

EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Victorian Government's nation-leading [Three-Year-Old Kindergarten](#) reform will create more than 6,000 new early childhood education jobs across Victoria, including over 4,000 teachers and 2,000 educators.

Scholarships are available for people looking to pursue a rewarding career in early childhood education.

The Early Childhood Scholarships Program has two streams:

- **Early childhood scholarships to become a teacher:** This option is available for eligible people wanting to study to become a registered early childhood teacher and work in a Victorian approved centre-based early childhood service.
- **Early childhood Aboriginal pathway scholarships:** This option is available for eligible Aboriginal people wanting to become an early childhood teacher or educator and work in the early childhood sector.

Early childhood scholarships to become a teacher

Scholarships awarded under the early childhood scholarships to become a teacher option are available to support approved bachelor or postgraduate qualifications. The qualification studied must allow the recipient to teach as an early childhood teacher registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. For a full list of early childhood education qualifications approved by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) from Certificate III through to postgraduate qualifications, see: [Approved early childhood qualifications](#).

Dual-qualification (early childhood and primary) bachelor and masters degrees are not eligible for this scholarship.

Bachelor trained early childhood teachers may also be eligible for support to study a postgraduate qualification that extends their skills and knowledge of early childhood education and care.

Recipients will receive up to:

- \$25,000 towards an approved early childhood bachelor degree
- \$12,000 towards an approved early childhood graduate diploma
- \$18,000 towards an approved early childhood masters qualification.

Early childhood Aboriginal pathway scholarships

Scholarships awarded under the **early childhood Aboriginal pathways scholarships** option are available to support approved qualifications from Certificate III and Diploma through to degree and postgraduate level qualifications. The qualification studied must allow the recipient to teach either as an early childhood educator or an early childhood teacher registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Aboriginal pathway scholarship recipients will receive up to:

- \$2,500 towards the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care
- \$5,000 towards the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care
- \$34,000 towards an approved early childhood bachelor degree
- \$16,000 towards an approved early childhood graduate diploma
- \$24,000 towards an approved early childhood masters qualification.

The study component of scholarships is not available for the Certificate III in, and Diploma of, Early Childhood Education and Care being studied via the Free TAFE initiative. Aboriginal people studying a Free TAFE course can still apply for a scholarship to receive employment milestone payments at the completion of their course.

Additionally, scholarships for the Certificate III and Diploma qualifications will continue to be available for Aboriginal people studying at non-TAFE registered training organisations. You can find further information about Free TAFE [here](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOLARSHIP MILESTONE PAYMENTS

Funding arrangements for scholarships

This financial assistance is designed to support the individual needs of scholarship recipients to complete their studies. This includes contributing to course fees, study materials such as textbooks and accommodation and living expenses to enable study.

Funding will be paid in instalments. Recipients will receive payments as outlined in their agreements in line with specific milestones described as follows:

- **study milestones** include proof of confirmed enrolment into the course and can include graduation from the course.
- **employment milestones** include proof of commencement of employment and can include completing a specified period of employment in a specified early childhood setting.

Payment for each milestone is subject to satisfactory evidence being submitted each year. For example, while studying, a scholarship recipient must submit evidence that they have completed study requirements and remain enrolled.

For milestone payments refer to **Appendix 1**.

Overview of support and conditions for scholarships milestone payments

At a minimum, the scholarship recipient must successfully complete the required study component in a [relevant course approved by ACECQA](#). Study can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis. To receive employment milestone payments, the recipient must commence employment in an approved role in the early childhood sector within six months of graduating from an approved course.

Note that should the recipient be unable to complete their course, or otherwise not meet the terms for financial assistance as set out in their signed agreement, repayment of financial assistance will be determined by the Department.

