



# Procedure

## Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme (LAFHAS) procedure

**Version:** 5.2 | **Version effective:** 22/11/2019

### Audience

This procedure applies to Finance and Human Resources (HR) teams involved in the processing of Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme (LAFHAS) applications.

### Purpose

This procedure outlines the steps to be followed when an application for LAFHAS is received by the department.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the eligibility criteria as outlined in the LAFHAS Applicant guidelines and other supporting documents.

### Overview

The LAFHAS supports eligible Queensland families whose children need to live away from home to attend a state school or an accredited non-state school. This may be due to geographical isolation and/or the nearest school is a bypass school.

Eligibility for LAFHAS assistance is based on the distance from students' homes to the nearest Queensland Government state school facility with the required year level.

Applicants must apply for LAFHAS annually. Successful applicants receive benefits in two instalments aligned with school semesters. Students can attract a combination of allowances depending on their individual circumstances, which include:-

- Remote Area Tuition Allowance (RATuA)—helps pay tuition fees charged by non-state boarding schools
- Remote Area Travel Allowance (RATrA)—helps pay a student's travel costs between home and boarding location during holidays
- Remote Area Allowance (RAA)—contributes to the cost of boarding at a state high school campus, to complete approved agricultural courses equivalent to and in lieu of Years 11 and 12.
- Remote Area Disability Supplement (RADS)—contributes towards additional costs associated with educating high needs students who are required to board away from home

The closing date for receipt of application forms is 31 December each year. Applications received after this date are not eligible for any entitlement. No retrospective payment is made for previous years.

Students who are eligible for assistance under the LAFHAS may also be eligible for the Australian Government Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme.

## Responsibilities

### Applicants

- Must apply annually by completing the application form.
- If circumstances change, must notify School Financial Resourcing (SFR) as soon as possible, to ensure that correct entitlements are continued and overpayments are avoided.
- Must provide accurate and truthful information in the application.
  - Penalties can be incurred for false or misleading statements as per Section 382 of the [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#).

### School Finance Resourcing (SFR), Finance Branch

- Assess eligibility against the criteria.
- Process application forms in the department's School Appropriation Payment Application (SAPA).
- Pay entitlements of allowances provided under the scheme to applicants and schools according to payment processes and at [rates](#) applicable for that calendar year.
- Maintain data confidentiality in line with privacy notices on application forms.

### The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR)

- The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) checks the distance eligibility provided by applicants.

### Human Resources Branch (HR)

- Provide support to SFR for queries relating to the LAFHAS procedure.
- Assess applications if applicants identify special circumstances when applying for assistance.
- Coordinate all requirements for the LAFHAS Review Panel.
- Manage and update the procedure and related documents.
- Maintain information on the Queensland Government LAFHAS website.

### Living Away from Home Allowance Review Panel

- Consider applications with special circumstances which do not meet the regular eligibility criteria.

## Process

### 1. Application lodged

Applicant applies for financial assistance prior to 31 December each year on the LAFHAS Annual Application Form via one of the following ways:

**Uncontrolled copy.** Refer to the Department of Education Policy and Procedure Register at <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/living-away-from-home-allowances-scheme-lafhas-procedure> to ensure you have the most current version of this document.

- [Online](#)
- By printing and completing a copy of the [electronic application form](#)
- Requesting a paper application package by phoning 1800 248 997
  - Applicants completing a paper application package are required to fax the completed form to (07) 3034 5890 or scan it and send it to [LAFHAS@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:LAFHAS@qed.qld.gov.au).
- Applicant receives correspondence acknowledging receipt of application including a reference number.

The application form must be received by the Department of Education no later than 31 December for the year of application.

## 2. Eligibility assessed against distance criteria

- Application is assessed by SFR to determine distance criteria eligibility.
  - If SAPA determines that application is medium to high risk, a distance check request is sent to TMR to determine eligibility.
- Should the distance eligibility criteria be met, **continue to step 6**.
- Should the distance criteria not be met, **continue to step 3**.

## 3. Eligibility assessed against special circumstances – Impassable roads or Itinerant occupations

- Application is assessed by SFR to determine criteria eligibility for Special circumstances – [Impassable roads](#) or [Itinerant occupations](#).
- Should the eligibility criteria be met, **continue to step 6**.
- If the application does not meet the eligibility criteria for distance, impassable roads or itinerant occupations, and has not requested consideration under [additional special circumstances](#) – medical or other mitigating circumstances, SFR send letter to applicant advising ineligible status and recommending other services.
  - The application is now considered finalised.
  - If applicant disagrees with decision about claim for LAFHAS, the applicant may:
    - request and complete Additional Special Circumstances form to have claim considered based on medical or other mitigating circumstances (if not previously applied), OR
    - request a review of decision by completing and submitting the LAFHAS Appeal form.
- If application is requesting consideration under additional special circumstances – medical or other mitigating circumstances, SFR forward application and supporting document to HR.
- **Continue to step 4.**

## 4. Assessment of applications with additional special circumstances (e.g. medical or other mitigating circumstances)

- HR sends acknowledgement letter to applicant.
- HR assesses the eligibility of applicants with [additional special circumstances](#) or applications which require further consideration.

