



# Degree Apprenticeships Pilot Program Guidelines

<b>Opening date:</b>	3 September 2024
<b>Closing date:</b>	Round 1: 1 June 2026, subject to demand and budget availability
<b>South Australian Government Administering Entity:</b>	Department of State Development
<b>Enquiries:</b>	<a href="mailto:defenceindustryworkforce@sa.gov.au">defenceindustryworkforce@sa.gov.au</a>
<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	Open competitive. Submissions considered on receipt against the assessment criteria.

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## Introduction

The Degree Apprenticeship Pilots Program ('Program') is an initiative of the [South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report and Action Plan 2024-27](#) ('Action Plan') designed to address critical STEM skills shortages in the state's defence industry targeted at entry level talent and mid-career transitions. Universities ('Program applicants'), registered in South Australia, are eligible to apply for this Program.

## Background

The Action Plan was developed in consultation with key stakeholders from government, unions, universities, training providers, businesses and industry. It contains 22 initiatives to generate a pipeline of STEM graduates and trade apprentices, increase participation of under-represented cohorts, increase awareness of defence industry careers, support mid-career transitions, and deliver a new Skills and Training Academy at Osborne.

The Program is available to the South Australian universities to develop industry-sought, university level education via an apprenticeship. This initiative will enable the universities to collaborate with defence industry employers to establish relevant degree level qualifications integrated with industry-specific skills. The 'earn while you learn' aspect will support new workers to both study and work in areas of high need for the defence industry.

The Program is co-funded by the Government of South Australia, through the Department of State Development and the Government of Australia, through the Department of Defence ('Funding Partners'). It is administered by the Department of State Development (SA) and supported by the South Australian Skills Commission.

## Objectives

The Program has the following objectives:

1. **Support employer needs:** address defence industry skills gaps and workforce needs of employers by tailoring the apprenticeship to align with the defence industry requirements.
2. **Attract new talent:** draw interest from individuals who might not otherwise consider a university qualification by providing a clear pathway and raising awareness about highly demanded jobs in the defence industry.
3. **Facilitate earning while learning:** support students to earn a salary while studying, reducing financial barriers to higher education and offering a more financially sustainable route to a degree.
4. **Improve retention rates:** support employers to retain talent by providing a structured pathway for career progression and development.
5. **Foster diversity of program participants** by targeting under-represented groups and developing tailored approaches, including women, First Nations, neurodiverse, disengaged young people, mature-aged, lower socio-economic backgrounds, and people with disability.

## Outcomes

The Program seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

1. A total of 375 Degree Apprenticeship commencements over four years to December 2028 across all pilot initiatives and their successors. This translates to approximately 25 participants per pilot Program per year.
2. 75 per cent Degree Apprenticeships completion per cohort.
3. 75 per cent of students completing the Degree Apprenticeship employed in the defence industry.
4. Minimum 30 percent participation from the diversity groups.
5. Pilots are converted to a sustainable model of delivery, post pilots.

## Program Streams

This Program will fund the development of the Degree Apprenticeship pilots sought by the defence industry, including:

**Engineering Stream:** This stream offers specialisations in an Engineering discipline in high demand from the defence industry, including but not limited to Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Structural Engineering. Degree Apprentices will gain a solid foundation in engineering principles, delve into their chosen specialisation, and develop relevant technical skills.

**Project Management Stream:** This stream equips Degree Apprentices with the skills and knowledge to effectively manage projects from initiation to completion.

**Other Streams:** This stream allows flexibility to prepare proposals for Degree Apprenticeship pilots sought by the defence industry at a reasonable scale. Consideration of other streams will be at discretion of the Program Funding Partners.

Each stream will:

- utilise a minimum of a four-year, paid apprenticeship model, as informed by the defence industry partner(s) with a focus on industry-relevant skills and practical application.
- Prioritise intakes from the defence industry and be open to intakes from other adjacent industry sectors to support the Program's ongoing viability and sustainability.

## Grant Amount and Grant Period

The Government of South Australia and the Government of Australia are investing \$2.5 million over four years to 30 June 2028 to deliver the Degree Apprenticeship pilots under a Grant Agreement for different academic discipline streams in South Australia. It is intended for the pilots to be self-sustaining post establishment. The specific grant amount for each pilot proposal will depend on the scope of the proposal. The available grant amount to establish the Degree Apprenticeship framework per pilot is \$600,000. The Program Evaluation Panel will have discretion

to recommend a higher amount within the available budget where additional elements of the pilot are required to support scale, viability and/or continuity.

