



Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Amendment (Commonwealth Prac Payment) Guidelines 2025

I, Jason Clare, Minister for Education, make these guidelines.

Dated 17 June 2025

Jason Clare
Minister for Education

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1 Name

This instrument is the *Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Amendment (Commonwealth Prac Payment) Guidelines 2025*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences the day after this instrument is registered.

3 Authority

This instrument is made under section 238-10 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

4 Schedules

Each instrument that is specified in a Schedule to this instrument is amended or repealed as set out in the applicable items in the Schedule concerned, and any other item in a Schedule to this instrument has effect according to its terms.

Schedule 1—Amendments

Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022

1 Section 4

Insert:

eligible midwifery (clinical placement) prac student has the meaning given by subsection 84(2).

eligible midwifery (continuity of care) prac student has the meaning given by subsection 84(2).

eligible nursing prac student has the meaning given by subsection 84(2).

eligible prac student has the meaning given by subsection 84(1).

eligible prac unit has the meaning given by subsection 81(2).

eligible social work prac student has the meaning given by subsection 84(2).

eligible teaching (bachelor) prac student has the meaning given by subsection 84(2).

eligible teaching (master's) prac student has the meaning given by subsection 84(2).

exceptional circumstances student has the meaning given by subsection 84(2).

student prac payments amount has the meaning given by subsection 83(2).

study period means a period of study during which a unit of study is offered.

Note: Examples of study periods include semesters, trimesters, blocks, intensives and sessions.

study period week means a week within a study period but does not include a week where a student is participating in a mandatory placement.

weekly Austudy rate for a year means half of the maximum basic rate of Austudy payment specified in item 1 of Table BA in subsection 1067L-B2(1) of the *Social Security Act 1991* that applies on 1 January of that year.

Note: Under the *Social Security Act 1991*, the maximum basic rate of Austudy payment is indexed on 1 January every year.

2 Section 67

Repeal the section, substitute:

67 Bodies corporate specified for the purposes of eligibility to receive grants

- (1) The following bodies corporate are specified for the purposes of item 11 of the table in subsection 41-10(1) of the Act:
 - (a) Graduate Careers Australia Limited;
 - (b) Australian Council for Educational Research Limited;

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- (c) Universities Australia;
 - (d) The body corporate representing the Organisation for Economic, Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Australia;
 - (e) Alphacrucis University College Limited;
 - (f) ACPE Limited (known as The Australian College of Physical Education);
 - (g) Christian Heritage College;
 - (h) Eastern College Australia Limited;
 - (i) Excelsia College;
 - (j) Holmesglen Institute;
 - (k) Melbourne Polytechnic;
 - (l) Montessori World Educational Institute Australia Inc;
 - (m) Tabor College Inc; and
 - (n) Avondale University.
- (2) The following bodies corporate are specified for the purposes of item 15 of the table in subsection 41-10(1) of the Act:
- (a) Alphacrucis University College Limited;
 - (b) Christian Heritage College;
 - (c) Eastern College Australia Limited;
 - (d) Holmesglen Institute;
 - (e) Melbourne Polytechnic; and
 - (f) Tabor College Inc.

Note: The Minister may impose other conditions that apply to any grants made to these bodies under subsection 41-25(2) of the Act.

3 At the end of Part 12

Add:

Part 13—Grants to assist higher education providers to provide payments to students who are undertaking mandatory practicums as part of their course of study—Commonwealth Prac Payment

79 Program objectives

- (1) The Commonwealth Prac Payment program is specified as a program for the purposes of providing higher education providers with grants to give payments to Commonwealth supported students, who are undertaking mandatory practicums as part of their course of study, under item 15 of the table in subsection 41-10(1) of the Act.
- (2) The objectives of the Commonwealth Prac Payment program are to:
 - (a) provide grants to higher education providers so those providers are able to deliver cost of living relief to eligible students undertaking mandatory placements as part of their teaching, nursing, midwifery and social work courses of study; and

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- (b) support students' learning outcomes by easing financial pressure on students during their mandatory placements; and
 - (c) increase students' rates of retention and completion of their courses of study by reducing the financial impact of mandatory placements that may have influenced students to defer or withdraw from study.

80 Specified bodies corporate

Higher education providers that are not Table A providers or Table B providers are specified for the purposes of item 15 of the table in subsection 41-10(1) of the Act.

Note: Table A providers and Table B providers are eligible for grants made for the purpose of item 15 of the table in subsection 41-10(1), and do not need to be specified in these guidelines.

