Destination Australia Program 2024 – Round 5

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Education has provided the following General Feedback for applicants of the Destination Australia Program Round 5 grant opportunity.

Overview

The grant opportunity application period opened on 14 July 2023 and closed on 10 August 2023. The grant opportunity received 43 applications.

The Destination Australia Program 2024 (Round 5) provides grants to Australian tertiary education providers in regional areas to offer scholarships to domestic and international students. The program includes funding to administer and promote those scholarships and promote tertiary education in regional Australia more broadly.

The objectives of the grant opportunity are to:

- support higher education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers in regional Australia to provide scholarships to domestic and international students to study in regional Australia
- facilitate domestic and international students completing an Australian qualification at a higher education or VET provider in regional Australia
- help fix areas of skills shortages and fill future skills needs by awarding scholarships to domestic and international students studying courses that are aligned with the Australian Government's National Skills Priority List
- in addition, enable domestic students from underrepresented groups to access tertiary education in regional Australia.

The intended outcomes of the grant opportunity are:

- the sustainability and growth of tertiary education providers and communities in regional Australia
- scholarship students encouraged to live and work in regional Australia post-study
- regions share in the social, cultural, and economic benefits of our international education sector.

Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. This information was provided to the Department of Education, who provided the final decision on whether an application did not meet the eligibility and/or compliance criteria. The Community Grants Hub undertook the preliminary assessment of all eligible and compliant applications using an open competitive selection process.

Following preliminary assessment, the Selection Advisory Panel (the panel) considered all assessed applications. The panel, established by the Department of Education, was comprised of subject matter experts. The panel assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

Consideration of assessed applications was, based on:

- the number of regional campuses being supported by the scholarships
- the distribution of scholarships across states and territories
- the distribution of scholarships across higher education, vocational education and training providers
- the distribution of domestic and international scholarships
- the capacity of the applicant to administer the scholarships
- whether the proposed courses are aligned with the Australian Government's National Skills Priority List and whether the identified skills are currently in shortage with future demand
- how the applicant will target and prioritise domestic students from underrepresented groups, such as low-socioeconomic status (low-SES), those who are first in family to tertiary study, those living with disability and First Nations people available grant funds for the grant opportunity
- previous management of Destination Australia grants, where applicable, including whether scholarships were awarded in compliance with the program guidelines and the grant agreement.

Each applicant was required to address the following selection criteria:

Criterion 1: Strategic priorities

Criterion 2: Benefits to the region

Criterion 3: Supporting scholarship students

Criterion 4: Administering and promoting Destination Australia scholarships

Preferred applicants were identified based on the strength of their responses to the selection criterion and their demonstrated ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Where applications did not meet the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, applicants were notified of the outcome in writing.

Selection Results

There was a strong interest in the program and applications were of a high standard. Assessment of applications was in accordance to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the Selection Process above.

This feedback is to assist grant applicants to understand for this grant opportunity what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria.

Preferred applicants provided strong responses to the selection criteria and demonstrated their ability to meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Provided below is further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion.

Criterion 1 - Strategic priorities

Describe how delivering Destination Australia scholarships will:

- align with your strategic priorities
- help fix areas of skills shortages
- enable domestic students from underrepresented groups to access tertiary education in regional Australia.

When addressing this criterion applicants**:**

- discussed how attracting scholarship students to study at their regional campus would contribute to achieving their strategic priorities
- detailed the process and criteria they will use to select students to receive scholarships who meet the eligibility criteria in section 5.1.1
- discussed how the courses they will be offering domestic and international students align with the Australian Government's National Skills Priority List and why they selected these courses (for example, currently in shortage, strong future demand)
- for domestic students, discussed how they will target and prioritise underrepresented groups, such as low-socioeconomic status (low-SES), those who are first in family to tertiary study, those living with disability and First Nations people
- described any additional characteristics they intend to require of scholarship students (for example, demonstrated financial need, high levels of academic achievement)
- detailed how they will measure their success against this criterion.

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to discuss how attracting scholarship students to study at their regional campus would contribute to achieving their strategic priorities.	Strong responses demonstrated the linkages between institution's strategic priorities and how the awarding of a Destination Australia grant will enable the institution to achieve those priorities.

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to detail the process and criteria they will use to select students to receive scholarships who meet the eligibility criteria in section 5.1.1.	Strong responses provided a detailed description of the processes they will use to select students to receive scholarships including the application process and selection criteria.
Strong applications were required to discuss how the courses they will be offering domestic and international students align with the Australian Government's National Skills Priority List and why they selected these courses (for example, currently in shortage, strong future demand).	Strong responses described how the type of courses the institution proposed to offer scholarships would be aligned with National Skills Priority List and the identified skills are currently in shortage with future demand. These details included field of study and qualification level upon graduation.
Strong applications were required to (for domestic students), describe how they will target and prioritise underrepresented groups, such as low-socioeconomic status (low-SES), those who are first in family to tertiary study, those living with disability and First Nations people.	Strong responses described the institution's plan for targeting and prioritising domestic students from underrepresented groups.
Strong applications were required to described any additional characteristics they intend to require of scholarship students (for example, demonstrated financial need, high levels of academic achievement).	Strong responses described the institution's plan for prioritising scholarships to domestic students from underrepresented groups and how the provision of a scholarship makes moving to regional areas a more attractive proposition to domestic and international students.
Strong applications were required to demonstrate how they will measure their success against this criterion.	Strong responses described how the success of the program will be measured by providing details of the metrics they will use including by the number of applications received and the number of students completing their courses.

