



Department of
**Energy and Economic
Diversification**

STEM Engagement Sponsorship

2026 Guidelines

Applications Close: Tuesday, 28 April 2026 at 10:00am (WST)

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1. Introduction

The Department of Energy and Economic Diversification (DEED) is the lead agency strengthening the Western Australia's science, innovation and technology ecosystem, supporting the Western Australian Government's 2025–2029 priority to drive economic diversification and build a vibrant, creative economy.

The State STEM skills strategy mission update **Future state, future skills: Accelerating STEM skills for Western Australia** sets out a vision for a globally competitive and innovative workforce with the skills to drive Western Australia's technological future and create new job opportunities. Its mission is to grow and bolster a diverse and inclusive, industry-connected science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and skills talent pool across the State.

The mission update supports **Diversify WA** by building STEM skills and capability to grow priority sectors, and enable long-term economic growth, the mission update also underpins **Western Australia's 10-Year Science and Technology Plan** which outlines a strategic vision to enhance the State's scientific and technological capabilities.



To achieve the mission, the Western Australian Government is taking action in three (3) priority areas:

1. Career pathways and industry linkages:

- Showcasing emerging STEM opportunities, including careers in industries that diversify and decarbonise the Western Australian economy.
- Fostering meaningful industry engagements with the community, schools (K-12), universities and VET providers to enhance and align course content, prepare workers for technological change, improve career awareness, and support educators and trainers.

2. Diversity and inclusion:

- Attracting under-represented groups into STEM through diverse role models, inspiring educators and effective outreach and access initiatives. Under-represented groups may include:

- i. People living in mid to low socioeconomic status (SES) areas;
 - ii. People living in regional or remote areas;
 - iii. Females;
 - iv. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
 - v. People living with disability; and/or
 - vi. Other groups underrepresented by STEM.
- b. Retaining and promoting under-represented groups in STEM through supportive education pathways and workplaces, dismantling barriers and biases and providing support to ensure they thrive.

3. STEM culture and literacy:

- a. Supporting community engagement initiatives to build interest, understanding, and positive attitudes towards science and technology and their critical importance to our future.
- b. Building STEM literacy and foundational skills to ensure Western Australians are equipped to thrive in the modern world and make informed decisions.

These priority action areas are underpinned by five (5) cross-cutting enablers:

- 1. Support and facilities for educators:** Encouraging access for educators to effective STEM resources, professional learning and industry engagement.
- 2. Coordination and collaboration:** Facilitating coordination and collaboration across the STEM ecosystem, maximising collective outcomes.
- 3. Alignment and leverage:** Maximising industry, community and government opportunities. Aligning and leveraging relevant international, national, state and local activities.
- 4. Communication and advocacy:** Promoting clear and collective messaging to promote STEM, advancing the shared vision and priority action areas.
- 5. Evaluation and measurement:** Facilitating evaluation and measurement of outcomes to enhance effectiveness, inform best practice and identify proven initiatives to scale up.

2. About the Sponsorship

2.1. Overview

The STEM Engagement Sponsorship (Sponsorship) is a competitive Western Australian Government sponsorship administered by DEED.

2.2. Objective and outcomes

The objective of the Sponsorship is to strengthen Western Australia's STEM capability by supporting initiatives that:

- Prepare students with essential STEM skills
- Reskill and upskill the current workforce, and
- Reduce barriers for under-represented groups.

This will ensure Western Australia has a diverse, future-ready talent pipeline that underpins the success of the State's economic development and diversification priorities.

The intended outcomes of the Sponsorship are:

1. An increase in the number and diversity of students, educators, professionals and community groups meaningfully participating in STEM engagement activities, demonstrated through higher participation rates and improved interest, confidence and understanding of science, technology and innovation.
2. Greater participation and progression of under-represented groups in STEM engagement activities, learning pathways, and career pathways, evidenced by increased access, retention, and transition into further STEM education or employment.
3. Stronger and more sustained collaboration between schools (K–12), educators, community organisations, researchers and industry, resulting in increased awareness of priority and emerging STEM career pathways and improved alignment between curriculum content and industry-relevant STEM skills.

3. Value

3.1. Levels of sponsorship

A maximum of up to \$30,000 per application can be sought. Sponsorship is offered as a one-off, non-recurrent Sponsorship contribution commencing during 2026 and to be spent by 30 April 2027.

DEED and the Minister for Science have the discretion to award Sponsorship amounts lower than sought as appropriate.

Where an applicant is successful, the recipient must enter into a Sponsorship Agreement with the Department (see Section 7.1) prior to receiving funds. This agreement will require a report back to DEED on outcomes and achievements.

