



# Veteran Recognition of Prior Learning – Tertiary Support (Round 1)

## Feedback for applicants

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Veteran Recognition of Prior Learning – Tertiary Support (Round 1) grant opportunity.

## Overview

The grant opportunity application period opened on Friday, 14 July 2023 and closed at 9:00 pm AEST on Wednesday, 23 August 2023. The grant opportunity received 10 applications.

The program aims to support veterans seeking to undertake tertiary education by supporting Australian universities to provide several initiatives to enable a smoother transition from Australian Defence Force (ADF) service. This assistance will be targeted at Australian universities to adapt and apply existing tertiary credit-mapping frameworks or to adapt, expand or establish direct or assisted entry, or recognition of prior learning (RPL) pathways.

## Selection process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the grant opportunity guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether an application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The Community Grants Hub undertook the preliminary assessment on all applications through an open competitive grant process. Applications which had undergone preliminary assessment were provided to the department's selection advisory panel (panel) for deliberation.

The panel established by the department, comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

When assessing and deliberating on applications the panel took into consideration a number of factors incorporating the inclusion or exclusion of late applications, the volume of applications received, meeting the identified requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the available funding envelope.

The panel's consideration of assessed applications was, based on:

- compliance with the requirements of the guidelines
- suitability against the eligibility criteria in the guidelines
- how well it met the assessment criterion
- how it compared to other applications
- alignment to the developmental plan outline and other required attachments
- whether it provided value with relevant money.



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## Selection results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicant demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criterion.

The Community Grants Hub notified applicants of the outcome in writing, where their applications did not meet the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criterion.

### **Criterion 1: Proposed approach to RPL or credit-mapping for veterans seeking to enrol in university study:**

- Described the project in detail including how they would deliver it.
  - Described the activities they proposed to undertake, and the number of veteran students they expected would participate in or benefit from each activity.
  - Demonstrated how their approach would improve a range of course options.
  - If expanding or developing an existing RPL framework clearly articulated how the activity would build on this, and what additional benefits it would provide.
  - Described how the outcomes achieved would continue beyond the life of the grant.
  - Described how they would demonstrate that the project has been successful.
- Described how the project would meet the program objectives.
  - Described the outcomes they expect to deliver through their project and how these relate to the program objectives outlined in section 2 of the guidelines.
  - Described their ability to share the knowledge they have gained about supporting veterans through RPL processes with other tertiary or education institutions.

### **Strong responses:**

- demonstrated a thorough understanding of the RPL program
- provided different processes to RPL or credit mapping
- described project processes/frameworks that could be transferred easily by other universities (replicable framework)
- provided clear examples of the various veteran cohorts and the varying levels of military training and purposes of the training
- created clear connections between the proposed activities and the target veteran cohort/s (that is, why the approach meets the cohort's needs)
- demonstrated up-to-date knowledge about veteran numbers (for example, transitioning from service, currently studying, targeted for grant activity if applicable)
- aimed to expand the course offerings beyond traditional 'like-for-like' hard skills by credit mapping soft skills (for example, teamwork, communications, problem solving)
- described how the grant activities would be integrated into standard ongoing processes in order to continue beyond the life of the grant (for example, new RPL added to existing RPL database)
- clearly articulated examples of how they would meet the outcomes and project objectives outlined in the guidelines
- demonstrated understanding of veteran community/defence and established or planned processes for sharing its knowledge with other institutions across several forums.

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## **Criterion 2: Experience with the veteran community:**

- Demonstrated how their organisation’s experience working with and delivering projects that included members of the veteran community.
  - Described how they would work with the community to ensure the successful implementation of the project.
- Demonstrated their organisation’s community knowledge, networks, and partnerships and outlined how they would use these to deliver the project successfully.
  - Described an understanding of the issues facing those who have served in the ADF, including of the effect of service life on veterans and issues encountered by veterans in an education environment.
- Demonstrated how their proposed activities would address the particular needs of the veteran community.
  - Described their evidence-based awareness of the barriers and enablers of veteran access to education.

### **Strong responses:**

- demonstrated how networking can be highly beneficial for veterans and provided a detailed description of previous experience within the veteran community and with veteran education
- demonstrated a focus on veterans by describing existing programs/projects/research
- referenced consultation and/or arrangements with relevant organisations (for example, industry, advisory bodies, and target cohort)
- provided a comprehensive list of networks, demonstrating a broad range of connections representing individuals, ADF/government, support groups, industry, research, and so on
- demonstrated an understanding of psycho-social issues (for example, PTSD, suicidality) and challenges of transitioning from military to civilian life (for example, routine, authority, and rank vs role)
- provided a proposal with a holistic approach
- referenced research relating to veteran access to education and support services
- referenced their consultations with veterans about their needs, barriers and enablers.

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### **Criterion 3: Organisational capacity and experience:**

- Demonstrated their organisation's ability to deliver the grant activity successfully.
  - Described their experience in working collaboratively with veterans or veteran groups to develop targeted enrolment or RPL policies and/or procedures.
  - Described their practical, technical, and advisory services that would assist veterans enrolling to study or studying at your institution.
  - Described their organisation's ability or experience in delivering other forms of RPL or alternative entry pathway programs for other cohorts.
- Demonstrated how they would successfully implement and monitor the grant activity to completion.
  - Described the key staff who would manage/deliver the project including their roles, relevant experience, skills and qualifications.
  - Described their approach, policies, and procedures for managing a grant agreement including monitoring the delivery of activity outcomes, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

#### **Strong responses:**

- understood the audience is veteran and grant/project focussed, not academia focussed
- described specific existing programs and/or demonstrated consultation is underway with veterans, veteran groups, and other organisations
- provided an overview of existing or new RPL/alternative entry processes and how veterans would obtain information and support and be targeted with specific assistance
- described additional specific supports for veteran students
- clearly identified other cohorts in the student body that have similar programs in place, preferably with references to support organisations (for example, schools, TAFE, community groups, industry)
- ensured academic biographies are tailored to the project and identified individuals' positions/roles, including information about supporting teams
- referenced previous grant management systems and success, if applicable, and demonstrated understanding of the guidelines
- ensured monitoring project delivery, evaluation activities and continuous improvement processes were addressed in the response.

### **Individual feedback**

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Individual feedback will be available for this grant opportunity. To request individual feedback please follow the instructions as set out in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines section 9.1.