

National Priorities Pool 2017 Investment Plan

This investment plan is made pursuant to the *Other Grants Guidelines (Education) 2012* under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

1. OVERVIEW

The National Priorities Pool is a component of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP). The HEPPP provides funding to providers to undertake activities and implement strategies that improve access to undergraduate courses for people from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds and improve their retention and completion rates.

This program supports activities that foster opportunity and support success in higher education by people from low SES backgrounds, including Indigenous peoples, people with disability, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, women in non-traditional areas, and people from rural and remote Australia who are also from low SES backgrounds.

The objective of the National Priorities Pool is to inform more effective implementation of the HEPPP, both by updating the policy basis for the program and enhancing on-ground delivery at the national level and within individual institutions. It supports projects that develop evidence, trial innovative ideas, build capacity and reform systems to maximise opportunity and outcomes for people from low SES backgrounds in higher education.

2. PRIORITY FUNDING AREAS

For 2017 the National Priorities Pool will continue to fund projects that address the three priority areas of funding outlined in previous National Priorities Pool Investment Plans.

Building the evidence base:

The purpose of this priority area is to gather and analyse the evidence which will inform future equity policy development and practice. Projects addressing this priority funding area will explore opportunities for improvement in current practice and achievement, and investigate new developments in approaches to increasing access, participation retention, and success in higher education at any university.

Fostering innovation:

The purpose of this priority area is to foster and test new equity interventions at both an institutional and a national level. Projects commissioned from this priority area will promote innovation within program delivery by developing and trialling new ideas and practices to assist low SES groups to access and succeed in higher education. This funding area will also target new barriers to higher education, address current gaps in program delivery and assist universities to expand activity to new areas.

More effective program implementation:

The purpose of this priority area is to improve current practice in HEPPP implementation and delivery across the higher education sector at both an institutional and a national level. Projects commissioned from this priority area will include projects that encourage information-sharing and collaboration among equity practitioners and promote cooperation between policy-makers and the higher education sector.

3. FUNDING

The Australian Government, through the Department of Education and Training, will commission universities to conduct projects approved by the Minister for Education and Training that address the priority funding areas in this Investment Plan.

All projects must produce outcomes that can be applied nationally and/or be adopted by other universities.

The National Priorities Pool will not fund any project that duplicates existing activities or research funded by the Australian Government. Projects that require recurring funding will not be considered.