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1. Links to Learning Community Grants Program

1.1 Description

Generic skills such as employability skills and personal attributes have been identified as important skills for young people to succeed in further education, training and employment. A rapidly changing workforce and an information based economy means that young people also need to develop independent learning skills and the ability to engage in lifelong learning.

Employability skills build on the Mayer Key Competencies, progressively replacing the Key Competencies in training package qualifications and units of competency from 2006.

Young people who are at risk of leaving school early or who have left school early often require further assistance with these skills so that they remain in or return to education, training and pathways to employment.

The Department of Education and Training (referred to as the ‘department’ in these guidelines) provides funding under the Links to Learning Community Grants Program (LTL) to approved not-for-profit, community organisations and local government authorities who successfully apply to work with young people aged 12 to 24 years who experience multiple barriers (outlined in Section 1.4) to and significant difficulties participating in mainstream education or training.

The department funds projects to deliver group and individual learning and support activities in an informal and creative learning environment. Approved organisations are offered a Funding Agreement, a contract with the department which specifies the agreed target, performance and operational requirements for operating a LTL project.

The learning activities are free of charge to LTL participants and designed so that employability skills and the development of personal attributes are inlaid. Learning activities must ensure young people develop the eight employability skills of:

- **Communication** that contributes to productive and harmonious relations across employees and customers
- **Team work** that contributes to productive working relationships and outcomes
- **Problem solving** that contributes to productive outcomes
- **Initiative and Enterprise** that contribute to innovative outcomes
- **Planning and organising** that contribute to long and short term strategic planning
- **Self management** that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth
- **Learning** that contributes to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes
- **Technology** that contributes to effective carrying out of tasks.

An Employability Skills Framework was endorsed in May 2005 by the National Quality Training Council encompassing employability skills, personal attributes and facets or elements of the skills. For information on the Framework, please refer to the ‘Employability Skills for the Future Report’ (2002) and the ANTA glossary of terms, located at [http://www.dest.gov.au/](http://www.dest.gov.au/). Employability Skills and the facets that employers identify as important (which vary depending on industry and job type) are listed in Attachment C.
Project activities should also lead to improvement in some of the following **personal attributes** that also contribute to employability and life as a whole:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>Personal presentation</th>
<th>Ability to deal with pressure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Common sense</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty and integrity</td>
<td>Positive self esteem</td>
<td>Adaptability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>Sense of humour</td>
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<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Balanced work and home life</td>
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### 1.2 Aim

The aim of the Links to Learning Community Grants Program is to assist young people aged 12 to 24 years who experience multiple barriers to and significant difficulties participating in mainstream education or training, to remain in or return to education or training in order to complete Year 12 or its vocational training and education equivalent.

### 1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the program are to:

1. locate school students at risk of not completing Year 12, or early school leavers who have not completed Year 12 such as the NSW Higher School Certificate or its vocational training and education equivalent such as a Certificate II in the vocational training and education sector

2. engage school students at risk or early school leavers through an individually negotiated participant and pathway plan

3. maintain participant interest and attendance by providing a learning environment and learning activities that respond to the needs of educationally disadvantaged young people

4. improve participants’ employability skills and personal attributes in order to remain in or return to education or training

5. finalise a next-step with each participant which specifies an immediate post-project activity

6. support participants directly into their negotiated next-step activity.
1.4 Target and Population Groups

A project is required to provide learning and support activities and assistance to one of the following target groups:

Early Leavers

Young people who left school before completing Year 12 or its vocational education and training equivalent and are not engaged in education, training or employment including those identified by Centrelink or other support services as lacking the skills and resources to participate in education or training, or a young person not actively participating in any support service may also self refer (an Early Leavers project); or

Students at Risk

Students in Government high schools in Years 7 to 12, identified by school learning support teams, student welfare committees or regional teams, as disengaged from school or at risk of disengaging from school, i.e. enrolled in school but not actively participating in learning, are in critical transition periods such as moving from primary to high school, reaching the legal school leaving age of 15 years of age (unless approval is given by the school principal to leave earlier), or no longer being engaged in education, training or employment (a Students at Risk project).

Within the nominated project target group, assistance is then provided to one of the following three population groups:

- young people who are of a **culturally and linguistically diverse** background, or
- young people who are of **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** descent, or
- a **general population group** which may also include young people from the above two groups.

An organisation may be funded to operate more than one project, each focussing on a different target or population group.

In any project, priority must be given to high need young people who are experiencing one or more of the following circumstances and finding them a **barrier to remaining in or returning to education or training**:

- offending or at risk of offending (activities must not be conducted at a Juvenile Justice Centre)
- homelessness, inadequate access to safe and secure accommodation including accommodation which may damage a young person’s health or, has inadequate personal amenities, etc.
- risk taking behaviour which may cause disability or death including binge drinking, dangerous driving, unprotected sex, vandalism, smoking, self mutilation and illegal drug use (NSW Department of Health)
- single parenthood
- substitute care and under the direction of the State by reason of an order or declaration under an Act
- geographic isolation
- unemployment
- not currently participating in the community or other programs and services, or
- a disability - a significant physical or mental condition which prevents a young person from gaining access to or remaining in education, training or employment (Disability Discrimination Act 1992).

Some young people experience barriers that would prevent them from actively participating and benefiting from LTL projects. They may need expert assistance from other services before commencing in a LTL project. Participation by young people in projects is voluntary.
2. **What should a Links to Learning project look like?**

There are many ways of operating an effective LTL project for young people. Organisations seeking funding are encouraged to design and develop creative, innovative approaches which are tailored to individual needs and local community conditions.

