Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program

2017 National Priorities Pool – Commissioned Projects
Frequently Asked Questions

This document is to:

a. inform applicants about the 2017 National Priorities Pool expression of interest (EOI) process
b. highlight any changes from previous rounds, and
c. answer questions that are frequently asked during the National Priorities Pool EOI process.

Disclaimer: This document should be read in conjunction with the Other Grants Guidelines (Education) 2012 (the Guidelines) and the Guide for Applicants. In the event of ambiguity, the Guidelines prevail over this document and the Guide for Applicants.

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1. Forms and submissions

1.1 What are the correct EOI forms?
The correct forms are:
   Written responses to questions must be provided using this form.
   The project plan, risk management information and budget must be provided using this form.
   This form must be signed by an authorised officer, scanned and submitted in PDF format.

1.2 Where do I obtain the forms?
Contact the student equity unit at your institution to obtain the correct EOI forms.

1.3 How do I submit my EOI?
Submit your EOI by uploading the completed forms to the submissions website, at submissions.education.gov.au.
Do not send your EOI to the equity inbox.

1.4 Who do I contact if I have questions about the application process or experience technical problems?
Please contact equity@education.gov.au if you need assistance. This email address is only monitored during business hours (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

1.5 What is the closing date for submissions?
EOIs must be submitted by 6 PM, 30 June 2017 (Australian Eastern Standard Time).
Late EOIs will only be accepted at the sole discretion of the Program Delegate and where exceptional circumstances are identified. Requests for late submission should be addressed to the Program Delegate at equity@education.gov.au and made prior to the deadline.

2. Budget

2.1 What information should I include in my budget?
Your budget should state how much funding your university is applying for from the National Priorities Pool and the cash or in-kind contribution that your university will make.
In addition, you must:

- demonstrate how the costs were determined
- justify the inclusion of these costs in your budget
- demonstrate how the amount of any cash or in-kind contribution was determined
- describe the benefits of any cash or in-kind contribution
- demonstrate how your budget line items and costs are commensurate with your project activities and expected outcomes.

Please note: If your EOI is successful, the information provided in your budget will be used to draft the Conditions of Grant for the project.

2.2 Can I include project team members' time as in-kind contributions?
Yes. Team members who will receive a salary from a separate funding source to the National Priorities Pool can be included in the budget as an in-kind contribution. Use the rationale column to show the proportion of time you estimate that the staff member will spend on the project and the nature of their contribution to the project.

2.3 Can I include institutional overheads as in-kind contributions?
Yes. Institutional overheads that can be demonstrably linked to project outcomes or the project's success can be included in the budget. Use the rationale column to show what the overheads include and how they will contribute to the project. Where appropriate, refer to your university’s policy on the costing of institutional overheads.

3. Timeframes

3.1 When is this project expected to start?
Commencement is dependent on Ministerial approval of the successful project and finalisation of Conditions of Grant. Indicative project commencement timelines are from 1 September 2017.

3.2 When is this project expected to conclude?
This project must conclude, including expenditure of all grant funding, submission of the Final Report and submission of the Acquittal Report, by the date specified in the Guide for Applicants for the relevant project.
4. General advice on preparing EOIs

4.1 General presentation tips
Projects will be assessed against the assessment criteria in section 2.6 of the Guide to Applicants.

Ways to make an EOI stand out may include:
- clearly defining the project’s expected outcomes
- demonstrating how the project outcomes will support the objectives of the HEPPP and the National Priorities Pool
- strongly substantiating your approach to the project, and
- ensuring that all project information is consistent and fully integrated across the EOI forms.

4.2 Project Plan
- A project plan should support the project description by providing a structured sequence of events that describe how a project will proceed.
- Each entry in a project plan should clearly demonstrate how the activity will contribute to the project outcomes. Avoid providing information or describing activities that do not clearly demonstrate relevancy to achieving the project outcomes.
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) should provide qualitative information beyond simply stating that a task has been completed. For instance, rather than stating “survey administered”, a KPI might explain what administering a survey will achieve, why it is relevant to the project outcomes, who would be surveyed, and propose a desired response rate.

4.3 Risk Assessment
- EOIs should present an accurate appraisal of potential risk to the successful completion of a project or its likelihood of achieving project outcomes.
- An EOI that identifies risks and presents effective strategies to mitigate those risks across the lifetime of the project will be viewed favourably, even where the initial consequence of a risk is significant.

4.4 Project Budget and Staffing
- EOIs should demonstrate how each member of the project team will contribute to the project across its lifetime and how the project will be managed.
- Where a staffing position is not determined at the time of submission, or contingent on the project being funded (such as a project manager or research officer position), the applicable budget line item should describe the duties of a position to be filled and why the position is relevant to the project’s successful completion.
- EOIs should provide sufficient information to justify the inclusion of each budget line item and demonstrate how its dollar value was calculated. For instance, “Staff Travel” should include information such as the number of people whose travel costs will be supported and demonstrate how the travel will contribute to the project outcomes.
5. Other Projects

5.1 Will the Department of Education and Training invite EOIs for any other commissioned projects under the 2017 National Priorities Pool?

Yes, the Australian Government will commission the following projects through an open EOI process:

- Australian Higher Education Equity Ranking
- Economies of scale in supporting low socio-economic status (SES) and other disadvantaged students
- HEPPP Evaluation Framework
- Individual-based socio-economic disadvantage measure
- Professional Development in equity interventions for school teachers
- Widening Participation Longitudinal Study – Phase 2 – Implementation.

In addition the Government will commission the following projects:

- Equity Research and Innovation Panel
- Publication of National Priorities Pool research
- Seed Funding for Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience Expansion.

5.2 Will the Department of Education and Training invite EOIs for university-proposed projects under the 2017 National Priorities Pool?

No. The Department of Education and Training will not invite universities to submit EOIs for university-proposed projects in 2017.