81 Extra conditions of eligibility

Provider must be eligible for Commonwealth Grant Scheme

- (1) A higher education provider that is not a Table A provider or a Table B provider is only eligible for a grant under the Commonwealth Prac Payment program for a year if it is eligible for grants under Part 2-2 of the Act for the year.

Provider must deliver certain units of study

- (2) A higher education provider is only eligible for a grant under the Commonwealth Prac Payment program for a year if, during the year, it delivers a unit (**eligible prac unit**) that:
 - (a) is being delivered as part of a course of study that:
 - (i) leads to the award of a bachelor degree or a master's degree in one or more of the fields of study listed in subsection (3);
 - (ii) is accredited or approved by the relevant professional standards body for the purposes of registration or licensing of a person as a nurse, midwife, social worker or teacher, as the case may be, in Australia or a State or Territory of Australia; and
 - (b) requires the student to participate in one or more mandatory placements that:
 - (i) ordinarily involves the student's participation for an average of 30 hours or more per week for the duration of the mandatory placement; or
 - (ii) for a mandatory placement for a course of study in midwifery known as a continuity of care placement—prevents the student from being able to maintain paid work due to the need to ensure their availability during the placement.
- (3) For the purposes of subparagraph (2)(a)(i), the fields of study are:
 - (a) midwifery;
 - (b) nursing;
 - (c) social work; and
 - (d) teaching.

82 Grants to be made in respect of a year

A grant to a higher education provider under the Commonwealth Prac Payment program is made in respect of a year.

83 Amount of grant for a year

Amount of a grant for a provider for a year

- (1) Subject to subsection (3), the amount of a grant for a higher education provider for a year is the sum of the student prac payments amount for the provider for the year and the amount of the administrative component for the provider for the year worked out in accordance with subsection (4).

Note: Subsection 83(3) reduces an amount of a grant to a higher education provider for a year if the provider does not make payments to its eligible prac students for the year of an amount at least equal to the student prac payments amount for the provider for that year.

- (2) The **student prac payments amount** for the higher education provider for the year is the sum of each of the amounts of the components worked out in accordance with subsections (5) to (10).

Grant amount reduced if student prac payments amount not all used

- (3) If the total amount of payments that the higher education provider pays to eligible prac students under subsections 86(3) and (5) for a year is less than the student prac payments amount for the provider for the year, the amount of the grant for the provider for the year is reduced by operation of this subsection by an amount equal to the difference between the student prac payments amount and the amount the provider has paid to students under subsections 86(3) and (5), multiplied by 1.05.

Note: The effect of this subsection is that any part of a higher education provider's student prac payments amount for a year that the provider does not pay to eligible students under subsections 86(3) and (5), and a part of the administrative component related to that amount, is an overpayment for the purposes of the Act, and is not rolled over to the following year under section 41-40 of the Act.

Administrative component

- (4) The amount of the administrative component for a higher education provider for a year is the student prac payments amount for the provider for the year multiplied by 0.05.

Midwifery (clinical placement) component

- (5) The amount of the midwifery (clinical placement) component for a higher education provider for a year is the number of eligible midwifery (clinical placement) prac students of the provider for the year, plus the number of exceptional circumstances students of the provider for the year participating in a mandatory placement known as a clinical placement for a unit in a course of study in midwifery, multiplied by the weekly Austudy rate for the year, multiplied by 20.

Midwifery (continuity of care) component

- (6) The amount of the midwifery (continuity of care) component for a higher education provider for a year is the number of eligible midwifery (continuity of care) prac students of the provider for the year, plus the number of exceptional circumstances students of the provider for the year participating in a mandatory placement known as a continuity of care placement for a unit in a course of study in midwifery, multiplied by the weekly Austudy rate for the year, multiplied by 6.

Nursing component

- (7) The amount of the nursing component for a higher education provider for a year is the number of eligible nursing prac students of the provider for the year, plus the number of exceptional circumstances students of the provider for the year participating in a mandatory placement for a unit in a course of study in nursing, multiplied by the weekly Austudy rate for the year, multiplied by 20.

Social work component

- (8) The amount of the social work component for a higher education provider for a year is the number of eligible social work prac students of the provider for the year, plus the number of exceptional circumstances students of the provider for the year participating in a mandatory placement for a unit in a course of study in social work, multiplied by the weekly Austudy rate for the year, multiplied by 26.