Support offered and conditions of scholarships, by qualification type		
Qualification	Support for students commencing study	Support for students who began study from January 2017
Early childhood scholarships to become a teacher		
Bachelor degree*	Up to \$25,000	Up to \$22,000
Graduate diploma	Up to \$12,000	Up to \$9,000
Masters qualification*	Up to \$18,000	Up to \$15,000
Early childhood Aboriginal pathway scholarships		
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	Up to \$2,500	Does not apply
Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care	Up to \$5,000	Does not apply
Bachelor degree	Up to \$34,000	Up to \$31,000
Graduate diploma	Up to \$16,000	Up to \$13,000
Masters qualification	Up to \$24,000	Up to \$21,000

*Dual-qualification (early childhood and primary) not eligible

CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE APPLYING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP

Eligibility

Applicants may be school leavers, career changers and those already working in early childhood who meet the eligibility criteria. Applicants do not have to already be working in the early childhood sector to apply.

Students who have already chosen their career in early childhood and enrolled in an eligible teaching qualification **from January 2017** can also apply for a scholarship. This applies to both bachelor and postgraduate level qualifications.

Those who have commenced an early childhood teaching qualification prior to 1 January 2017, and those undertaking a dual (early childhood and primary) bachelor and masters degrees are not eligible to apply.

To apply for a scholarship, you must:

- be an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen or the holder of a permanent visa and meet the relevant citizenship and residency requirements
- be a Victorian resident
- for all applicants yet to commence a bachelor degree, graduate diploma or master's qualification, have been accepted into a course leading to an approved early childhood teaching qualification
- for Aboriginal applicants studying either the Certificate III in or Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, have been accepted into a Victorian TAFE or other compliant registered training organisation. Aboriginal people accessing free TAFE will be able to apply for the employment milestone component of scholarships upon completion of the relevant TAFE course and commencement of employment
- be enrolled in each unit for course commencement (at a minimum) at your registered training organisation or tertiary institution by the relevant census date, unless otherwise agreed by the Department
- not be receiving any other scholarship or grant from the Department in relation to the course you intend to study in the event of having previously withdrawn or been terminated from a scholarship awarded by the Department, have repaid any funds in accordance with the former agreement before applying.

Eligible courses

For a full list of approved early childhood education qualifications from Certificate III through to postgraduate qualifications, see: [Approved early childhood qualifications](#).

Those studying to become an educator through the Early Childhood Aboriginal pathway component must enrol in CHC30113 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care or CHC50113 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (or the relevant qualifications that supersede these). Search the Victorian Skills Gateway for a list of registered providers at skills.vic.gov.au.

Program requirements

Applicants who are offered a scholarship will be required to accept and sign a Scholarship Agreement with the Department that sets out the terms and conditions on which the Department is willing to make the Scholarship available to the applicant. The Scholarship Agreement must be signed, and the relevant milestone completed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Department before any funding can be paid to the scholarship recipient.

The Scholarship Agreement will detail the successful applicant's and the Department's responsibilities in connection with the scholarship including further detail on the payment structure and the outcomes that must be achieved.

Applicants will be required to notify the Department in the event of a proposed or actual change to their study or employment arrangements.

Repayment of scholarship and employment milestone payment funding

Recipients who do not meet their obligations in the Scholarship Agreement may be required to repay to the Department part of, or the full amount of, the scholarship funding received.

The scholarship recipient will be responsible for paying all costs associated with the course in excess of the amount of the scholarship amount awarded to the recipient by the Department.

Before applying for a scholarship, applicants should consider their personal financial circumstances and ensure that undertaking the required study will be financially feasible.

Employment milestone payments

After successful completion of the approved course, scholarship recipients may be eligible for additional milestone payments upon commencing employment and completing minimum continuous periods of employment in the Victorian early childhood sector in an approved role.

Employment is to commence within six months of graduation from an approved course in order to satisfy the first employment milestone payment.

Continuous employment means meeting the employment and other requirements for the required timeframe as detailed in the Scholarship Agreement. A scholarship recipient may work in successive approved roles at multiple approved services during the relevant timeframe which meet the Department's criteria for scholarship milestones. In all circumstances, the Department must be notified of any gaps or changes in employment circumstances, status or location to receive employment milestone payments. For example, this may include evidence of successive fixed-term contracts or parental leave taken.

Applicants are solely responsible for arranging their own employment and the Department does not guarantee that scholarship recipients will obtain employment in the early childhood sector.