Criterion 2 – Benefits to the region

Describe how receiving Destination Australia scholarship funding will contribute to growth and quality within your institution and community.

When addressing this criterion applicants**:**

- discussed how they would leverage Destination Australia scholarships to enhance their high-quality educational offering and attract students to the region
- discussed how attracting new students from a diverse range of backgrounds will benefit their region and local community
- discussed how offering Destination Australia scholarships would facilitate growth in the number of enrolled students at their regional campus
- detailed how they will measure their success against this criterion.

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to discuss how they would leverage Destination Australia scholarships to enhance their high-quality educational offering and attract students to the region.	Strong responses demonstrated examples of how the existing community and industry linkages will be leveraged to enhance their educational offerings and attracting new students to the regions by promoting the benefits to the regional community more broadly, such as employment opportunities for local communities or tailoring of education to meet local industry needs.
Strong applications were required to demonstrate how attracting new students from a diverse range of backgrounds will benefit their region and local community.	Strong responses described how the scholarships would attract students to specific fields of study, resulting in better industry and research partnerships to enhance the quality of education and delivery experience in the region where the institution is located.
Strong applications were required to describe how offering Destination Australia scholarships would facilitate growth in the number of enrolled students at their regional campus.	Strong responses demonstrated how the Destination Australia grant will enable growth in the institution as a result of new scholarships (beyond increases in student numbers) either by building on existing delivery of quality education, research and training, or developing new education, research and training capacity.
Strong applications were required to how they will measure their success against this criterion.	Strong responses described how benefits to the region will be measured by providing details of the metrics they will use including by the number of enrolments, number of students engaged in work experience/paid employment, number of new community partnerships.

Criterion 3 – Supporting scholarship students

Describe how you will provide support services to ensure a high-quality student experience and help Destination Australia scholars build connections with the broader community.

When addressing this criterion applicants:

- detailed their proven track record in providing support services to both international and domestic students that meets or exceeds legislative requirements
- described the support services they will make available to scholarship students
- discussed how they will promote those support services and encourage scholarship students to access them
- discussed how they will support scholarship students to achieve academic success and course completion
- discussed how they will help scholarship students engage and form connections with the broader community, such as work experience opportunities, local community events and so on
- detailed how they will measure their success against this criterion.

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to demonstrate their proven track record in providing support services to both international and domestic students that meets or exceeds legislative requirements.	Strong responses demonstrated the results of internal and external surveys and comparative studies between institutions, which included current and previous provision of support services.
Strong applications were required to describe the support services they will make available to scholarship students.	Strong responses provided a description of the support services they will provide to students including health and wellbeing services, academic support and career advice.
Strong applications were required to describe how they will promote those support services and encourage scholarship students to access them.	Strong responses described the promotional strategies they will use to encourage students to access the support services including the use of various online communication channels, newsletters.
Strong applications were required to describe how they will support scholarship students to achieve academic success and course completion.	Strong responses described how the institution will ensure scholarship students will have access to adequate support services throughout the duration of their scholarship, including academic support, health and welfare services, career advice and accommodation support.

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to discuss how they will help scholarship students engage and form connections with the broader community, such as work experience opportunities, local community events and so on.	Strong responses described how they will encourage students to form connections with the broader community including holding community events, engagement with local sporting and cultural groups.
Strong applications were required to describe how they will measure their success against this criterion.	Strong responses described how the success of the program will be measured by providing details of the metrics they will use including by the number of applications received, number of students completing their courses, community engagement, referrals to support services.

Criterion 4 – Administering and promoting Destination Australia scholarships

Describe how you will administer the Destination Australia scholarships and how you will promote the scholarship opportunity to prospective students.

When addressing this criterion applicants:

- described how they will promote the scholarship opportunity to attract new students and the communication methods they will use, including whether they will have a dedicated Destination Australia Program web page
- described how they will promote the benefits of studying, living and working in regional Australia to potential scholarship students
- detailed their administrative processes for awarding and managing scholarships in accordance with the program guidelines
- detailed how they will measure the effectiveness of their promotional activities and administration.

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to describe how they will promote the scholarship opportunity to attract new students and the communication methods they will use, including whether they will have a dedicated Destination Australia Program web page.	Strong responses described the promotional activities/strategies they will use to attract new domestic and international students including having a dedicated Destination Australia program web page.
Strong applications were required to describe how they will promote the benefits of studying, living and working in regional Australia to potential scholarship students.	Strong responses described how they will promote the benefits of studying, living and working in regional Australia via a number of channels including digital and social media.

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to describe their administrative processes for awarding and managing scholarships in accordance with the program guidelines.	Strong responses described the monitoring mechanisms the institution have in place or would adopt to ensure the funds are appropriately used.
Strong applications were required to describe how they will measure the effectiveness of their promotional activities and administration.	Strong responses described how they will measure success of their promotional activities and administration by providing details of the metrics they propose to use as well as the methods they will use to collect data including through surveys with their international students the effectiveness of their promotional activities.

Individual feedback

Individual feedback will not be provided for this grant opportunity.