The Program will release funding in two Rounds:

- Round 1: Up to \$1.5 million available for pilots delivered from 2024 - 26.
- Round 2: Up to \$1 million available for pilots delivered from 2025 – 28, subject to outcomes of Round 1.

The university and/or industry partners are required to make in-kind and/or financial contributions towards the grant activities.

The Program will be open all year round. The proposals will be considered when received and until the Program funding is fully committed against each round of funding.

## Eligibility Criteria

The Program applicant must:

- be a university registered and operating in South Australia; and
- have an industry partner(s) who will employ the Degree Apprentices.

State and Commonwealth Government agencies are not eligible to apply.

## Eligible Activities

Funding must be used to support the establishment and delivery of the Degree Apprenticeship pilots aimed at increasing the defence industry related technical skills, required to meet current or future defence capability needs. The eligible activities include:

1. Design and supervise the delivery of the pilot Program (Bachelor's) qualification via a 4 to 5-year Training Contract (apprenticeship) model in collaboration with defence industry partner(s):
  - a) Design the curriculum structure.
  - b) Identify courses which will be co-delivered with industry partners.
  - c) Design the moderation and assessment elements to guarantee students attain the required competencies.
2. In collaboration with industry partners develop, deliver and implement a readiness and support plan that ensures employers are adequately prepared and supported to:
  - a) Undertake competency development and assessment for courses delivered in the workplace.
  - b) Perform supervisory functions as defined in the Training Contract and Training Plan.
  - c) Define the support activities provided to employers throughout the duration of the apprenticeship.

- d) Define the university student workplace supervisory arrangements.
3. Enrol and support approximately 25 participants per year across the pilot program (the applicant needs to confirm the target participant number in the proposal). This includes student wrap around services tailored to the student and employer.
4. Review and moderate assessments for industry co-delivered courses that require moderation.
5. Be the point of contact with industry for all academic matters related to the Program.
6. Identify industry partners willing to engage in the Program and liaise with them to align the required commitments.
7. Support industry partners activities to engage individuals and employers to participate in the Program.
8. Develop and manage the apprentice training plans in collaboration with the employers.
9. Draft contracts and agreements for the co-delivery of the courses.
10. Manage and administer any third-party contracts, aligned to the pilot Program delivery.
11. Support information exchanges between industry partners, students, and the university in relation to the Program.
12. Have a roadmap for the pilot Program to continue into future years on completion of the initial grant agreement.
13. Provide annual reporting for the duration of the pilot Program to enable monitoring of outcomes.

### Program Delivery Requirements

The university will be expected to engage or allocate the following:

1. An academic coordinator function focused on understanding the above activities related to developing the new co-delivered degree curriculum and assessments; and
2. A Higher Education Training Contract (apprenticeship) Coordinator function to manage the above activities related to employer relations, student apprentice wellbeing and performance.
3. Undertake marketing activities that support industry partner marketing campaigns, actions and activities to attract students and employers into the program. All marketing and communications activities must acknowledge support of the Government of South Australia and Government of Australia.
4. Support the recruitment process for the Program by advertising vacancies, checking candidates for eligibility, shortlisting, and interviewing candidates for companies and ensuring training contract and enrolment paperwork is completed. This activity can be outsourced or managed internally by the university.
5. Sub-contractors' fees aligned to the delivery of the pilot Program.

## Ineligible Expenditure

Expenditure items that are not eligible are:

- Overheads and consumables.
- Capital expenditure for the purchase of assets.
- Routine operational expenses, including communications, accommodation, office computing facilities, printing and stationery, legal and accounting fees.
- Activities that duplicate the program or services provided by other grant providers.

