability Inclusive Development Guidance Note \(dfat.gov.au\)](https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/accessibility-design-guide-universal-design-principles-for-australia-s-aid-program), and the Accessibility Design Guide: Universal Design Principles for Australia's Aid Program, accessible on the DFAT website at: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/accessibility-design-guide-universal-design-principles-for-australia-s-aid-program>. Note that this requires where applicable, the involvement of people with disabilities, increasing inclusion related to a range of disabilities, and ensuring universal accommodation and accessible information.

- (d) *Fraud Control Policy and Fraud Control Toolkit for Funding Recipients*, accessible on the DFAT website at: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/fraud-control-toolkit-for-funding-recipients>
- (e) *Foreign Bribery Guidelines*, accessible online on the Attorney General's website at: <https://www.ag.gov.au/crime/foreign-bribery>

Promotion

Australia Awards PNG promotion of HEP Grants will include publicising successful outcomes on the program, DFAT and DHERST websites, Facebook and other social media platforms as appropriate. Participating universities may be asked to provide suitable photographs and other relevant materials for these promotions.

University partners are encouraged to seek appropriate opportunities for positive media and communication outputs. Per the individual partner agreements, each university partner is required to seek approval before issuing, or seeking to generate through external parties, any media statements, photographs, articles, newsletter items or online content. For further information, please contact Australia Awards PNG.

Acknowledgement of Funding

Australian Government funding of any Higher Education Partnership project should be appropriately acknowledged in publications, reports, at workshops, and in presentations at conferences and other public events. The partner universities will be solely responsible for any discrepancy that is reflected in their own publications and/or reports of their Higher Education Partnership project. The reported results or outcomes of the projects may not necessarily be the view endorsed by the Australian government or Australia Awards PNG.

Contact information

Any queries in relation to the HEP Grants including applications, budget eligibility or reports, should be sent to the AAPNG Higher Education Partnerships Team during business hours at:

Address: Australia Awards Papua New Guinea, PWC Haus Level 1, Harbour City, Konedobu, Spring Garden Road, Port Moresby, NCD, Papua New Guinea

Telephone: 3211 766 / 7373 3800

Mobile: 7304 4464 / 7933 4638

Email: hep@australiaawardspng.org

Website: www.australiaawardspng.org

Smarty Grants: [Login or Register - Australia Awards PNG \(smartygrants.com.au\)](#)