Teaching (bachelor) component

- (9) The amount of the teaching (bachelor) component for a higher education provider for a year is the number of eligible teaching (bachelor) prac students of the provider for the year, plus the number of exceptional circumstances students of the provider for the year participating in a mandatory placement for a unit in a course of study that leads to the award of a bachelor degree in teaching, multiplied by the weekly Austudy rate for the year, multiplied by 16.

Teaching (master's) component

- (10) The amount of the teaching (master's) component for a higher education provider for a year is the number of eligible teaching (master's) prac students of the provider for the year, plus the number of exceptional circumstances students of the provider for the year participating in a mandatory placement for a unit in a postgraduate course of study that leads to the award of a master's degree in teaching, multiplied by the weekly Austudy rate for the year, multiplied by 12.

84 Eligible prac students etc.

- (1) For the purposes of this Part, an **eligible prac student** of a higher education provider for a year is a student who:
- (a) is enrolled in an eligible prac unit delivered by the provider during the year; and

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- (b) is a Commonwealth supported student in relation to that unit, or is a student that the provider reasonably expects will be a Commonwealth supported student in relation to that unit; and
 - (c) must, as part of the requirements to complete the unit, participate for a week in a mandatory placement that either:
 - (i) commences prior to 1 July 2025 and includes 1 July 2025; or
 - (ii) commences on or after 1 July 2025.

(2) For the purposes of this Part:

- (a) an ***eligible midwifery (clinical placement) prac student*** of a higher education provider for a year is an eligible prac student of the provider who, during the year, must participate in a mandatory placement known as a clinical placement for a unit of a course of study in midwifery; and
- (b) an ***eligible midwifery (continuity of care) prac student*** of a higher education provider for a year is an eligible prac student of the provider who, during the year, must participate in a mandatory placement known as a continuity of care placement for a unit in a course of study in midwifery; and
- (c) an ***eligible nursing prac student*** of a higher education provider for a year is an eligible prac student of the provider who, during the year, must participate in a mandatory placement for a unit in a course of study in nursing; and
- (d) an ***eligible social work prac student*** of a higher education provider for a year is an eligible prac student of the provider who, during the year, must participate in a mandatory placement for a unit in a course of study in social work; and
- (e) an ***eligible teaching (bachelor) prac student*** of a higher education provider for a year is an eligible prac student of the provider who, during the year, must participate in a mandatory placement for a unit in a course of study that leads to the award of a bachelor degree in teaching; and
- (f) an ***eligible teaching (master's) prac student*** of a higher education provider for a year is an eligible prac student of the provider who, during the year, must participate in a mandatory placement for a unit in a postgraduate course of study that leads to the award of a master's degree in teaching; and
- (g) an ***exceptional circumstances student*** of a higher education provider for a year is an eligible prac student of the provider:
 - (i) who during the year, must participate in a mandatory placement for a unit in a course of study in midwifery, nursing, social work or teaching; and
 - (ii) to whom the provider is satisfied that exceptional circumstances apply, such that, because of their exceptional circumstances, the student is unable to meet the requirements in subsection 86(3) in relation to the mandatory placement.

Note: The Minister has the power under subsection 41-25(2) of the Act, to impose further conditions on grants, including conditions on when a higher education provider can be satisfied that the student had 'exceptional circumstances'.

85 Conditions that apply to grant—general

A higher education provider must only use the grant for a year to:

- (a) make payments to eligible prac students of the provider for the year under section 86; and
- (b) administer payments made under section 86 (whether for that year or another year).

Note: The Minister can impose other conditions on grants, including conditions on reporting, under subsection 41-25(2) of the Act.

86 Conditions that apply to grant—payments to eligible prac students

Higher education provider to provide information to students

- (1) A higher education provider must provide, in writing, information about the Commonwealth Prac Payment program to each student of the provider that the provider anticipates will become an eligible prac student in relation to an eligible prac unit to be delivered by the provider, as soon as practicable after the student enrolls in the unit.
- (2) The information must include details of students' eligibility for payments under the program, and how to apply for those payments.

Payments to students who satisfy means test etc.

- (3) Subject to subsection (9) and section 87, a higher education provider must pay an amount equal to the weekly Austudy rate to each eligible prac student who has applied for payments under the Commonwealth Prac Payment program in relation to each week that:
 - (a) the student:
 - (i) participates, or has participated, in a mandatory placement for an eligible prac unit of the provider for the number of hours advised by the provider for that week, consistent with subsection (8); or
 - (ii) participates, or has participated, in a mandatory placement for a course of study in midwifery known as a continuity of care placement which prevents the student from being able to maintain paid work due to the need to ensure their availability during the placement; and
 - (b) satisfies subsection (4).

