Market Accelerator Program 2025–26 Frequently Asked Questions

Study Queensland – International Education and Training Sector

Market Accelerator Program 2025-26

The purpose of this document is to provide answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) under the Trade and Investment Queensland (TIQ) Market Accelerator Program 2025-26 (the Program). The information provided in this document is supplementary to the Program Guidelines.

The Program Guidelines and supplementary information can be found on the TIQ website.

This document will be updated when required, however, if there is a question that isn't answered in this document, email the Grants Team at grantsmanagement@tiq.qld.gov.au

Eligibility criteria

The program provides matched funding of up to $30,000 (excluding GST) to emerging, new-to-export and growing and experienced exporters to respond to global opportunities and expand into new export markets. The program is aimed at applicants experiencing growth who wish to accelerate their export journey.

Applicants from the International Education and Training (IET) sector, must be a **Queensland-headquartered CRICOS registered Vocational Education and Training (VET) provider, English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) provider or Non-government/Private School.**

Only one application per funding round will be accepted per Organisation. To be eligible to apply for the program, the IET applicant must:

- have fully acquitted any grants they have previously received from TIQ or Study Queensland
- be headquartered in Queensland
- submit only one application per eligible business or financial beneficiary
- hold a current Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) international education and training provider registration
- have a registered course open to international students during February 2026-February 2027
- be delivering ELICOS, VET and/or primary to senior high school program
- have an active Australian Business Number and be registered for GST
- not be a public education provider or publicly funded university
- not be insolvent or have owners or directors that are undischarged bankrupt

Applicants must also:
- be applying for up to $30,000 ex GST in funding and must be able to make a 1:1 matched contribution for each eligible expense
- be a sole trader, company incorporated in Australia or be an incorporated trustee applying on behalf of a trust, or a small industry association, not receiving government funding
- be classed as a small – medium sized enterprise with 199 or less full-time employees and not be a subsidiary of a group of companies that has 200 or more full-time equivalent employees
- have a project capable of being completed and delivering export outcomes within the grant period
- be pre-qualified by TIQ/Study Queensland as export ready. (The applicant can be an emerging, or new-to-export/growing exporter or experienced exporter).
- where there is an international agent that is assisting with the project, an education agent certificate will need to be submitted with the application. (Your Study Queensland Client Manager will assist with this).

- have a minimum trading history of two full financial years (demonstrated through the provision of financial statements in the business name) and interim FY25-26 statements, with **a net profit shown for FY24-25 and FY 25-26**
- provide documented proof of proposed international education export sales that show binding commitments, such as agent agreements with student recruitment KPIs, joint venture program contracts that specify delivery dates and student numbers.
- provide evidence of a one-to-one matched cash contribution to the project for each eligible project cost
- not use federal, state or local government grants towards their one-to-one matched cash contribution
- address all assessment criteria and attach all required documentation

What is the difference between "emerging" and "new-to-export and growing" and "experienced education exporters"?

Emerging exporters are those who have never exported before.

New-to-export/growing exporters have exported previously but in limited quantities or markets and need support to continue their export journey.

Experienced education exporters regularly export to one market or a variety of export markets and may recruit students onshore and deliver online courses or transnational courses.

What does "have a company address headquartered in Queensland" mean?

The applicant organisation must have a Queensland address as a principal place of business. This will be verified on the Australian Business Register. There may be mitigating circumstances (where a business has moved recently to Queensland and this is not yet on the ABR or where there's significant educational operations in Queensland) and TIQ may review these at our discretion.

Do I have to be registered for GST to apply?

Yes. To be eligible to apply applicant organisations must be registered for GST. This will be verified on the Australian Business Register.

Can I apply for the Program if I am currently receiving, or have previously received, grant funding from TIQ or Study Queensland?

Applicants are only eligible to apply if they have fully acquitted any TIQ grants or Study Queensland grants.

How do I meet pre-qualification requirements?

Through our consultation services, we can support your business through its export journey including undertaking the pre-qualification requirements for this program.