## Assessment Criteria

The applications will be assessed on merit and must address all assessment criteria below:

Criterion	Description	Weighting
1. Delivery Model	<p>Demonstrate this by identifying:</p> <p>1.1 <b>Delivery Plan:</b> a detailed plan outlining how the pilot Program will be delivered, including on-the-job training components, university course delivery, assessment strategies, and associated timing.</p> <p>1.2 <b>Industry Partnerships:</b> demonstrated collaboration and endorsement of relevant industry partners (Defence Primes and SMEs). This should detail the scale and specific demand and needs identified by industry to be addressed through the pilot Program, where the defence industry is prioritised. It should also detail which industry partner will submit an application to the South Australian Skills Commission. Demonstrate industry's engagement with the relevant union to ensure Industrial Relations (IR) compliance and equity of employment conditions across employers. Summarise the proposed employment conditions (application of industrial instrument).</p> <p>1.3 <b>Student Support Services:</b> a clear strategy for providing support services to students throughout the pilot Program, including academic support, career guidance, and well-being resources. This must also include detail of student support to be provided by partner employers.</p> <p>1.4 <b>Targeting Underrepresented Cohorts:</b> a plan outlining the intended approach to attract and support students from underrepresented groups, potentially including outreach initiatives, scholarships, and mentoring programs.</p> <p>1.5 <b>Governance and Risk Management:</b> a plan to oversee the pilot Program delivery and detail on key risks and how these will be managed.</p>	40%

Criterion	Description	Weighting
2. Capacity, capability, and resources to deliver the Program	<p>Demonstrate this by identifying:</p> <p>2.1 <b>Curriculum:</b> a comprehensive curriculum aligned with national training packages and industry needs for the chosen stream(s).</p> <p>2.2 <b>Accreditation and Declaration:</b> a plan to ensure relevant accreditation and regulatory compliance of the pilot Program and qualification and declaration of the new trade or vocation.</p> <p>2.3 <b>Resources:</b> access to resources with right skills and experience, both management and technical to deliver the pilot Program.</p> <p>2.4 <b>KPIs:</b> strategy to measure the pilot success against the Program Outcomes, including targets and metrics.</p>	40%
3. Budget	Breakdown of costs, including the sum sought from government, and the financial contribution from the university / industry.	20%

The Evaluation Panel may also consider other aspects of the application it regards as relevant when assessing applications and may request additional information if required to undertake the assessment.

## How to Apply

### Step 1: Prior to Formal Application

Before applying, the university is encouraged to consult with the Department of State Development, Department of Defence, and the South Australian Skills Commission to discuss the intent and proposed scope of the pilot Program. To initiate the engagement, the university needs to submit a brief Expression of Interest to [defenceindustryworkforce@sa.gov.au](mailto:defenceindustryworkforce@sa.gov.au). Lead industry partner(s) are encouraged to attend the initial engagement that will follow the EOI being submitted.

Upon submission of the EOI and the initial engagement, the university may be asked to provide a detailed submission addressing the assessment criteria.

Should a detailed submission be sought, in parallel the lead defence industry partner will be expected to prepare and submit an application to the South Australian Skills Commission to have the qualification declared as a vocation (traineeship) or a trade (apprenticeship) in South Australia. The lead industry partner will also engage with the relevant union to ensure industrial relations compliance and equity of conditions across employers.

### Step 2: Submission of Formal Application

To apply, submit the proposal via email to [defenceindustryworkforce@sa.gov.au](mailto:defenceindustryworkforce@sa.gov.au), addressing all eligibility and assessment criteria and include all necessary attachments.

The university is responsible for making sure the proposal is complete and accurate. The Evaluation Panel may ask for clarification and/or additional information.



For further information about the submission process, contact the Department of State Development at [defenceindustryworkforce@sa.gov.au](mailto:defenceindustryworkforce@sa.gov.au) or call [1300 117 088](tel:1300117088).

## Assessment Process

Upon receipt of the proposal, the submission is assessed against the eligibility criteria.

Only eligible proposals will proceed to the evaluation stage and be assessed against the assessment criteria.

The Evaluation Panel will consider the proposal on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria; and
- whether it provides value for money.

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value for money, the Evaluation Panel will have regard to:

- the overall objectives of the Program;
- the evidence provided to demonstrate how the proposal contributes to meeting those objectives; and
- the relative value of the grant sought and financial co-contributions.

## Evaluation Panel

An Evaluation Panel will be established comprising representatives from the South Australian Department of State Development, South Australian Skills Commission, and the Australian Government Department of Defence. The Evaluation Panel may also seek additional advice from technical experts or advisors to inform the assessment process.