The approaches should build on skills areas which are of interest to young people and take account of their immediate needs. For example, projects could use thematic activities such as video production, food preparation, learning to drive, fashion design, music performance or multi-media to motivate young people to participate in activities where employability skills and personal attributes can be developed and support needs identified.

To help organisations plan and design creative, innovative projects which are consistent with the program objectives (Section 1.3), guidelines have been developed on six core elements that every LTL project must have. These core elements are presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Core project elements](image-url)
2.1 Locate (core element 1)

When a Links to Learning project is working well it successfully locates students at risk of not completing Year 12, or early leavers who have not completed Year 12 or its vocational training and education equivalent (program objective 1).

What must each project do?
As a minimum, all LTL projects must:

- identify the project’s target group
- develop relationships, linkages and collaborative partnerships with other community organisations, government departments, and education and training providers committed to working together for the mutual benefit of young people to ensure that:
  - high need young people in the project’s target group are referred to the project
  - the project works in co-operation with other local support services to ensure the LTL project is part of a co-ordinated package of assistance to high need young people (both during and after completing the project)
- develop a referral process with other agencies to ensure details of the young person’s needs, any identified educational barriers, support given by other agencies and the young person’s goals are obtained and recorded.

When
At the commencement of the project and prior to recruitment of participants, linkages and partnerships with other service providers should be developed, and maintained throughout the project.

What must each project deliver?
Each project must ensure that the agreed number of participants specified in the Funding Agreement commence in project activities and are from the project target group, also specified in the Funding Agreement.

How do we measure the performance of a Links to Learning project?
The performance of the project in relation to core element 1 will be monitored through quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments made through electronic data collection, project reports and departmental monitoring visits. Projects assisting students at risk will receive referrals from partner Government high schools selected by the department. The role of schools is outlined in Section 3.2.

Quantitative performance indicators for core element 1 are:
- % of project participants who are in the LTL project target group and population specified in the Funding Agreement [Performance Standard: 100%]
- number of participants who commenced in LTL activities as a percentage of the agreed number of participants specified in the Funding Agreement [Performance Standard: 90%]
  A participant registered and undertaking more than 12 hours in a LTL project is recognised as a commencement.

Qualitative assessments of performance will focus on:
- the scope and quality of linkages and partnerships.
2.2 Engage (core element 2)

**When a Links to Learning project is working well it engages students at risk or early school leavers through an individually negotiated participant and pathways plan (program objective 2).**

**What must each project do?**
As a minimum, all LTL projects must:

- identify the needs of each participant in terms of their:
  - immediate and future goals and aspirations
  - barriers to learning and participation in education and training
  - additional support needs.

- prepare and implement a negotiated participation and pathways plan with each participant based on their needs. This plan identifies:
  - activities that will be provided during the project to achieve their goals and address barriers to learning and participation in education and training, and pathway options, and
  - strategies including referrals to other agencies to address the young person’s additional support needs while participating in the project
  - agreed time and personal commitments.

**When**
The participation and pathways plan should be developed prior to commencement of activities for participants and in the first few weeks of their participation. The plan should then be reviewed and updated throughout the project.

**What must each project deliver?**
Projects must ensure that each participant has an individually negotiated participation and pathways plan.

**How do we measure the performance of a Links to Learning project?**
The performance of the project in relation to core element 2 will be monitored through quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments made through electronic data collection, project reports and departmental monitoring visits.

Quantitative performance indicators for core element 2 are:

- % of project participants commenced with an individually negotiated participation and pathways plan  [Performance Standard: 100%]

Qualitative assessments of performance will focus on:

- the quality of needs and goal assessment processes used in the project
- the quality of each individual’s participation and pathways plan.

Standard documentation is available to guide approved funded projects on developing effective plans.
2.3 Participate (core element 3)

When a Links to Learning project is working well it maintains participant interest and attendance by providing a learning environment and learning activities that respond to the identified needs of educationally disadvantaged young people (program objective 3).

What must each project do?
As a minimum, all LTL projects must use a combination of group and individual support activities that:

- are between 100 and 500 hours in length
- incorporate a minimum number of contact hours comprising:
  - 70% structured group learning activities with clearly identified outcomes, and
  - a maximum of 30% individual learning and support activities such as one-to-one assessments, tuition and learning assistance, and personal support (approximately 20%); planning, liaison and negotiations with referral agencies and next-step providers (approximately 5%); and post-completion support (approximately 5%).
- have a staff to participant ratio of between 1:5 to 1:10
- are delivered in a creative, flexible and informal learning environment
- use teaching and learning strategies relevant to the target group
- are provided free to the target group of young participants
- utilise linkages and partnerships with other community organisations, government departments, and education and training providers to facilitate access for participants to additional support where required.

When
Applies to all participant activities throughout the project.

What must each project deliver?
Each project must ensure that the number of contact hours specified in the Funding Agreement is delivered.

How do we measure the performance of a Links to Learning project?
The performance of the project in relation to core element 3 will be monitored through quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments made through electronic data collection, project confirmation and other reports and departmental monitoring visits.