As part of your pre-qualification for the program, you will need to be certified as export ready. Our Client Managers are available to discuss your export readiness and, if appropriate, will provide an Education Export Ready Certificate which will be uploaded as part of your application.

Our Client Managers are experienced international education specialists who have the knowledge and ability to support your business in approaching the global marketplace.

If you are a new client and have not engaged with Study Queensland in the past, you can book a call with us to discuss your organisation and export goals.

Our Client Managers will also undertake a check of the international partner / recruitment agent in the international market (where appropriate), and this document will be provided to you to be uploaded as part of your application. The Client Managers can connect your business to our TIQ international offices to support you through the export journey internationally and assist with the resolution of potential IET issues in market.

What is a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME), and how do I identify full-time equivalent (FTE) employees?

Small and medium-sized enterprise is defined as 199 or less full-time equivalent employees.

Do I have to be an established business?

Yes. Applicant organisations must demonstrate two years of trading history through the two most recent full financial statements (**Profit and Loss, Balance Sheet for FY23-24 and FY24-25**).

Interim financial year statements (**FY 25-26**) should also be provided. The statements must show a **net profit for FY24-25 and FY 25-26**.

Applicants must also provide a current (dated 2026) bank statement showing sufficient funds to match the grant funding. If applying for a $30,000 grant, the bank statement must show at least $30,000.

Can I apply for funding if the organisation is already receiving funding from other government programs related to this project?

No. If the proposed project is already receiving grant funding from any other government program, including federal, state or local government grants related to this project, the organisation is not eligible to apply. The organisation can apply for this funding if they have received unrelated funding, but this funding can't be used towards the project costs for the program.

Only one application can be accepted from each applicant organisation, eligible entity or financial beneficiary. Where there are two or more businesses that have one director and/or shareholder in common, only one application (the first submitted application) will be accepted. Please consider this if there are multiple IET organisations with joint board members or CEOs who wish to apply and submit only one application. (See the Guidelines for more information).

What is a "matching cash contribution"?

Applicants are required to demonstrate that they can provide the matching cash contribution (the equivalent of the grant funding they are applying for) through the provision of a 2026 Bank Statement showing these funds are available at the time of application. Once approved, successful recipients are required to make a dollar-for-dollar contribution to the project. TIQ will assess whether this has occurred through the review of all expenditure and the provision of eligible invoices and matching receipts for all activities funded by the grant at the acquittal. (e.g. Recipients receive $30,000 ex GST funding and must also contribute $30,000 ex GST to the project. This means that a total of $60,000 ex GST minimum in invoices and matching receipts must be submitted at the end of the project with the acquittal). Recipients that fail to provide all eligible invoices and receipts at the end of the project sufficient to cover the first payment and matched contribution will be required to repay funding.

Application process

How do I apply?

Applicants must read and understand the Program Guidelines before applying for a grant and must understand what the required documents are prior to submission. Applications will only be accepted online. The link to apply can be found on the TIQ website. This is provided once an eligibility survey is completed. Please ensure that the application is as detailed as possible with all the required documentation before submitting.

How do I access SmartyGrants?

Applicants must set up a SmartyGrants account via the portal using the organisation name and an email address.

When will applications open?

TIQ will publish opening and closing dates for the Program, and any other relevant information on the TIQ website.

What is the required documentation?

There are pre-qualification and financial documents required to be attached to an application. All required attachments are listed in the Program Guidelines on the TIQ website. Please ensure that you review these required documents carefully and ensure they are submitted at the time of application. If documents are missing, your application may be ineligible for funding.

Can I apply after the program has closed?

No. Late applications will not be accepted. Applications close at **1pm (AEST)** on the date of closure (not Close of Business or Midnight). Once the deadline has passed, the portal will be locked. Any unsubmitted applications will not be able to be progressed and will remain unsubmitted. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications prior to or early on the closing date to avoid issues.

Why am I unable to answer questions in the application form?

The application form has eligibility requirements and conditional formatting built in. If an answer identifies the application as being ineligible, you should no longer proceed to completion.

