

# Regional and Specialist Training Fund (RSTF)

## Application Guidelines

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The Regional and Specialist Training Fund (RSTF) is a targeted funding stream that supports training for specific skills in regional and specialist areas that are not being met by the current training market.

The fund meets the needs of:

- Localised employer needs in regional Victoria (Regional)
- Specialised occupations of economic significance to Victoria (Specialist)
- Government workforce priorities (Specialist).

The fund gives industry increased confidence in the training and TAFE system to respond to the needs of regional industries. Specialised industries of economic significance to Victoria can be supported to grow through access to a skilled workforce.

The objectives of RSTF are to:

- Assist rural and regional communities to access training that meets their local industry needs
- Address place-based and occupation specific barriers to training that are significant to specific localities or industries/occupations within Victoria
- Achieve parity of training outcomes for regional and metropolitan Victoria
- Greater alignment between workforce requirements and training needs across the state.

### Eligibility

All Victorian training providers that hold a current Skills First VET Funding Contract are eligible to apply.

### Funding Approach

In line with the commitments made under the Skills First reform package, RSTF is available to meet industry and community demand for training that is too costly to deliver through the contestable TAFE and training system.

The fund is available where current training activity does not meet industry's priorities with respect to localised employer needs in regional Victoria (Regional) and/or specialised occupations of economic significance to Victoria (Specialist).

#### Localised employer need in regional Victoria (Regional)

Regional grants address industry diversity and local skill demands across regions of Victoria. This includes training that is critical for Victoria's regional economies, provides pathways for young people and those wishing to re-enter the workforce, and equips students with skills to maximise employment opportunities.

Regional areas of Victoria eligible for RSTF funding through this stream include:

- Barwon South West
- Gippsland
- Grampians
- Hume
- Loddon Mallee
- Mornington Peninsula
- Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges

#### Specialised occupations of economic significance to Victoria (Specialist)

Supporting specialist occupations is critical in facilitating the Government's response to structural change occurring in the economy. Training in Victoria needs to be efficient, flexible and responsive to new and emerging industry specialisations.

The Government recognises that there are courses for specialised occupations of economic importance to Victoria, but not currently delivered to levels demanded by industry.

RSTF enables training for specialist occupations where training activity demanded by industry is small (but of high economic value) and the cost of delivering high-quality training is unviable at the mainstream subsidised rate.

## Duration

Funded projects are expected to be completed within 24 months of a grant being awarded.

## Key dates

RSTF funding will open on **16 August 2021**. Applications can be lodged at any time throughout the year.

## How to apply

Applications are to address the Program Criteria as set out in this document. All applications are to be lodged using the Department's on-line application form. A link to the application form will be provided **after an EOI has been submitted and reviewed**.

[EOIs](#) can be accessed from the RSTF website.

## Assessment

Applications will be assessed by the Department of Education and Training against the Program Criteria noting that preference will be given to applications that have strong industry backing.

## Program criteria

### Criteria 1: Industry and/or Regional Need and Impact - 30%

	Criteria questions	Checklist of information to include
1.1	<p>What is the industry and/or regional need for this course?</p> <p>What are the reasons for the current skills gap?</p> <p>Why are current options for training not meeting this demand?</p> <p>List the occupations specific to regional/employer consultation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Describe the current skill gaps and how the gaps arose.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Describe the expected employment outcomes of this proposal.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Describe the impact that improved delivery of the selected course will have on the region.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Detail how your proposal will be successful in meeting the demand, compared to other options.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Describe any secondary benefits, such as contributing towards a sustainable delivery model or broader benefits to the organisation / community.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Include reference to any reports, documents, newspaper articles, etc. These can be included as URL links with page references.</li> </ul>
1.2	<p>What consultation have you undertaken in the development of this proposal to ensure it will deliver the expected training benefits?</p> <p>What consultation have you undertaken to ensure that the project outcomes are sustainable in the future?</p> <p>Is the course or training package included in a current Case for Change by a Skills Service Organisations / Curriculum Maintenance Manager Service / Trainer Networks or similar body?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate industry linkages and industry support for the provision of training.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> List the stakeholders that you have consulted with and the nature of the consultation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide evidence of consultation such as industry letters that provide information about job vacancies, the need for trained candidates, current and future employment opportunities.</li> </ul>