Quantitative performance indicators for core element 3 are:
- % of project participants who commenced and completed all negotiated group and individual activities [Performance Standard: 75%]
- number of contact hours negotiated with participants as a percentage of the agreed contact hours specified in the Funding Agreement [Performance Standard: 90%]

Qualitative assessments of performance will focus on:
- the appropriateness of the learning environment for the target group
- the appropriateness of the learning activities for the target group
- participants’ actual attendance at LTL activities.
2.4 Learn (core element 4)

When a Links to Learning project is working well it improves participants’ employability skills and personal attributes to assist them to remain in or return to education or training (program objective 4).

What must each project do?
As a minimum, all LTL projects must:

• map and document project activities against the employability skills

• plan and deliver activities to improve participants’ employability skills and personal attributes as part of individually negotiated project participation and pathways plans (refer to Section 2.2)

• document and report on the progress of each participant against the employability skills and personal attributes.

When
Prior to participants undertaking activities and throughout their participation.

What must each project deliver?
Each project must ensure that all participants receive a record of achievement which documents their progress against the employability skills and personal attributes.

How do we measure the performance of a Links to Learning project?
The performance of the project in relation to core element 4 will be monitored through quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments made through electronic data collection, project confirmation and other reports and departmental monitoring visits.

Quantitative performance indicators for core element 4 are:

• % of project participants commenced who are assessed as making some progress in all eight employability skills [Performance Standard: 75%]

• % of project participants who commenced and receive a record of achievement [Performance Standard: 100%]

Note: A record of achievement is documentation of a participant’s achievements in LTL which can include the Individual Participation and Pathways Plan, a portfolio of work achieved, a statement of attainment, an AQF qualification, record of achievement (usually a certificate) or other supporting documentation.

Qualitative assessments of performance will focus on:

• the quality of learning strategies and activities

• the quality of processes for recording and documenting progress.
2.5 **Next-step (core element 5)**

*When a Links to Learning project is working well it finalises a next-step with each participant which specifies the intended immediate post-project activity (program objective 5).*

**What must each project do?**

As a minimum, all LTL projects must:

- finalise a next-step related to education, training or pathways to employment which includes effective steps for the transition between exiting the project and commencing the activity
- review the support needed by the young person to achieve the next-step.

The next-step should be one of the immediate post-project activities below:

- return to school with support from school or school education officers
- other education programs to achieve Year 10 or Year 12
- traineeships and apprenticeships
- other accredited training
- non accredited education and training programs
- voluntary work
- employment.

Definitions of the vocational training and education terms can be found in the ANTA glossary of terms located on the website at [http://www.dest.gov.au/](http://www.dest.gov.au/).

In exceptional circumstances, some young people may not have the skills to progress onto the activities listed above. In these cases, the immediate next-step could include a further preparatory course and/or access to social support services to further address their barriers to education and training.

Given the diverse and complex needs of young people in the target group, each project needs to develop and sustain a range of pathways suitable for the individual needs of the participants.

**When**

Options for the next-step options should first be considered when negotiating a participation and pathways plan with the participant. Next-step options should also be reviewed and noted at the mid activities interview and at the end of the LTL activities as appropriate.

**What must each project deliver?**

Each project must ensure that an individually negotiated next-step is finalised with each participant.

**How do we measure the performance of a Links to Learning project?**

The performance of the project in relation to core element 5 will be monitored through quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments made through electronic data collection, project reports and departmental monitoring visits.

Quantitative performance indicators for core element 5 are:

- % of participants commenced who exit the project with a next-step [Performance Standard: 90%]

Qualitative assessments of performance will focus on:

- the quality of the next-step activity.
2.6 Moving On (core element 6)

When a Links to Learning project is working well its participants actually commence the negotiated next-step activity (program objective 6).

What must each project do?
As a minimum, all LTL projects must:

- assist and support the participants to commence in the negotiated next-step activity
- liaise with education, training, other support providers and employers to ensure continuity of support between the LTL project and the next-step activity
- maintain contact with participants after they commence the next-step activity and offer them support to remain in the activity (estimated around 5% of the contact hours).

When
A project must assist participants to commence in their next-step activity within two months of completing LTL activities and remain in that activity for at least twelve hours.

What must each project deliver?
Each project must ensure that an agreed number of post-completion support hours are delivered.

How do we measure the performance of a Links to Learning project?
The performance of the project in relation to core element 6 will be monitored through quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments made through electronic data collection, project reports and departmental monitoring visits.

Quantitative performance indicators for core element 6 are:

- % of participants commenced who remain in the next-step activity after leaving the LTL project for at least 12 hours [Performance Standard: 75%]
- number of participants commenced who received support hours after leaving the LTL project [Performance Standard: 75%]

Qualitative assessments of performance will focus on:

- the scope, range and quality of next-step activities.
3. Projects

LTL projects co-ordinate and deliver individually tailored skill-based activities, personal support, education or training pathways planning and assistance to link participants to training and further education options or back to school.

3.1 Early Leavers Projects

Education and training play a key role in providing young people aged 15 to 24 years who left school early and are not in learning pathways or employment with the opportunity to develop knowledge, skills and personal attributes required for participation in economic and social life as adults.

The Government recognises that some individual learners require targeted assistance to remain in or re-enter mainstream education and training systems because of their low levels of skills and other barriers to participation.

The community based approach for implementation of Early Leavers projects means that organisations can develop local strategies within the broad program guidelines to best address the barriers experienced by the young people in their local area.

