Early childhood grants management policy

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Audience

Early Childhood and Education Improvement Division

Purpose

This policy outlines the approach to the management of grants administered by the Department of Education (the department) in the Early Childhood and Education Improvement (ECEI) Division. The approach is consistent with the requirements of Queensland Treasury Financial Accountability Handbook 2019, Volume 6 – Grant Management.

Policy statement

ECEI provides grant funding to ensure children and families have access to high quality early childhood education and care services that provide safe, inclusive and nurturing learning environments. ECEI strives to deliver effective, efficient, and transparent end to end grant management to the early childhood sector. This policy has been developed in line with the Early childhood grants management framework and is supported by the Early childhood grants management procedure.

Principles

The key principles that support the delivery of effective, efficient and transparent grants management are:

Principle	What this means for the department
Collaboration and partnership	- Working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure grant funding achieves its objectives. - The needs and interests of grantees and beneficiaries are considered in grant process design. - Ensuring a shared understanding of expectations and positive working relationships with grant recipients. - ECEI proactively seeks and receives feedback from grant recipients and applicants to improve grant outcomes and processes.

Principle	What this means for the department
Outcomes focus	• Ensuring grant objectives are clearly defined, link to strategic objectives and contribute to building sustainable communities. • Establishing performance measures for grant programs that will facilitate effective and efficient evaluation of grants. • Focusing on outcome performance of grantees rather than simply complying with process.
Probity and transparency	• Complying with public sector values such as honesty, integrity, impartiality and accountability. • Ensuring decisions relating to grant opportunities are impartial, appropriately documented and consistent with legislative and policy requirements. • Grants management processes are managed objectively, without bias and in a way that is compatible with, and properly considers human rights. • Fraud and corruption prevention activities are built into grants management functions and accountabilities.
Proportionality	• Performance and reporting requirements match the nature, scale, complexity and risks of the grant or grant program, thereby minimising 'red tape'. • Robust internal controls are built into all grant management activities.
Accountability	• Formal documented processes are used to manage and administer grants management activities. • Roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in grants management are clearly defined.
Continuous improvement	• Working together with stakeholders to identify improvements in the design, delivery and administration of grants. • Regularly reviewing policies, procedures and other supporting resources to ensure relevance, accuracy and effectiveness. • Grant data is reported internally and externally to communicate performance against strategic objectives and drive ongoing continuous improvement.

Requirements

1. Legislative framework

As all Queensland government grant programs involve the use of public money, ECEI is accountable for funds allocated in its grant programs. ECEI will meet the obligations in:

- the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (Qld), the framework for management standards in the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019 (the FPMS) and requirements of other applicable

legislation. The FPMS requires the department to comply with the whole-of-Government approach to grant program development and administration set out in the [Financial Accountability Handbook 2019](#), Volume 6 – Grant Management (the Handbook) when the content applies to the department's circumstances;

- the [Community Services Act 2007 (Qld)](#), the framework for ensuring that government grant funding contributes to building sustainable communities by facilitating access by Queenslanders to community services; and

- other relevant legislation.

Scope of funding activities of this policy

Only grant funding paid to external providers is to be managed under the Grants Management Framework and policy. For the purpose of this policy, a 'grant' is funding provided to external entities (including community groups, statutory bodies, local government or commercial enterprises) that exhibits some, or all, of the following characteristics:

- a transfer to an external recipient in return for compliance with certain terms and conditions;

- a transfer which may not directly give approximately equal value in return to ECEI; and

- a recipient that has been selected on merit against a set of program-specific criteria.

Subsidies, such as those payable under the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS) are a form of grant and are to be managed under this policy.

The following activities are not to be managed under this policy:

- funding or budget transfers from ECEI to regional cost centres to support the delivery of internally led programs;

- funding or grants provided to state schools;

- activities where an external provider has been selected in a procurement process to deliver a specific activity. This will be managed in accordance with the approved departmental procurement procedure; and

- leasing arrangements where an external provider has entered into a lease for a department-owned asset.

2. Grants management

This policy covers the full cycle of grant funding from program design, through to grants administration and program evaluation. This provides a continuous improvement loop with evaluation of performance and outcomes informing future program development. The three distinct stages of design, administration and evaluation each have associated activities which are outlined in the [Early childhood grants management framework](#).
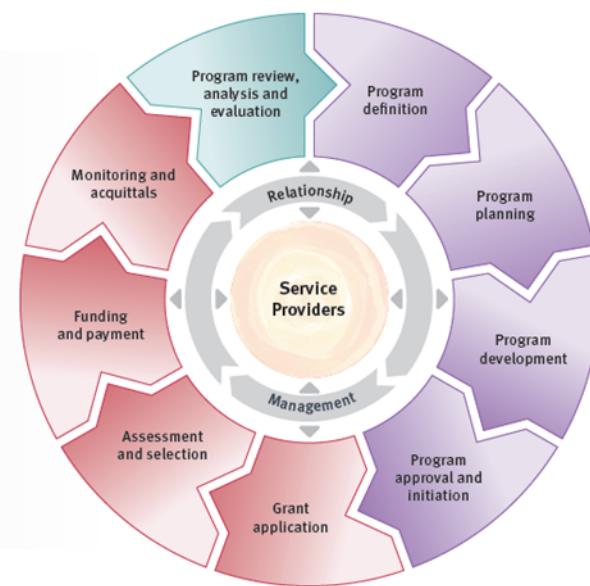
Image 1 – Early childhood grants management framework

The Early childhood grants management procedure details roles, responsibilities and operational processes for effective delivery of end to end grants management.