Criteria 2: Training Delivery Capability, Capacity and Approach – 30%

2.1	Describe your strategy to meet the proposed timeline of your proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Detail the readiness of the project <input type="checkbox"/> Attach a project plan
2.2	<p>What is your capability / capacity to manage the project? (list the resources that will support a positive outcome.)</p> <p>Describe the methods and tools you will use to manage project partnership/s and project risks?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide information on previous projects you have undertaken that demonstrate capability and capacity to deliver this project <input type="checkbox"/> Detail project risks and mitigation strategies. Ensure Risk Management Strategy is completed in project plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Indicate whether a teacher has been allocated or will be recruited. If recruited, outline your recruitment strategy including timelines. <input type="checkbox"/> What strategies / tools will you use to manage the project and the project partnerships to deliver the project on time and on budget?
2.3	<p>Provide a rationale for your proposed mode of delivery for the selected course?</p> <p>What is the rationale for any components of on-the-job and campus-based delivery?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Attach a copy of the Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS) for this RSTF application. The TAS should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Duration of the qualification</li> <li>■ When you intend to commence training</li> <li>■ A percentage breakdown of the mode of delivery eg. Classroom / practical / on-line / self-supervised study</li> <li>■ The nominated elective stream/s, where packaging rules require selection of an elective stream</li> <li>■ Details of any units where there is a requirement of mandatory work placement or structured workplace training. Include how many hours are required and the arrangements that you will implement for practical placement or structured workplace training.</li> </ul>

### Criteria 3: Student attraction and retention – 15%

	Criteria questions	Checklist of information to include
3.1	<p>Who will be the target student cohort/s for this training?</p> <p>How will you attract students to this training?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Define the target student cohort/s. (You will need to report on this number regardless of the type of funding applied for)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Detail the student recruitment strategies that you will use for this proposal. This may include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ partnerships with industry</li> <li>▪ an existing student pipeline from industry</li> <li>▪ promotion through industry associations</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attach a recruitment strategy plan</li> </ul>
3.2	<p>What strategies will you put in place to ensure students remain engaged in the training and high retention rates are achieved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outline any wrap around services that you will provide to students including language literacy numeracy (LLN) support, counselling services, special needs support, inclusiveness policy and strategies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Detail any pathway opportunities for students</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attach a student retention plan</li> </ul>

### Criteria 4: Cost to deliver, value for money and sustainability – 15%

4.1	<p>What are the costs for this proposal?</p> <p>How do they provide value for money?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a budget breakdown of costs and any expected forms of revenue or co-contribution</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attach the completed budget template</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide detailed evidence of costs associated with course delivery</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Once established, will this course remain sustainable beyond the initial RSTF funding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explain how you have ensured that the costs are delivering value for money for the Victorian Community</li> </ul> <p>What is your sourcing strategy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you aligned to Victorian Government procurement policies, if so, which? (<u>Procurement Policies and Framework</u>)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide breakdown on costings. Please complete Grant Budget Template.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Detail the extent of any co-investment</li> </ul>
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4.2	<p>Over what period of time will this training meet the needs of industry and/or the region?</p> <p>Will there be a continued need after the project?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Detail whether the training is to meet an immediate industry and/or region need <input type="checkbox"/> Identify how purchased items will continue to be maintained once the project concludes <input type="checkbox"/> Detail sustainability methods and strategy for provision of this course beyond the initial RSTF funding period <input type="checkbox"/> Describe how your organisation's maintenance strategy will ensure long lasting benefits from the project. How will ongoing maintenance costs be met? <input type="checkbox"/> How will this project be included within your asset management plan? Provide evidence of need via an equipment audit or similar assurance process.

#### Criteria 5: Evaluation – 10%

5.1	<p>How are you going to measure the impact of your project?</p> <p>Describe how you will capture lessons learnt from the project?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Explain how the project, taken as a whole, will be evaluated, including the measures of success and outcomes. <p>Examples of evaluation questions:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> How has industry benefitted from the project? <input type="checkbox"/> What impact has there been on the region? <input type="checkbox"/> How many students gained employment at the end of their training? <input type="checkbox"/> Have student and employer satisfaction increased? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the project outcomes sustainable? <input type="checkbox"/> Has the program been delivered within its scope, budget and expected timeframe? <input type="checkbox"/> Attach the completed Evaluation Plan template
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