3.2 Students at Risk Projects

LTL projects are one of the strategic resources available to Government high schools to assist students in Years 7 to 12 at risk of leaving school early before completing post-compulsory education. Innovative community based projects are an early intervention strategy designed to assist students remain at school. Students at risk in critical transition periods such as those entering high school (Year 7-8), and those reaching the legal school leaving age of 15 years of age (Years 9 - 10) are key focus groups assisted by a Links to Learning project.

The department will identify partner Government high schools to refer students at risk to LTL projects. Referrals from other Government high schools can occasionally be accepted provided that students from partner schools are given first priority.

At the beginning of the funding period, approved organisations will be advised by the department of their partner schools. Organisations are then required to consult immediately with student services officers in the region and the principal of each partner school on the proposed key target group for each school, specific needs, suitable referral and liaison strategies, and the name of the in-school co-ordinator.

It is not the aim of the program to withdraw students from productive participation in school activities, or to be a substitute for school. Schools and funded LTL projects should select mutually convenient hours for the operation of projects, based on the needs of the group of students. Activities held during school hours are strongly encouraged. It is expected that those students who already have a marked low attendance at school will participate in LTL activities held substantially in school hours.

The LTL project co-ordinator should then liaise with the in-school co-ordinator to:
- identify and refer appropriate students
- negotiate assessment and referral procedures
- discuss students’ participation in project activities and on-going monitoring of students’ progress whilst undertaking the project
- negotiate follow-up and support strategies for students when they return to school full-time
- review the project towards the end of the year and discuss possible amendments for the following year’s project.
A Protocols document which clarifies the roles of all key players involved in referring students, establishing project activities, and supporting the students during and after project activities will be made available to funded organisations and partner schools at the beginning of the funding period. Parents/caregivers and students may be interested in sections of the protocols.

The department of supports the development of employability skills in government high schools through the School to Work program.

Students from years 9-12 have access to an Employment Related Skills Logbook which is a resource to assist them in understanding their individual school to work transition planning. The employment related skills featured in the Logbook includes cross cultural understanding in addition to the eight employability skills. Use of the Logbook is encouraged in Links to Learning projects as a way of providing relevance and connectedness to concurrent school learning.
4. Funding Processes

4.1 Project Funding

Funding may be awarded for a period of up to three years without full re-application. A contract with the department (known as the Funding Agreement) will be negotiated annually depending on availability of funds, local needs, and whether the organisation has successfully met its program performance and accountability requirements.

Funding is provided to operate a project on a calendar year basis, commencing 1 January to 31 December. A project must be fully operational by 31 March.

Funding is calculated at a rate of $10.20 per participant contact hour (excluding the GST on grants payments). The number of participant contact hours and number of young people to be assisted by the project is negotiated and written into the Funding Agreement.

Funding is calculated on the per-participant contact hour rate, and should cover all costs associated with administering and delivering the project. Costs incurred for operating a project may include administration costs, salaries / on-costs, insurances, project materials, training fees, rent, purchase or lease of equipment, audit fees and fares for isolated participants.

**Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Under the PAYG legislation, where funded organisations do not quote an Australian Business Number the department is required by legislation, except in very limited circumstances, to withhold 48.5% of the payment and remit the withheld amount to the Australian Taxation Office.

Where the funded organisations are registered for GST the grants will be ‘grossed up’ by 10%. For those organisations whose funding is ‘grossed up’, 1/11th GST on the funding received from the department must be paid to the Australian Taxation Office. The department will generate a Recipient Created Tax Invoice in respect of the supplies made by the funded organisation.

4.2 Eligible Organisations

Organisations must be non-profit, community based and incorporated either under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984, or as a company under the Corporations (NSW) Act 2001, or as a co-operative registered under the Co-operatives Act 1992 or be a Local Government Authority, or a non-profit organisation established under a Special Act of Parliament.

Eligible organisations must also be financially viable with income and assets greater than expenditure and outgoings.

Applications from community based organisations working in partnership with other organisations including education and training providers are encouraged. Evidence of formal partnership arrangements such as a memorandum of understanding is to be provided as an attachment to the funding application.

4.3 Applications

Advertisements are placed in metropolitan and local newspapers in the middle of the year prior to each three year funding period. The current three year funding period is 2007 to 2009. The program guidelines are available on the program’s internet site at [www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas/youth/](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas/youth/). Funding applications are made online at the same Internet address. Itemised support documents are also requested to be provided.

The funding application requires details on the applicant organisation, their project management skills and experience, the need for a project and details of their proposed project and approach to project delivery relating to the six core elements (see Section 2).
The application seeks the following:

- proof of either incorporation under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984, or a company under the Corporations (NSW) Act 2001, or a co-operative registered under the Co-operative Act 1992 or a Local Government Authority
- proof of financial viability
- details of the project and its location(s)
- capacity and capabilities to assist young people at risk of not participating in education or training to Year 12 or its vocational education and training equivalent, or those not participating in education or training
- details of proposed processes for locating young people in the target group and obtaining appropriate referrals to the project (see core element 1 – LOCATE – Section 2.1)
- details of proposed processes for developing an individually negotiated participation and pathways plan for each participant (see core element 2 – ENGAGE – Section 2.2)
- details of proposed structure of group and individual support activities (see core element 3 – PARTICIPATE – Section 2.3)
- details of proposed learning strategies related to improving participants’ employability skills and personal attributes (see core element 4 – LEARN – Section 2.4)
- details of proposed strategies and activities for finalising a next-step for each participant (see core element 5 – NEXT-STEP – Section 2.5)
- details of proposed strategies and activities for supporting participants who exit the project to commence participation in the negotiated next-step activity (see core element 6 – MOVING ON – Section 2.6)
- project budget.

