



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

# Norfolk Island Vocational Education and Training Financial Assistance Initiative

## Guidelines

Opening Date:	2 January 2019
Date Guidelines Released:	1 December 2018
Revised:	18 March 2024 V6
Type of Financial Assistance:	Direct Subsidy

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# 1 About the Norfolk Island Vocational Education and Training (VET) Financial Assistance Initiative

The Norfolk Island VET Financial Assistance Initiative promotes growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing on Norfolk Island through increased access to quality VET.

The Norfolk Island VET Financial Assistance Initiative is being delivered by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (The Department) on behalf of the Australian Government to fill an assistance gap on Norfolk Island as residents are unable to access subsidies provided by state and territory governments.

The Norfolk Island VET Financial Assistance Initiative supports participants to manage the costs of studying at TAFE or at a VET institution while living on Norfolk Island.

Financial assistance is available to support apprentices and trainees including school-based as well as post-school participants studying full-time or part-time VET courses while residing on Norfolk Island.

In order to be eligible for financial assistance, the course must be a VET course including school-based traineeships and apprenticeships with training in job-related and technical skills that can be applied to employment on Norfolk Island. These parameters cover a large number of careers and industries like trades and office work, agriculture, retail, hospitality and technology.

Financial Assistance is available from 2 January 2019.

These Guidelines may be updated from time to time.

## 2 Norfolk Island VET Financial Assistance Process Map

### THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OPENS

We publish the guidelines and advertise on the Department's website.



### YOU COMPLETE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FORM

You will attend Asuria and complete the Eligibility Form for yourself and your course.  
Your application should align with these Program Guidelines.  
Applications are submitted to Asuria.



### ASURIA WILL ASSESS ALL APPLICATIONS

Asuria will assess the application against the eligibility requirements.  
Assessment will include an interview with you.



### APPLICATION DECISIONS ARE MADE

Asuria will decide on an applicant's course suitability for funding and advise applicants of the amount of financial assistance to be paid.  
Asuria may consult with the Department on an application.



### ASURIA NOTIFIES YOU OF THE DECISION

Asuria will advise you of the decision of your application and the amount of financial assistance.



### ENTER INTO AN ARRANGEMENT

You and Asuria will enter into a Letter of Offer.



### DELIVERY OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

You undertake the VET course as identified in your Letter of Offer.  
You or the supplier (RTO or travel agent) submit the training fee or travel invoice to Asuria for payment to pay the subsidised amount. In the case of partial funding, you are required to pay the unsubsidised portion of the fees directly before submitting the invoice to Asuria for payment.



### EVALUATION OF THE NORFOLK ISLAND VET FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE

The Department, in partnership with Asuria, will evaluate the Norfolk Island VET Financial Assistance Initiative as a whole.  
The evaluation will be based on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

### 3 Financial Assistance Benefits

The VET Financial Assistance Initiative will subsidise the cost of the course fees incurred by a Norfolk Island resident comparable to the subsidy available to a resident of the chosen institution's state or territory.

### 4 Financial Assistance Eligibility

#### 4.1 Participant eligibility

To be eligible to receive Financial Assistance the participant must be:

- at least 15 years of age or in year 10 or above (*note: where a participant is less than 15 years of age, their application must be accompanied by a letter from the School Principal approving their participation*)
- be enrolled in an eligible VET course or school-based traineeship/apprenticeship that qualifies for subsidy in Australia
- must meet the individual eligibility requirements for the subsidy available for their enrolled course
- an Australian or New Zealand Citizen or holder of visa classes 808 or 444
- a resident of Norfolk Island at registration
- not receiving any other Commonwealth or state or territory financial support towards the course (VET Student Loan are not considered financial support under this Initiative)
- not receiving VET Financial Assistance subsidies for more than two separate courses of study in each four-year period, except in exceptional circumstances.

#### 4.2 Eligible courses and assistance

Courses eligible for financial assistance include:

- training in job-related and technical skills that can be applied to employment on Norfolk Island;
- a qualification level as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework of:
  - Level 1 - Certificate I
  - Level 2 - Certificate II
  - Level 3 - Certificate III
  - Level 4 - Certificate IV
  - Level 5 – Diploma
  - Level 6 - Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree
- study undertaken for an apprenticeship as block work on the mainland where their employment is on Norfolk Island; and
- the course and eligible provider must both be accredited
- travel and accommodation assistance for eligible participants

#### 4.3 Eligible providers

An eligible provider is either a:

- Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institution, or
- Registered Training Organisation (RTO) registered with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) or the Western Australian Training Accreditation Council (WA TAC).