3. Governance and accountability

Grants management will operate using good governance and clear accountability for all parties involved ensuring individuals and organisations are answerable for their plans, decisions, actions and results. The principles, elements and mechanisms used to ensure effective governance of ECEI grants management align with the department's Corporate governance framework.

4. Applicant and recipient rights and responsibilities

When managing grant programs, ECEI must appreciate and acknowledge that applicants have a right to:

- seek information about grant processes and the outcomes of processes;
- be treated with respect and courtesy;
- be treated fairly and equitably; and
- be informed of the conduct expected of them.

Complaints received about a grants management activity or outcome will be managed in accordance with the department's Customer complaints management policy.

5. Risk identification and management

Risk identification, assessment and management are fundamental elements of grant program planning, and a risk management plan will be developed and documented during the program planning process. The plan will address general and program specific risks for the grant program, from planning to evaluation. This activity is to be undertaken in accordance with the department's Enterprise risk management framework.

A risk based approach will be applied to performance management and assurance activities of all grant programs.

6. Recording and reporting

QGrants, Grants Management System, Content Manager and SAP are ECEI systems for recording, administering and reporting grant programs and expenditure. These systems complement the grants management framework approach and support the delivery of effective grant management functions.

7. Monitoring and review

The grants management approach is to be reviewed at least every three years to ensure it continues to meet departmental needs and requirements. Information to inform the review may include:

- grant program evaluations;
- survey results from grant applicants and recipients;
- internal or external review or evaluations; and
- any changes in policy, legislation or organisational structure.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Beneficiary/ies	A service/organisation that delivers the early childhood program and is the end recipient of a grant.
Entity	A generic term referring to the various organisational units that deliver services or otherwise service Government objectives. The term can include departments, commercialised business units, statutory bodies, local governments or other organisations established by Executive decision.
Funding	An amount of financial assistance that is provided to an entity under the Service Agreement, as specified or included in a Funding Schedule. In an appropriate context, it also means all of the funding assistance payable under the Service Agreement.
Grant	A grant is a sum of money given to organisations or individuals for a specified purpose directed at achieving goals and objectives consistent with government policy. Specifically, funding provided to entities that exhibit some, or all, of the following characteristics: • a transfer to a recipient in return for compliance with certain terms and conditions; • a transfer which may not directly give approximately equal value in return to the government; and • a recipient may have been selected on merit against a set of program-specific criteria.

Term	Definition
Grantee(s)	The organisational entity (applicant) responsible for the grant. This is the registered legal entity with an Australian Business Number.
Grant activity(ies)	The project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake with the grant funding provided.
Grants administration	The processes that an entity undertakes to achieve government policy outcomes through grants. It includes: planning and design; selection and decision-making; the making of a grant; the management of grant agreements; the ongoing relationship with grantees; reporting; and review and evaluation.
Grants management	The means to efficiently, effectively and ethically administer funding to approved grant recipients in accordance with government policy outcomes.
Grants management system	The department's online reporting system for the electronic lodgement of data and reports under the Service Agreement Reporting Requirements (which is QGrants).
Grants programs	Those activities and operations of the grantee which are necessary to carry out the purpose of the grant.
Grant recipients	Refer to Grantee.
Performance measures	Performance measures should show how well an organisation/service provider, government agency or service system is working. Of particular importance are performance measures that can identify demonstrate whether clients are better off as a result of the service or program that they used or participated in.
QGrants	The online grants management system used to manage the various Department of Education grant programs, including Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme and Early Years Services grant programs.
QKFS Funding Requirements	The Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme: Funding Requirements provides information about how to become and approved kindergarten provider and remain eligible for Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS) subsidies.
Service Agreement	An agreement entered into by the Department of Education (DoE) and the Grantee which details funding that will be provided by DoE for the purpose of delivering services as outlined in a Funding Schedule. It is legally binding, and outlines the Grantees obligations and the specified performance measures and reporting requirements Grantees are expected to deliver upon.
Subsidy(ies)	A sum of money granted by the Queensland Government to Grantees to help reduce the cost of early childhood education and care in Queensland.

Legislation

- *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (Qld)
- Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019
- *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld)
- *Community Services Act 2007* (Qld)

Delegations/Authorisations

- Delegation of Director-General's powers under Community Services Act 2007 (Qld)
- Delegation of Director-General's powers under Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld)
- Delegation of Director-General's powers as Accountable Officer under Financial Accountability Act 2009
- Financial Delegations

Policies and procedures in this group

- Early childhood grants management procedure

Supporting information for this policy

- Early childhood grants management framework

Other resources

- Code of conduct
- Enterprise risk management policy
- Enterprise risk management framework
- Enterprise risk management procedure
- Conflict of interest procedure
- Corporate governance framework
- Customer complaints management policy
- Customer complaints management procedure
- Financial internal controls policy
- Financial Accountability Handbook 2019, Volume 6 - Grants Management

Contact

For further information, please contact:

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15/07/2026

Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

Nil

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