The Department may also accept service undertaken on a casual basis when determining whether the recipient has successfully met the employment milestone. Generally speaking, casual employment will only be accepted for this purpose where the recipient has, at all times, continued to actively seek ongoing or fixed term employment. Evidentiary documentation may be required to demonstrate the steps taken by a recipient in this regard.

Details of the employment requirements are below:

Qualification type	Period of continuous employment to receive employment milestone payment	Required setting	Required role
Bachelor degree or postgraduate qualification	First payment made upon commencing employment. Second payment made on commencement of third year of employment after graduation from study.	Victorian centre-based early childhood service(s)*	Early childhood teacher or equivalent
Certificate III or Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care	Once-off payment made after 12 months of continuous employment	Victorian early childhood setting(s)+	Early childhood educator or equivalent role

*Victorian approved centre-based early childhood service refers to kindergartens and long day care services delivering a kindergarten program. This excludes family day care and outside school hours care services.

+This excludes outside school hours care services.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM

Tax implications

The receipt of funding may have taxation implications and implications in respect of other Government benefit schemes. This includes, but is not limited to, those administered through Centrelink. Applicants are advised to seek their own independent taxation advice and liaise with relevant organisations to find out about these implications before applying for the Early Childhood Scholarships Program.

Compassionate grounds

Where unforeseen exceptional circumstances have prevented the recipient from completing their employment, the Department may have regard to such exceptional circumstances in determining whether to waive some or all of the recipient's repayment obligation. Compassionate or compelling circumstances will be assessed by the Department on a case-by-case basis and evidentiary documentation may be required to support a recipient's request for a waiver of the recipient's repayment obligation.

UPDATE OF GUIDELINES

These guidelines, including program eligibility criteria, will be reviewed and may change in future years.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

For information about the Victorian Early Childhood Scholarships Program and to apply, please visit www.education.vic.gov.au/ecscholarships. For further information, applicants can also email EC.Financial.Support@education.vic.gov.au or call 1300 161 396.

Applications will be assessed within 10 business days of submission. Further evidence or information may be requested to support an application, which may extend the assessment timeframe.

APPENDIX 1: SCHOLARSHIP MILESTONE PAYMENTS


The tables below detail funding amounts paid after evidence the study and employment milestones have been achieved. As part of the agreement entered into with the Department, scholarship recipients are required to provide evidence of study and employment on a regular basis between milestones. For example, evidence of successful enrolment each year in a bachelor qualification or a new contract with an employer.

Scholarships study and employment milestones

Qualification	Study milestones		Employment milestones		Total value (up to)
	Enrolment/ on signing contract	Graduation	At start of year one	At start of year three	
Early childhood scholarships to become a teacher					
Bachelor degree	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$25,000
Bachelor degree (current students)	\$3,250*	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$22,000
Graduate diploma	\$4,000	N/A	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$12,000
Graduate diploma (current students)	\$1,000	N/A	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$9,000
Masters qualification	\$6,000	N/A	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$18,000
Masters (current students)	\$3,000	N/A	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$15,000
Early childhood Aboriginal pathway scholarships					
Bachelor degree	\$10,750	\$10,750	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$34,000
Bachelor degree (current students)	\$7,750	\$10,750	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$31,000
Graduate diploma	\$5,333	N/A	\$5,333	\$5,334	\$16,000
Graduate diploma (current students)	\$2,333	N/A	\$5,333	\$5,334	\$13,000
Masters qualification	\$8,000	N/A	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$24,000
Masters (current students)	\$5,000	N/A	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$21,000

*Current bachelor degree students who apply for a scholarship in the final year of their course are not eligible for this payment

Key

Recallable payment 

Payment cannot be recalled 

Not applicable 

VET early childhood Aboriginal pathway scholarships and employment milestone

Qualification	Study milestones		Employment milestone	Total value (up to)
	Enrolment	Graduation	At end of year one	
Early childhood Aboriginal pathway scholarships				
Certificate III	\$833	\$833	\$834	\$2,500
Diploma	\$1,667	\$1,667	\$1,666	\$5,000