4.4 Application Assessment

Assessment will be based on the details provided in the application, the requested attachments, and information provided by referees, other funding bodies and contained in the Department’s own records. Applications will be assessed by departmental officers or their representatives.

Stage 1: Each application received will be confirmed within 14 days of the application’s receipt by the department.

Stage 2: An application will be assessed as eligible for assessment if the organisation:

- is financially viable, and
- is incorporated either under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984, as a company under the Corporations (NSW) Act 2001, as a co-operative registered under the Co-operatives Act 1992 or is a Local Government Authority
- has no outstanding business matters which may impact on the operation of a LTL project such as litigations, debt collection, contract termination, government investigations etc.

Stage 3: Applications marked eligible will be assessed against the following assessment criteria. Applications rated most suitable will be recommended for funding.
4.5 **Assessment Criteria**

Preference will be given to eligible applications which demonstrate:

- a history of sound project administration, implementation and compliance with funding requirements, preferably in relation to high need young people
- a significant number of high need young people in the program’s target group in need of support to remain in or return to education or training in order to complete Year 12 or its vocational education and training equivalent
- successful community networks and partnerships for planning and delivering services to students at risk or early school leavers
- effective processes to locate students at risk or early leavers
- effective strategies to engage a participant, including identifying the young person’s needs and the preparation of an individually negotiated participation and pathways plan
- effective strategies to maintain a participant’s interest and attendance including a relevant learning environment and learning activities
- effective strategies to improve a participant’s employability skills and personal attributes to assist them remain in or return to education or training
- effective strategies to finalise a participant’s next-step
- effective strategies to assist, monitor and liaise with a participant after they have commenced the next step
- value for money.

4.6 **Funding Approval**

The department may negotiate and vary aspects of an application to better match local needs, priorities and best value for money. Final details will be included in the Funding Agreement.

Details of applications recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Minister for Education and Training for approval.

Organisations will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application. Letters of offer will be made to successful applications.

4.7 **Payment of Funds**

Payment of funds will be made in two instalments in the calendar year by electronic funds transfer (EFT):

- 65% of the approved funding (**First Payment**) on exchange of signed Funding Agreements
- 35% of the approved funding (**Second Payment**) on receipt and processing of satisfactory reporting requirements and actions (ie. management self report, monitoring visit report, participant outcomes forms entered on the LTL Online Service). The second payment is also dependent on meeting all the terms of any previous Funding Agreement including receipt of an audited financial statement.
5. Responsibilities of Funded Organisations

5.1 Contractual Obligations

Organisations who accept the offer of funds will be required to enter into a contract with the Department of Education and Training to fulfil the program’s objectives and requirements. Both parties must sign and retain copies of the contract, known as the Funding Agreement.

The Funding Agreement includes the following details:

- the parties to the contract
- the stipulated level of funding the department will make to the organisation for the specified purpose
- the timing of payments
- the organisation’s reporting requirements during and at the completion of the funding period, and
- the target group, number of participants, number of contact hours, participating schools (in Students at Risk projects), project location, and any special conditions.

Failure to meet the LTL program requirements and conditions of funding could result in the termination of the Funding Agreement. In such cases the organisation will be advised and consulted prior to any action being taken. Repayment of funding, in part or in whole, may be required.

5.2 Reporting

Performance monitoring and reporting will focus on participant progress and outcomes, as reflected in the Participant Outcomes Forms (POF), overall project activity and performance reflected in cumulative participant achievements and reports on project activities. Many reports will be provided and submitted electronically.

LTL projects are monitored by departmental officers from the Community Grants Programs Unit or their representatives.

**Table 1 - LTL Reporting Documents**

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<tr>
<th>Report/Document</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Confirmation</strong></td>
<td>Confirming the year's project activities prior to the commencement of the first participants</td>
<td>Before March 31 of the funding year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management Self Report</strong> (incorporating financial expenditure)</td>
<td>Report on organisational management systems and financial expenditure to date</td>
<td>In early May prior to the Monitoring Visit conducted by departmental officers or their representatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant Outcomes Forms</strong></td>
<td>Data entry of participant details online at the at Links to Learning Online service at <a href="https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas/youth/">https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas/youth/</a></td>
<td>Details entered upon registration and commencement of each participant and progress updated: - before the monitoring visit (May-July) - at re-application (July-August) - at end of project and before February 28 of the following year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Project Report</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation of the project which includes feedback from key stakeholders and participants</td>
<td>Before February 28 of the following year. It is recommended that where schools are involved this process commences in November of the funded year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audited Financial Statement</strong></td>
<td>An audited financial statement of grant funds</td>
<td>Before March 31 of the following year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Projects will be required to maintain internal records to support the data provided in the Participant Outcomes Form. These records will need to be made available for monitoring visits and departmental audits. The records must include:

- Referral data for each participant
- Participant Permission and Registration form
- A plan of activities to be delivered by the project
- Project activities mapped against the employability skills
- An individual participation and pathways plan for each participant
- Attendance records
- A next-step for each participant exiting the project.

These records must be of equivalent standard to the corresponding reporting and accountability documents available from the Department.