## 4.4 Mode of study

Participants may undertake study on a full-time or part-time basis. A full-time study load is as defined by the Eligible Provider of the Eligible Course of Study.

Participants may change from full-time to part-time study, or vice versa. Participants must notify Asuria within four weeks of the change of enrolment status.

The mode of study may be face-to-face or online, but must be undertaken through an Australian accredited RTO.

## 4.5 Travel and Accommodation Assistance

Travel and accommodation assistance is provided as below:

Assistance	School Based Apprentice or Trainee	Non-School-Based VET Participant
Airfare - Participant	1 x return economy airfare to either Sydney or Brisbane airport	1 x return economy airfare to either Sydney or Brisbane airport
Airfare - Accompanying adult for an apprentice, trainee or VET Participant under 18yrs old	1 x return economy airfare to either Sydney or Brisbane airport capped at \$1000 ex-GST per year	1 x return economy airfare to either Sydney or Brisbane airport capped at \$1000 ex-GST per year
Travel Allowance - Participant only	\$0.19 per km up to 150kms return	\$0.33 per km up to 150kms return
Accommodation Assistance - Participant only	\$50.00 per night	\$105.00 per night

**Travel allowance** is paid from the arriving airport to your place of study and return on day of travel back to the island up to 150kms each way.

**Accommodation and other expenses assistance** is contingent upon the availability of return flights to Norfolk Island. This support will be extended only for the duration leading up to the first available flight following the completion of the block training.

Eligible Participants as per clause 4.1 are able to claim the travel and accommodation assistance despite the subsidy eligibility of the course.

## 5 Financial Assistance Application Process

### 5.1 When to apply

Participants must apply for Financial Assistance after they have successfully completed the eligibility task with Asuria and within four weeks of enrolling for a VET course.

Participants may register for a VET course at any time in accordance with the requirements of the TAFE or RTO, but need to factor in the importance of completing an eligibility interview with Asuria to assess the fees for the course and the possible government subsidies.

## 5.2 How to apply

Before you apply, you should read and understand these guidelines, the Application Form and the draft Letter of Offer that are available from Asuria.

Participants must complete the Application Form and submit all relevant supporting documentation to Asuria.

## 5.3 Supporting documentation

Examples of evidence to substantiate eligibility include:

- Norfolk Island resident:
  - Utilities bill confirming address
  - Superannuation statement
  - Drivers Licence
  - Bank Statement confirming address
  - Copy of a Centrelink letter, current Income Statement or other letter from a Commonwealth, state or territory agency with Norfolk Island address
  - Rent agreement, rates, mortgage documents
  - Copy of Visa Subclass 808 or 444

## 5.4 Questions during the application process

Should a Participant have any questions on the Financial Assistance Initiative, Participants should contact Asuria:

- phone: 22562
- email to: [norfolkislandadmin@Asuria.com.au](mailto:norfolkislandadmin@Asuria.com.au).
- mail to: P.O. Box 885, 115a Taylors Road, 2899 Kingston, Norfolk Island

# 6 Successful Financial Assistance applications

## 6.1 Letter of Offer

If you are successful, you must enter into a legally binding Letter of Offer with Asuria.

A draft Letter of Offer is available from Asuria. Standard terms and conditions for the Letter of Offer will apply and cannot be changed.

It is recommended that all Participants applying for financial assistance familiarise themselves with the conditions of the Letter of Offer or consider seeking independent advice on the implications of the conditions and their capacity to meet these conditions if financial assistance is approved.

Asuria will develop the Letter of Offer based on the information you provide in your application. Should you propose any changes to these details, such as proposed course and course fees, we will review these against the application to ensure they do not impact the approval.

Asuria will work with successful Participants to have Letters of Offer executed within four weeks of approval ('execute' means both you and Asuria have signed the Letter of Offer). The offer may lapse if both parties do not execute the Letter of Offer within this time. Asuria will not make any financial assistance payments until there is an executed Letter of Offer in place.

## 6.2 How the Financial Assistance will be paid

The Letter of Offer will state the:

- name of the VET course being undertaken

- maximum financial assistance amount to be paid
- amount, timing and requirements of each payment (payment schedule).

Asuria will not exceed the maximum financial assistance amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra expenditure, you must pay it yourself.