- HR will contact the applicant for further documentation to support their application if required.
- If HR determine that application meets the additional special circumstances criteria, continue to step 6.
- If HR determine that application does not meet special circumstances criteria, send letter to applicant advising ineligible status and recommending other services.
  - The application is now considered finalised.
  - If applicant disagrees with decision about claim for LAFHAS, the applicant may request a review by completing and submitting the Appeal form.
- If HR requires specialist advice to determine eligibility, the LAFHAS Review Panel is convened.
- **Continue to step 5.**

## 5. Application referred to LAFHAS Review Panel

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- The LAFHAS Review Panel assess the special circumstances application and make a final determination on eligibility.
  - Decisions are documented in meeting minutes.
  - Applicants are notified of decision by letter within 5 working days of the review panel meeting.
- If LAFHAS review panel determine that application meets the additional special circumstances criteria, **continue to step 6.**
- The application is now considered finalised.

## 6. Process eligible application

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- SFR ensures all application information is complete and contacts the applicant if information is incomplete.
- SFR seeks certification from schools on student attendance.
- School completes certification form and return form to SFR.
- SFR calculates entitlements.
- SFR processes payment file in accordance with monthly payment schedule.
- SFR transfers payment file to Accounts Payable for payment via the DoE finance system (SAP ERP).
- SFR sends communication to eligible applicants.
- The application is now considered finalised.

## 7. Annual management

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### Annual approval of LAFHAS rates:

- SFR prepare a brief recommending that the Assistant Director-General HR approve the increase in LAFHAS allowance rates for the new school year, in October each year.
- Assistant Director-General HR approves brief no later than 31 October.
- HR prepare web work request to update LAFHAS website.

**LAFHAS documents:**

- HR review and update LAFHAS documents and LAFHAS website annually, to ensure currency of information.

**Communication with families:**

- SFR sends a communication to applicants in November each year to remind them to apply for the following year.

**8. Appeals process**

- Appeal form is completed by applicant, scanned and emailed to [LAFHAS@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:LAFHAS@qed.qld.gov.au)
- SFR forward Appeal form to HR
- The LAFHAS Review Panel reassess the application based on the appeal documentation.
- HR send letter to the applicant to communicate the outcome within 5 working days of the review panel meeting.
- The appeal process is now considered finalised.

**9. Management of overpayments**

Should an overpayment be found, SFR will undertake recovery action. In instances where a misinterpretation by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) or departmental officers has occurred, an overpayment is recognised from when the misinterpretation has been identified and corrected.

**Definitions**

Term	Definition
<b>Additional special circumstances</b>	For the purpose of the LAFHAS, additional special circumstances refers to applicants who do not fully meet residential distance criteria, but who could still be regarded as geographically isolated because of special circumstances and wish to apply under medical or other mitigating circumstances.
<b>Appeal process</b>	If an applicant disagrees with a decision about a claim for the LAFHAS or recovery of a LAFHAS overpayment, the applicant may request a review by completing and submitting a LAFHAS Appeal form.
<b>Bypass schools</b>	A Bypass school is a Queensland state school which meets a set of conditions that enable it to be disregarded when distance criteria are considered for applications for financial support under the Queensland Government's LAFHAS.
<b>Impassable roads</b>	An impassable road for the purposes of the LAFHAS is where due to adverse weather conditions, daily access to school is denied for a significant portion of the school year.

Term	Definition
<b>Itinerant occupation</b>	An itinerant occupation for the purposes of the LAFHAS is an occupation that is not located in the one specific location but where the nature of the type of work cannot be regarded as static. A home base is required to be identified.
<b>Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme (LAFHAS)</b>	Support for families in geographical isolated areas to access financial assistance to study away from home.
<b>Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme Review Panel</b>	<p>A review panel that considers applications with special circumstances which do not meet regular LAFHAS eligibility criteria or to hear appeals about departmental decisions on LAFHAS matters.</p> <p>The review panel comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, Transformation, HR (Chair)</li> <li>• Executive Director, Finance Strategy and Advice or delegate</li> <li>• Executive Director, Office of Non-State Education or delegate</li> <li>• Executive Director, State Schools – Operations or delegate</li> <li>• Manager, SFR, Finance Branch or delegate</li> <li>• Manager, Transformation, HR</li> <li>• Other departmental officers or subject matter experts as required.</li> </ul>
<b>SAP ERP</b>	Systems, Applications and Product, Enterprise Resource Planning
<b>Special circumstances</b>	For the purpose of the LAFHAS, special circumstances refers to applicants who do not fully meet residential distance criteria, but who could still be regarded as geographically isolated because of special circumstances and wish to be considered for the LAFHAS due to Impassable Roads or Itinerant Occupation.

## Legislation

- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#)

## Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

## Policies and procedures in this group

- Nil



## Supporting information for this procedure

- Nil

## Other resources

- [Bypass schools procedure](#)
- [LAFHAS Applicant guidelines](#)
- For further information about the Australian Government Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme, refer to the [Australian Government Department of Human Services](#) website.
- [Centrelink website](#)
- [Australian Government Department of Education website](#)
- [Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme](#)
- [Impassable roads fact sheet](#)
- [Itinerant occupation fact sheet](#)
- [Additional special circumstances fact sheet](#)

## Contact

For further information, please contact:

Transformation Team  
Organisational Transformation and Capability  
Human Resources

Phone: (07) 3055 2927

Email: [LAFHAS@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:LAFHAS@qed.qld.gov.au)

## Review date

11/12/2019

## Superseded versions

*Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.*

2.0 FNM-PR-001: Living Away From Home Allowances Scheme

3.0 FNM-PR-001: Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme (LAFHAS)

4.0 Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS)

5.0 Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme (LAFHAS)

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