5.3 Project Management

5.3.1 Staffing

Funded organisations must adhere to the following departmental requirements:

- recruit and supervise appropriate staff to operate the project. Either the staff co-ordinating the project or the tutor delivering project activities must have achieved or have commenced in a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA 40104), or have an equivalent qualification
- ensure all staff working on LTL activities are provided with copies of the terms and responsibilities of the funding (including Program Guidelines, Funding Agreement, budgets and relevant documents)
- ensure employment contracts; detailed duty statements; letters of offer of employment outlining employment conditions; Prohibited Employment Declarations, working with children checks and clearances are endorsed and on record in accordance with legislative requirements concerning Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People and the NSW Government’s Interagency Guidelines for Child Protection and Intervention. This includes compliance with the following NSW Legislation:
  - Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998,
  - Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998, and
- It should be noted that where a person has been the subject of a risk assessment by any NSW authorised employment screening agency, and a risk rating of low-medium or higher has been communicated, the applicant is to be rejected for employment in the LTL project.
- accept all legal and other responsibilities as employers of project staff, including adherence to industrial awards where they apply.

5.3.2 Administrative

Funded organisations must adhere to the following departmental requirements:

- ensure all conditions in the Funding Agreement are met
- set up an effective management and supervision structure to oversee the project
- ensure that staff employed with LTL funds do not hold positions on the management committee
- set up policies and procedures for the organisation and project’s operation which have been approved by the management committee
- ensure the minutes of all formal meetings including management committee meetings, are written in English, accepted and signed off by the Chairperson/President and securely kept
- ensure all records of decisions and approvals are reflected in the minutes of the management committee meetings
• implement proper record systems for effective handover when new LTL project staff commence
• implement proper financial management of the project as indicated in Section 5.4
• monitor the project to ensure all project responsibilities are met
• assess the quality of activities and services offered and measure the results against the targets, program aim and objectives
• ensure there is an assets register which details all equipment purchased with the department’s funding, including dates of purchase, cost, and serial numbers
• ensure that staff attends suitable professional development opportunities on a regular basis.

5.4 Financial

Organisations are required to keep funding in an account with one of the following organisations:
• a credit union
• a bank, or
• a building society.

A funding account must be either a separate account or an independent part of an account already held by the organisation, where funding transactions can be identified and audited.

Organisations shall ensure, as a minimum, that the appropriate financial and operational records and registers required by the legislation relevant to the legal structure of the organisation are maintained.

The following accounting records (hardcopy or electronic) must be kept:

| * invoice records | * leave records |
| * receipt records | * cash book |
| * cheque book and signatories | * journal |
| * bank deposit book | * ledger |
| * order records | * bank statements |
| * invoices/accounts paid records | * financial reports/ trial balances |
| * petty cash records | * GST records |
| * wages book/ employee tax (paye) records | * investment register. |

5.5 Communications

In day to day matters of project delivery the department will communicate directly with the funded organisation’s nominated project contact, usually the project co-ordinator. The department will communicate with the management committee/board of management regarding matters of a legal nature, new policy arrangements and where there are serious concerns about the implementation or financial management of the project.

5.6 Technical Requirements

The application and related processes, and most written correspondence issued by the department for funded organisations will be conducted and sent electronically. Therefore it is mandatory that organisations and project co-ordinators have reliable weekly access to internet and e-mail facilities.

The minimum computer specifications required for organisations funded under LTL include:

• Intel Pentium II processor or equivalent, and 300mhz
• 128 mb of ram
• 15 inch colour monitor
• CD rom drive (>20x)
• standard mouse/keyboard
• Internet Browser – Internet Explorer Version 5.5 or greater
• Internet and email access and accounts.
5.7 Other Responsibilities

5.7.1 Indemnity and Insurance

All personnel employed by the organisation in whatever capacity shall be the sole responsibility of the organisation. The department will not indemnify the organisation in respect of such personnel for any act or claim resulting from such employment.

You must obtain and maintain Professional Indemnity Insurance, Public Liability Insurance for at least $10 million, Product Indemnity Insurance, and any insurance policies that the Workers Compensation Act and any other law requires you to.

In cases where work experience is being considered for participants the organisation must ensure that they or the workplace has the necessary work experience insurance coverage.

5.7.2 Research

Organisations must participate in research projects and evaluations conducted as part of the program.

5.7.3 Promotion

Where it is intended to publicly promote activities under the program, the organisation should ensure that acknowledgement is made of the Department of Education and Training and the Minister as the source of the funding. This includes publications, project stationery, promotional material, signs, advertising and media publicity.

5.7.4 Equity

The department supports the inclusion of equity principles in the design and delivery of its programs and services and promotes equitable practice through adherence to established policies. Equity principles are intended to ensure that all people have fair and reasonable access to services provided through the department’s funded programs.

In carrying out the project, organisations should be aware of equity principles and apply those where practicable to the project. In the use of funding for project purposes the organisation must not adopt policies and practices which are inconsistent with the equity policies and practices of the department.

The department is committed to providing equal access to its services for all people, regardless of their gender, race, marital status, sexuality, disability or age. The department has introduced equity strategies such as the Charter for Equity in Education and Training (Attachment A) and the Principles for Multiculturalism (Attachment B).

Organisations should also ensure that all practices are consistent with the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Acts.

5.7.5 Privacy

The department is committed to respecting the privacy of individuals who receive a service through its programs.

In requesting client information from organisations the department is aware of the:

- obligations governing collection and storage of information
- rights of individuals to whom the information relates
• obligations with respect to the use of the information collected
• limits on the disclosure of the information.