A payment schedule will be negotiated with you. Funding will be paid:

- directly to the supplier or RTO upon receipt of invoice
- for Travel and Accommodation Assistance on application before travel. The daily assistance will be paid from the closest available flight dates to the start and end of the training/work placement regardless of time spent off island

When making a claim for payment, the participant must complete the claim form attached to the Letter of Offer and provide the invoice for payment accompanied with evidence of payments for any unsubsidised amounts.

In exceptional circumstances, Asuria, in consultation with the Department, may allow alternative payment arrangements.

### 6.3 Financial Assistance and taxation

For further advice on taxation matters related to financial assistance, please contact a taxation professional.

### 6.4 Financial Assistance and social security payments

Payments made under the Norfolk Island VET Financial Assistance Initiative are not considered income for the purposes of the social security income test.

For further advice, please contact Centrelink.

### 6.5 Letter of Offer variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect the participant's ability to complete a course within the expected timeframe. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to the Letter of Offer, including:

- changing the financial assistance payment schedule
- changing mode of study from full-time to part-time or vice versa
- extending the timeframe for completing the course.

If you want to propose changes to the Letter of Offer, you must put them in writing before the Letter of Offer end date. Contact Asuria for further information. We will not consider changes after the Letter of Offer end date.

### 6.6 Letter of Rescission.

In circumstances where a course, traineeship or apprenticeship withdraws, ceases or postpones indefinitely, a Letter of Rescission will be provided by Asuria. This letter will end the funding process. You are not required to co-sign the Letter of Rescission, but please keep a copy for your file.

## 7 Delivery of Financial Assistance

### 7.1 Participant responsibilities

You must let Asuria know if anything is likely to affect your ability to complete the VET course for which you are receiving financial assistance.

Asuria and the Department need to know of any key changes to your circumstances, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your course by the anticipated completion date or if you have decided to withdraw from the course.



You must also inform Asuria of any changes to your:

- name
- address
- nominated contact details.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the Letter of Offer you must contact Asuria immediately.

## 7.2 Department responsibilities

The Department is responsible for:

- providing Asuria with funding for the Financial Assistance
- promoting the Financial Assistance, in partnership with Asuria
- monitoring the performance of Asuria
- maintaining the Guidelines and Letter of Offer
- monitoring and evaluating the overall Financial Assistance performance.

## 7.3 Asuria responsibilities

The Department has engaged Asuria to deliver VET Financial Assistance on Norfolk Island. Asuria will:

- complete an interview to determine if the participant and course are eligible for financial assistance
- receive and assess all applications from participants seeking VET Financial Assistance
- receive and assess all applications from participants seeking Travel and Accommodation Assistance
- negotiate and execute a Letter of Offer with successful participants
- pay any subsidised course fees directly to the RTO or, in the case of reimbursement, the person of participant's choice on receipt of satisfactory claims for payment incurred on behalf of Participant
- pay travel assistance to the Participant before the date of travel upon evidence as per clause 4.5
- pay for flight costs upon invoice from travel agent
- acquit financial assistance with Participant once VET course is complete
- provide support services to VET Participants including:
  - explanation of the VET financial support
  - linking Participants with other Government agency support services as required such as health, counselling and IT support
  - linking potential VET Participants to employment or apprenticeships
  - support and encourage Participants to complete courses and
- arrange pro-rata reimbursement of Financial Assistance for incomplete courses from the Participant and back to the Commonwealth
- promote VET financial support through schools and other community organisations
- report quarterly to the Commonwealth on the Financial Assistance including uptake and performance.

## 7.4 Completion of course

On completion of the course, you must notify Asuria within one month that you have finished. To support your advice, you must provide a statement of achievement or certificate, or similar.

## 7.5 Non-Completion of VET course

Should you not complete the course, you must notify Asuria that you have withdrawn from the course immediately.

You may have to repay a pro-rata amount of the financial assistance received. Asuria, in consultation with the Department, may waive repayment of financial assistance in exceptional circumstances.

## 7.6 Acknowledgement and Publicity

The Department or the Administrator may wish to publicise the success of the Initiative or particular Participant. You will be contacted for permission should it be that your achievements and the financial assistance you received be recognised in the publication.

## 7.7 Evaluation

We will evaluate the Initiative to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. Your completion advice to Asuria will be considered in this evaluation. You may be contacted to assist with the evaluation. The Letter of Offer requires you to provide information to help with evaluation.

# 8 Probity

The Australian Government will ensure that the process is fair, in line with the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct.