The Evaluation Panel will assess the proposals against the assessment criteria. The Evaluation Panel and any technical experts or advisors will be required to sign a Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement.

## Grant Agreement Approval

The Program delegate (who is a Senior Responsible Officer within the Department of State Development with responsibility for administering the Program) decides which grants to approve taking into account the recommendations of the Evaluation Panel and the availability of grant funds. The Program delegate reserves the right to offer funding at a different level than that sought.

The Program delegate will not approve funding if there are insufficient Program funds available across relevant financial years for the Program.

## Grant Agreement

The successful Program applicant will be required to execute a South Australian Government Grant Agreement or deed (the 'Grant Agreement'). The Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy will enter into a single Grant Agreement for each pilot Program. The university will be responsible for management of any chosen sub-contractors. The Grant Agreement will include clauses relating to, but not limited to, the following:

- Funding being conditional on the outcome of due diligence processes.
- Funding being provided in tranches over the Program period and subject to the achievement of any specified milestones and reporting requirements.
- Eligible and ineligible expenditure.
- Reporting requirements including data and measures for performance and impact of the Program, how the funding has been spent, including provision of data in order for the Department of State Development to evaluate the success/impact of the Program.
- Requirement for the university to be interviewed/surveyed and to provide relevant information (including data on revenue, cost, employment);
- Appropriate acknowledgement of the Government of South Australia and the Government of Australia and their respective Ministers.

If any information in an application form or report is found to be false or misleading, the funding provided through the Program may be repayable on demand.

## Reporting

The reporting requirements will be specified in the Grant Agreement. The university will be expected to report on:

- progress against agreed Program milestones and outcomes over the duration of the pilot;
- Program expenditure, including expenditure of grant funds;
- contributions of participants directly related to the Program;
- evidence of completion of approved activities;
- resource changes; and
- inability to complete activity/activities.

The Department of State Development will monitor the progress of the Program by assessing the submitted reports and may conduct site visits to confirm details of the reports if necessary.

## Additional Information

### Freedom of Information

Program applicants should be aware that all documents in the possession of the Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1991 \(SA\)](#) (FOI Act). Information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the FOI Act.

The FOI Act gives members of the public a legally enforceable right to access documents – subject to certain exemptions – held by Government Agencies, local government authorities, statutory and regulatory bodies and South Australian Universities.

### Privacy and Information Policy

The Department of State Development complies with the [Government of South Australia's Information Privacy Principles Instruction](#). The Department of State Development collects information (including personal information) as reasonably necessary for the purposes and functions of:

- Administering its grants and funding programs;
- Keeping stakeholders informed about the Program, relevant upcoming events, grant funding initiatives and outcomes, its services, special events or client feedback surveys, as well as its activities in general; and
- Improving its websites and other services.

The collection and use of information extends to use of such information by the Minister for the purposes as outlined above.

Any information contained in or relating to an application, including information identified by a Program applicant as confidential information for the purposes of applying for funding under this Program, may be disclosed by the Department of State Development to, or used by the Department of State Development:

- To its employees, advisers or third parties in order to manage the Program (including but not limited to, for the purposes of evaluating and assessing the application);
- For the purpose of verifying other funding income for the Program – the Department of State Development may provide information to other agencies nominated in your application;
- For due diligence, monitoring, reporting and audit purposes;
- Within the Government where this serves the legitimate interest of the Department of State Development;
- In response to a request by a House or Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia or South Australia;
- For training, systems testing and process improvement, including compiling statistics and reports;

- If an application is successful, for promotion of project activities and outcomes;
- Where information is authorised or required by law to be disclosed; and
- Where the information is already in the public domain.

It is the intent of the Government to be transparent with regards to financial assistance provided to industry. The Government intends to publicly disclose details of all financial assistance provided by the Government for this Program (which will include, but is not limited to, the name of the successful Program applicant(s), details of the Program activity and amount of grant funding).

### Disclaimer

No responsibility for any loss or damage caused by reliance on any of the information or advice provided by or on behalf of the state of South Australia, or for any loss or damage arising from acts or omissions made, is accepted by the state of South Australia, their officers, servants or agents.

### Variation

The Department of State Development reserves the right to amend these Guidelines and application terms as required.