Organisations should ensure that clients receiving a service from a project are advised of:

• that information is being collected about them
• the purpose for which the information about them is being collected
• the intended use of the information and the people, or agencies such as the Department of Education and Training that may be granted access to the information
• whether or not the information is required to be provided by law
• any rights to access the information and make corrections
• where the information will be held.

They should also ensure that participants consent to the use of their information for the identified purposes.

Organisations are required to advise clients that from time to time the department will undertake surveys to determine client satisfaction and to measure performance of the service in meeting the stated objectives.

Organisations are required to make available such client information as is reasonably requested by the department. The department will consult with organisations at the appropriate time regarding the nature of the intended survey and the precise level of information required and will only seek to collect information which is reasonably necessary to undertake the task concerned.

The department’s policy ensures that wherever personal information is made available, strict confidentiality will be maintained and that the information will be used only by the program, and only for its stated purpose.

5.7.6 Child Protection

Organisations must comply with the provisions of the following relevant Acts, the:

• Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998;
• Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998; and

The department will determine its own policies and procedures to ensure it complies with the legislation and Interagency Guidelines. Organisations will comply with any requirements of the department that apply to them. In particular the child protection employment legislation prohibits convicted sex offenders from working with children and broadens the checking of those who want to work with children.

It is mandatory for all preferred applicants seeking child related employment to be checked by an approved NSW screening agency, and where a person has been the subject of a risk assessment and a risk rating of low-medium or higher has been communicated, the applicant is to be rejected for employment in the LTL project.

5.7.7 Disability Legislation

Organisations must comply with the provisions of the following Acts, the:

• Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992);
• NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977); and
• NSW Disability Services Act (1993).

The department will provide further information to assist you to comply with the legislation and a copy of its own requirements related to Disability Action Plans.

5.7.8 Occupational Health and Safety

Organisations must comply with the requirements of the NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 and ensure that all places of work at which the service is provided or work is undertaken, other than the premises of NSW DET, shall be a safe working environment and shall comply with any statutory requirements of occupational health and safety.

5.7.9 Double Funding

A funded organisation must not use LTL funding for a young person for whom they are already receiving funding from another public funding source for providing the same or similar service to that young person.

5.7.10 Fraud

The department is committed to protecting its expenditure and programs from any attempt by members of the public, contractors, grantees, agents, intermediaries or its own employees to gain financial or other benefits by deceit. The department is strongly committed to fraud prevention and control through verification of the accuracy of information provided to the department and of the appropriateness of the use of funds provided by the department. Funded organisations should have policies and procedures in place to ensure risk management and fraud control.

6. Department Of Education and Training Responsibilities

6.1 Contractual Obligations

Organisations are funded to deliver activities and outcomes in accordance with the Funding Agreement and Program Guidelines 2007.

6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the program’s aim and objectives are being achieved, project activities will be monitored by officers from the department or their representatives by means of:

- visits to projects
- analysis of project reports
- analysis of financial reports
- analysis of statistics compiled from Participation and Outcomes Forms, and
- other information that may be requested from the organisation from time to time.

Performance is assessed against the program guidelines, the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement, program objectives, performance standards and equity strategies. Monitoring activities are integral to advising the Minister on the overall development and performance of the program. It is also a mechanism for highlighting best practice and for identifying projects which may require assistance to improve their performance.

Failure to meet the required performance standards could result in the termination of the Funding Agreement. In such cases the organisation will be advised and consulted prior to any action being taken.
6.3 Surplus Funds

Funding not used by the end of the funding period must be returned to the Department within three (3) months of the end of the funding period except where written permission by the Department is given to use the unspent funds to enhance a Links to Learning project. This written permission must be obtained before March 31 of the following year, prior to the unspent monies being deducted from a future funding allocation made to you.

6.4 Promotion

Requests for contact details and other information on LTL projects are often received from within the department, other government departments, businesses and members of the public.

Enquiries have also been received from students seeking information for a project or a work experience placement, parents and schools wishing to refer participants, media interest in producing a story, peak bodies seeking contact with community organisations in their area of interest, and businesses wishing to advertise new learning aids for literacy and numeracy. As it is in the best interest of the program to widely promote its existence, departmental officers will provide contact information where it will benefit the program. Information is also available to the public on the LTL Internet site at www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas/youth/.

6.5 Provision of Advice and Support to Organisations

6.5.1 Professional Development

The department supports staff working in LTL projects with professional development opportunities that will:

- improve their knowledge and understanding of trends, issues and other services related to high need young people
- enhance the skills of coordinators in program planning, delivery, reporting, management and evaluation including operating within a regional service delivery structure
- increase the skills of management committee representatives in program management
- provide coordinators with the opportunity to support each other and share information/ ideas/ resources
- enrich the quality of the activities offered and achieve excellent outcomes for the target group.

6.5.2 Electronic Support

The LTL internet site is at www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas/youth/.

The LTL internet site provides:

- general information about LTL which will be updated on a regular basis by the department, a mechanism to disseminate information to funded organisations and provision of standard documentation to assist funded organisations to manage their projects effectively
- access links to the Links to Learning Online reporting service for registering project participants, providing performance and outcome data, and accessing reporting documents
improved communication links with and between LTL funded organisations eg. dissemination of success stories, examples of best practice, performance information and information on professional development etc.