**Note:** These guidelines may be changed from time to time by us. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on the Department's website at **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid..**

## 8.1 Complaints process

Feedback, enquiries and complaints relating to the VET Financial Assistance Initiative must be sent to Asuria. Initial complaints must be lodged in writing by either:

- email to: [feedback@Asuria.com.au](mailto:feedback@Asuria.com.au)
- mail to: 115a Taylors Road, 2899 Kingston, Norfolk Island

Asuria will respond to all enquiries in the first instance. If Asuria cannot resolve the matter, they will refer it to the Department for resolution.

In addition, the Department's Complaints Management procedures apply to complaints about the VET Financial Assistance Initiative. All complaints about the process must be lodged in writing by either:

- using the online feedback and complaints form at <https://infrastructure.gov.au/utilities/feedback.aspx>;
- email to: [clientservice@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:clientservice@infrastructure.gov.au);
- mail to: Director, Governance Section  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts  
GPO Box 594  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Any questions you have about decisions for the VET Financial Assistance Initiative should be sent to [norfolkislandadmin@Asuria.com.au](mailto:norfolkislandadmin@Asuria.com.au).

If you do not agree with the way we have handled your complaint, you may lodge a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with us.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

- Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
- Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)
- Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

## 8.2 Conflict of interest

### 8.2.1 Participants

A conflict of interest could affect the performance of the financial assistance. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if our staff, staff of Asuria and/or you or any of your family:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or employee of Asuria
- has a relationship with, or in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives funding under the Program

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interest or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to a grant application, you must inform Asuria in writing immediately. Employees of Asuria and Departmental officials must also declare any conflicts of interest.

### 8.2.2 Asuria

All personnel of Asuria must declare, on an ongoing basis, any perceived or existing conflicts of interest to the Department.

A real or perceived conflict of interest may arise if any personnel of the Asuria has a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a Participant
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation that is likely to interfere with or restrict the Asuria from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently.

### 8.2.3 Department

The Department will be made aware of any conflicts of interest and will handle them as set out in Australian Government policies and procedures. Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (Section 13(7)) of the Public Service Act 1999. We publish our conflict of interest policy on the Australian Public Service Commission website.

## 8.3 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

We treat your personal information according to the 13 Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy Act 1988. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

You are required, as part of your application, to declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles. You must ask for the Australian Government's consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else if you are given reasonable notice of the disclosure; where disclosure is authorised or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law; if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health; or if you have consented to the disclosure.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about Participants under the Initiative in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may reveal confidential information to:

- employees and contractors of our department or other Commonwealth agencies to help us manage the Initiative effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister, Assistant Minister or Parliamentary Secretary and
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes including government administration, research or service delivery and according to Australian laws, including the:

- Public Service Act 1999
- Public Service Regulations 1999
- Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013
- Privacy Act 1988
- Crimes Act 1914
- Criminal Code Act 1995.

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the four conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
4. you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

The Agreement will include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the Letter of Offer.

## 8.4 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the Program, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and

exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail:

Freedom of Information Coordinator  
Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities  
GPO Box 594  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
Tel: (02) 6274 6495  
Fax: (02) 6275 1347

By email: [FOI@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:FOI@infrastructure.gov.au)

## 9 Enquiries and Feedback

For further information or clarification, you can contact Asuria on +6723 22562 or at [feedback@Asuria.com.au](mailto:feedback@Asuria.com.au)

We may publish de-identified questions you ask us with our answer on our website as Frequently Asked Questions.

You can also contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman with a complaint (call +61 1300 362 072). There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

### Appendix A: Definitions of key terms

Term	Definition
Administrator	Norfolk Island Administrator
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework, the national policy for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system. It incorporates the quality assured qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.
Conflict of Interest	The exercise of a power or making of a decision by a person in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either a material personal interest (whether financial or non-financial) or a material personal association.
Course Commencement Date	The expected date for commencing the VET course.
Course End Date	The expected end date for completion of the VET course.
Department	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.
Financial Assistance	The funding made available by the Commonwealth to successful Participants.
Initiative	Norfolk Island VET Financial Assistance Initiative
Letter of Offer	A legally binding contract between a successful Participant and Asuria
Program	Norfolk Island VET Financial Assistance

RTO	Registered training organisation
Successful Participant	A Participant that has been offered financial assistance and has an executed Letter of Offer in place.
TAFE	Technical and further education institutions
Us	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
VET	Vocational Education and Training
We	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
You	Successful Participant