Note: If a provider does not make payments under this subsection in a year that at least equal the provider's student prac payments amount for the year, its grant amount for the year is reduced under subsection 83(3).

- (4) An eligible prac student satisfies this subsection if:
 - (a) the student is in receipt of an income support payment (within the meaning of subsection 23(1) of the *Social Security Act 1991*); or
 - (b) the student is in receipt of a tertiary education allowance paid under sections 3.3, 3.5, 3.6 or 3.6A of the *Veterans' Children Education Scheme* (an instrument made under subsection 117(3) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*); or
 - (c) the student is in receipt of a tertiary education allowance paid under sections 3.3, 3.5 or 3.6 of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme 2004* (an instrument made under

subsection 258(5) of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*); or

- (d) the student is in receipt of an amount identified as a 'Living Allowance', which has been appropriated under subsection 55A(1) of the *Student Assistance Act 1973*; or
- (e) the student:
 - (i) in the four study period weeks immediately prior to the student commencing their mandatory placement, or in the four study period weeks immediately prior to the student applying to the provider for the payments under the Commonwealth Prac Payment program (whichever is earlier), worked on average more than 15 hours a week; and
 - (ii) earned, derived or received an income (including amounts of scholarships from the Commonwealth, States and Territories) of less than \$1500 per week before tax, on average over that period.

Payments to exceptional circumstances students

- (5) Subject to subsection (9) and section 87, a higher education provider must pay an amount equal to the weekly Austudy rate to each eligible prac student who has applied for payments under the Commonwealth Prac Payment program in relation to each week that the student is an exceptional circumstances student.

Note 1: The effect of section 83 is that payments under this subsection will be made out of the student prac payments amount of the grant.

Note 2: The Minister has the power under subsection 41-25(2) of the Act, to impose further conditions on grants, including conditions on the number of students that a higher education provider can be satisfied are exceptional circumstances students, or that the provider cannot be satisfied that a student is an exceptional circumstances student if doing so will result in the provider paying amounts in relation to 'exceptional circumstances students' above a certain amount.

Timing of payments to students

- (6) Unless conditions imposed on the provider under subsection 41-25(2) of the Act provide otherwise, a higher education provider must make a payment to a student under subsections (3) or (5) by the later of:
 - (a) the end of the month in which the student applied for payments under the Commonwealth Prac Payment program; and
 - (b) the end of the month in which the last day of the week to which the payment relates occurred.
- (7) The higher education provider must inform the department if the provider becomes aware that they will not be able to make a payment to a student in the timeframes specified in subsection (6).

Note: The notification by the provider under this subsection will give the Minister the opportunity to consider whether to exercise the power to impose conditions under subsection 41-25(2), to enable the provider to make a payment to a student outside of the timeframes specified in subsection (6).

Advice to students about hours in their mandatory placement for a week

- (8) For the purposes of subparagraph (3)(a)(i), a higher education provider must advise the student of the number of hours the student must participate in their

mandatory placement in each week, and those hours must total an average of 30 hours or more a week for the duration of the placement.

When a higher education provider must not make a payment to a student for a week

- (9) A higher education provider must not make a payment to a student for a week under subsection (3) if:
- (a) the week to which the payment relates commences before 1 July 2025 but includes 1 July 2025; and
 - (b) subparagraph (3)(a)(i) applies to the student; and
 - (c) counting only the days in the week starting on 1 July 2025, the number of hours the student participates, or participated, in a mandatory placement for the week is less than the number of hours advised by the provider under subsection (8).

87 Maximum payment to a student

The maximum number of weeks in relation to which a higher education provider can make a payment under subsections 86(3) or (5) to an eligible prac student in relation to the student's participation in mandatory placements for a course of study is as follows:

- (a) for a course of study in midwifery—26;
- (b) for course of study in nursing—20;
- (c) for a course of study in social work—26;
- (d) for a course of study that leads to the award of a bachelor degree in teaching—16;
- (e) for a postgraduate course of study that leads to the award of a master's degree in teaching—12.

88 Indexation

The amount of income earned, derived or received specified in subparagraph 86(4)(e)(ii) is indexed on 1 January 2026, and each subsequent 1 January, using the method set out in Part 5-6 of the Act.