6.5.3 Community Grants Programs – Departmental Officers or representatives

The Links to Learning Community Grants Program is managed by the Community Grants Programs Unit. Departmental officers from Community Grants Programs or their representatives are responsible for administering the grants, monitoring projects, making payments and providing relevant and timely assistance to funded organisations throughout the funding period. Departmental officers or their representatives can be contacted at:

**Community Grants Programs**

**Telephone:** 1800 009 129  
**E-mail:** youthassist@det.nsw.edu.au

**Postal Address:** Department of Education and Training  
Community Grants Programs  
Locked Bag 53  
DARLINGHURST NSW 2010

**Site Address:** Department of Education and Training  
Community Grants Programs  
Level 13  
1 Oxford Street  
DARLINGHURST NSW 2010
NSW CHARTER FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

PREAMBLE

The New South Wales Government believes that education is the foundation of an informed and just society, the key to overcoming social inequality and to achieving social justice objectives.

The New South Wales Government is building a high quality and fair education and training system. Our vision is of people from all backgrounds and circumstances sharing access to the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to participate fully and successfully in the community. We aim to improve overall education and training outcomes by focusing on those learners and groups of learners who are not benefiting full from education and training.

PRINCIPLES FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. Everyone is entitled to high quality education and training programs that provide recognized credentials and clear pathways to employment and lifelong learning. The outcomes of education and training should not depend on factors beyond the learners control or influence.

2. In the allocation of public resources, priority is given to narrowing those gaps in education and training outcomes that reflect need and prevailing social inequalities.

3. All young people are entitled, as a minimum, to be able to complete their school education to Year 12 or a vocational education equivalent.

4. The diversity of the population is recognized and valued by inclusive approaches to the development, conduct and evaluation of programs.

5. A demonstrated commitment to these equity principles and practices is a core responsibility for all those involved in education and training.

To ensure a coherent linkage between resources, access, delivery, participation and outcomes to achieve equity, these principles will be applied in three main ways:

- equity principles will be built into all services provided by education and training agencies
- available resources will be clearly linked to the achievement of better and more equitable participation and outcomes
- specific measures will continue to be provided to assist all learners and groups to maximise their outcomes from education and training.

This Charter will be reflected in all education and training policies and activities. Agencies will monitor and report on progress towards more equitable outcomes from education and training.
Principles of Multiculturalism

Principle 1

All individuals in NSW should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life in which they may legally participate.

Principle 2

All individuals and public institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language.

Principle 3

All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programs provided or administered by Government of NSW.

Principle 4

All institutions of NSW should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of NSW as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State.
### Employability Skills Framework: Skills and Facets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Facets of the skill that employers identified as important (the nature and application of these facets will vary depending on industry and job type)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong> that contributes to productive and harmonious relations across employees and customers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listening and understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Speaking clearly and directly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writing to the needs of the audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Negotiating responsively</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reading independently</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Empathising</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Using numeracy effectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding the needs of internal and external customers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Persuading effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Establishing and using networks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Being assertive</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sharing information</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Speaking and writing in languages other than English</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork</strong> that contributes to productive working relationships and outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working across different ages and respective of gender, race, religion or political persuasion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Working as an individual and as a member of a team</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowing how to define a role as part of a team</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Applying team work to a range of situations, e.g. futures planning, crisis problem solving</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identifying the strengths of team members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coaching, mentoring and giving feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem solving</strong> that contributes to productive outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing creative, innovative solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing practical solutions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Showing independence and initiative in identifying problems and solving them</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Solving problems in teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Applying a range of strategies to problem solving</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Using mathematics including budgeting and financial management to solve problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Applying problem-solving strategies across a range of areas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Testing assumptions taking the context of data and circumstances into account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resolving customer concerns in relation to complex project issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Initiative and enterprise that contribute to innovative outcomes | • Adapting to new situations  
• Developing a strategic, creative, long-term vision  
• Being creative Identifying opportunities not obvious to others  
• Translating ideas into action  
• Generating a range of options  
• Initiating innovative solutions |
| --- | --- |
| Planning and organising that contribute to long-term and short-term strategic planning | • Managing time and priorities – setting time lines, coordinating tasks for self and with others  
• Being resourceful  
• Taking initiative and making decisions  
• Adapting resource allocations to cope with contingencies  
• Establishing clear project goals and deliverables  
• Allocating people and other resources to tasks  
• Planning the use of resources including time management  
• Participating in continuous improvement and planning processes  
• Developing a vision and a proactive plan to accompany it  
• Predicting – weighing up risk, evaluate alternatives and apply evaluation criteria  
• Collecting, analysing and organising information  
• Understanding basic business systems and their relationships |
| Self-management that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth | • Having a personal vision and goals  
• Evaluating and monitoring own performance  
• Having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and vision  
• Articulating own ideas and vision  
• Taking responsibility |
| Learning that contributes to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes | • Managing own learning  
• Contributing to the learning community at the workplace  
• Using a range of mediums to learn – mentoring, peer support and networking, information technology (IT), courses  
• Applying learning to ‘technical’ issues (e.g. learning about products) and ‘people’ issues (e.g. interpersonal and cultural aspects of work)  
• Having enthusiasm for ongoing learning  
• Being willing to learn in any setting – on and off the job. Being open to new ideas and techniques  
• Being prepared to invest time and effort in learning new skills  
• Acknowledging the need to learn in order to accommodate change |
| **Technology that contributes to effective carrying out of tasks** | • Having a range of basic IT skills. Applying IT as a management tool  
• Using IT to organise data. Being willing to learn new IT skills  
• Having the occupational health and safety (OHS) knowledge to apply technology  
• Having the appropriate physical capacity. |

*Source: Employability Skills for the Future, (DEST, 2002)*