If there are questions about eligibility, email the Grants Team at grantsmanagement@tiq.qld.gov.au

Why am I getting a red error message when trying to submit?

The application form has validation requirements built in. If a question is labelled with an asterisk (*) it is a required field. The red error message occurs when trying to submit identifies a required field has not been answered.

What if I experience technical issues with the SmartyGrants portal?

The grant application portal is managed by SmartyGrants, an external service provider to TIQ. If you experience a technical issue with the portal, email the SmartyGrants Service Team via phone: +61 3 9320 6888 or via email service@smartygrants.com.au If a technical issue stops an applicant

organisation being able to complete a submission, a report can be provided by SmartyGrants to support the claim, and a late application can be accepted when the issue is resolved.

Proposed projects

What does "proposed project" mean?

The proposed project is the eligible activities undertaken, and associated eligible costs, to finalise a student enrolment/education export into a new international market.

What does "new market" mean?

Market is, for the sake of this program, the recruiting country or territory.

A new market is either -

- A country that the applicant has never recruited from

  OR

- A country that the applicant has rarely recruited from (less than 20% of total annual recruitment since 2021)

For this program, we will consider new regions within a large geographic country as a new market. (These countries include USA, China). For example, if you have successfully recruited students from the Beijing area but never from the Shanghai region, Shanghai would be considered a "new market" for the purposes of this grant.

What project expenditure is eligible under the Program?

The grant must be used for eligible activities that support the objectives and intended outcomes of the Program. The grant is available to provide financial support to manage the challenges associated with the complex export transactions.

Eligible project costs include, but are not limited to, external costs for:

Market expertise and advisory services
- Engaging an in-market education specialist or representative
- Advice on overseas market entry, regulatory approvals, registrations, and compliance
- Professional services for international education contracts, legal and financial structuring, IP protection, and attracting investment
- Education product and delivery adaptation
- Localising or adapting courses, curriculum, delivery models, or digital learning platforms for overseas markets
- Testing and validating education products and services
- Developing market-appropriate branding and marketing materials

Accreditation and approvals
- Costs associated with overseas education accreditation, quality assurance, and regulatory approvals required for offshore or cross-border delivery

Travel related to export outcomes
- Travel to overseas markets to secure approvals, finalise agreements, establish delivery, provide training, or support operations

- Travel to international education trade shows or recruitment exhibitions only where booth space is purchased or travel is required to finalise an export deal *(General conference attendance is not eligible).*

NOTE – All Travel expenses are limited to 30% of the TIQ portion and 30% of the recipient portion. If the applicant receives $30,000 ex GST, travel is capped at $9,000 for the TIQ portion and $9,000 for the recipient portion. Travel expenses may be reviewed at TIQ's discretion.

No other exhibition or conference attendance expenses are covered. Air travel is restricted to economy class. If you choose to travel in another class, you will need to provide an economy class quote for your airfare at the time of travel. Accommodation is capped at AUD$250 per night. Travel is also limited to a maximum of two (2) staff members. Per Diems in market are an ineligible expense.

How do I demonstrate a proposed export sale?

There are pre-qualification and financial documents required to be attached to an application. These are listed in the Program Guidelines and on the TIQ website. Please ensure that you review these required documents carefully and ensure they are submitted at the time of application. If documents are missing, your application may be ineligible for funding.

Evidence of the export

IET applicants must provide documented proof of proposed education export sales into a new international market. Evidence must include one or more of the following:

- Agent agreements that specify clear student recruitment KPIs and target numbers.
- Student enrolment agreements (this is the final step before payment is made)
- Joint venture program contracts detailing the program structure, confirmed delivery date, and expected student numbers.
- Transnational education program agreements that outline the program details, delivery schedule, and enrolled student numbers.

Can I submit expenses that were incurred just prior to the program launch?

Yes, recipients can submit expenses from six months prior to the launch date and for expenses incurred until the program ends. However, any expenditure on eligible project costs occurring prior to approval is at the applicant's own risk, as there is no guarantee that the application for funding will be successful. The grant is extremely competitive and there are only a limited number of successful recipients. Please consider this before incurring any costs.

This list is not exhaustive and applies to the grant funds and recipient matching cash contribution. Other costs may be eligible where TIQ decides that they do directly support the objectives and intended outcomes of the Program.

What project expenditure is ineligible under the Program?

The grant and the matching cash contribution cannot be used by recipients to cover project expenses that do not support the objectives and intended outcomes of the Program. The grant is not intended to be attributed to everyday operations of running a business. More detail on ineligible expenditure is listed in the Program Guidelines on the TIQ website.

Applicants are reminded that these costs are ineligible:

- administration costs for your organisation that are considered "internal" costs are ineligible. This means that you can't have the organisation's employees working on projects that are covered by the grant funding. (For example, if you wish to undertake digital upgrades or marketing upgrades for your market, you must engage external (external to your business) marketing providers or IT specialists to complete the activities that are listed on the budget on your application. You must obtain invoices and receipts from these external providers to prove that this occurred and submit all of these at the end of the project).
- wage expenses - wages are not covered by the grant
- general business development costs or business development travel is not eligible (check the eligible booth and travel expenses listed above)
- per diems in market
- event costs (such as functions for international student agents) are ineligible
- participation in study tours is not allowed if using grant funding

How do I provide a proposed budget?

The application form includes a proposed project budget table which asks for detailed expenditure. Applicants must make a 1:1 matched contribution for each eligible item that is equal to, or greater than the value of the grant funding sought. Applicants can only cover eligible costs with their cash contribution.

Applicants must obtain draft quotes/general price information for proposed activities to ensure that anticipated costs are accurate. On the application form, applicants must provide as much detail as possible regarding the activities to be undertaken in the application, the supplier details and budget and input these details into the budget table.

Budget examples:

- $5,000 to obtain professional advice (such as international regulation advice)
- $5,000 to engage an in-market specialist to assist with business leads in market

How does this proposed budget in the application form link to the grant funding and what are my obligations if awarded funding?

If your application for funding is successful, you will be required to report actual progress and achievements against the funded activities and outcomes contained in the application form and included in the Funding Agreement.

The project must be completed within the 12-month timeframe (see Guidelines for more information). We will be contacting you regularly to check on the progress of your project and you must provide us with details on how this is progressing. If issues arise, we can consider market variations or other options at our discretion and if approved with appropriate evidence.

You must provide **all** the invoices and receipts to cover both the grant funding portion and your own matched contribution with the acquittal report at the end of the project. (Eg. $30,000 ex GST funding – there must be invoices and receipts for the project that cover $60,000 ex GST of expenditure or more).

If you have completed most of the project and spent most of the allocated grant funding and matched contribution, we will adjust the second payment accordingly.

If you did not start the project and did not spend the initial 50% grant payment and your matched funding, you will be required to return the first grant payment (or the unused portion, noting the matched requirements for expenses).

All payments are subject to the completion of a signed export success form. You **must** provide a signed Export Success Form containing the export value and jobs created (where appropriate). This is a mandatory requirement of the grant funding and final payment will not occur until this is received.

You may be required to promote your projects and provide additional reporting or participate in other media opportunities. The Queensland Government may also publish details of your business name, funding amount and other details on Government websites or media releases. Please see the Guidelines for further information.

Assessment, outcomes and notification

Who assesses applications?

The grant program is highly competitive. All eligible applications will be assessed against the criteria, through a merit-based approach, by a moderation panel comprising of representatives with relevant experience.

When will I know the outcome of my application?

All applicants will be advised of their outcome via email within 12 weeks of the program close date.

What are the requirements for accepting an offer of funding?

If successful, applicant organisations will have 10 business days from the Letter of Offer to sign and return the Financial Incentive Agreement. Full details of accepting funding are listed in the Program Guidelines.

Can I request feedback if my application is unsuccessful?

Yes. If you are unsuccessful, you may seek feedback within 10 business days of being notified of the outcome. Our Client Managers can provide support for your export journey.

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