3.2. Eligible expenditure

Items eligible for sponsorship include:

- staff salaries, personnel costs and specialist skills;
- project and program development;
- program related production, equipment and resources;
- administration;
- marketing, media and promotions;
- travel expenditure; and
- other associated and relevant costs directly attributable to the delivery of the project.

3.3. Ineligible expenditure

Items ineligible for sponsorship include:

- Political, religious, advocacy or lobbying activities.
- Projects, programs, events or activities that commenced before the funding agreement has been countersigned.
- Operational costs: An operational cost is defined as the costs associated with the usual business of an organisation. It can also be defined as expense that is planned or expected to achieve the year-to-year objectives of the organisation.

- Recurrent organisational costs: A recurrent organisational cost is defined as a repeated duplicate occurrence or the replacement of an asset.
- The purchase of equipment that is not specific to the delivery of the proposed project, program, event or activity and would otherwise support core activities.
- Payments, reimbursements, or waivers to contracted employees/members/participants/ volunteers to undertake core activities.
- Fundraising activities, donations, cash money or Local Laws.

Projects must be undertaken within the eligibility period of May 2026 to April 2027.

Eligible expenditure must be incurred with evidence prior to the date the project ceases.

4. Eligibility

4.1. Organisation eligibility

To be considered eligible, and to be included in the evaluation process, an application must be received by the closing date, propose eligible expenditure, and be led and submitted by an organisation that meets the following criteria¹:

- a. Have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and/or Australian Company Number (ACN);
- b. Be an organisation based in WA or be an organisation not based in Western Australia that can show that the initiative will be delivered in and have significant impact in Western Australia;
- c. Be made by a valid legal entity that can enter into a funding agreement with the Western Australian Government;
- d. Be solvent;
- e. Be a STEM engagement service provider from outside of the formal education system, such as a non-for-profit enterprise, membership organisation or privately owned organisation.
 - i. Universities or registered training organisations are eligible applicants where the proposed initiative involves informal STEM engagement, falls outside of standard course curriculum and does not form part of student tuition.
 - ii. Schools are not eligible applicants, but organisations can propose initiatives that support schools and teachers with informal STEM engagement,

¹ If an organisation does not meet the eligibility criteria, they may partner with an eligible organisation.

resources, professional learning or industry engagement and support school expenses associated with participating in the initiative such as travel expenditure, equipment costs and staff costs.

- f. The project, program, initiative, event or activity must align with one or more outcomes of the Sponsorship.
- g. The project, program, initiative, event or activity has NOT received financial support through another DEED funding program within the same calendar year.
- h. Applicants do not have an outstanding Project Completion Report for any sponsorships or funding with DEED.
- i. Applicants are not employees or officers of the Department, or members of their immediate families.

Applicant organisations are only eligible for one Sponsorship.

5. Evaluation Criteria

Eligible applications will be evaluated against the following equally weighted criteria. Please address these four (4) criteria as clearly as possible and use evidence where possible. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should allow assessors to determine your capacity and capability to deliver the program to completion.

1. Project quality and feasibility

- a. The extent to which the project is well planned and achievable, with clearly described objectives, activities, timeline and milestones, outputs and outcomes, key performance indicators, and budget;
- b. Identification of the project's target audience, including who the project aims to reach, how the project is designed with evidence to deliver outcomes for that audience and how the project will be promoted to attract maximum participation;
- c. Identification of key risks and appropriate management plan for any risks identified.

2. Impact

- a. The projected impact of the project for its participants and for Western Australia as a whole, with reference to one or more of the following three (3) priority action areas to grow and bolster a diverse and inclusive, industry-connected STEM education and skills talent pool across the State;
 - i. Career pathways and industry linkages
 - ii. Diversity and inclusion

- iii. STEM culture and literacy.
- b. Identification of how this impact will be achieved and measured, supported by evidence and an evaluation plan.
- c. Identification of how DEED will be acknowledged for its support and any other specific sponsorship benefits DEED will receive.

3. Need and value for money

- a. Appropriateness of the budget provided which should outline:
 - i. how the Sponsorship funds will be allocated to eligible expenses to deliver the project and value for money for Western Australians, and
 - ii. any co-investment, sponsorships, financial contributions or in-kind support from the applicant and other organisations towards the project and how these funds will be used.
- b. Demonstrated need for the Sponsorship and why you cannot fund this project yourself (e.g. difficulties and gaps in funding), and the extent to which the project would or would not run without the full Sponsorship.

As part of the application, applicants will be required to submit a project expenditure budget in the format included in the application portal.

4. Capacity, capability and collaboration

- a. Evidence of the provider's capability to deliver the proposed project successfully, based on success of previous projects, experience of the team and any unique skills;
- b. Evidence of the provider's capacity to achieve the milestones and outputs proposed within the application through staff, budget and other resources;
- c. Value of any collaboration/s the provider intends to engage in to facilitate and enhance delivery of the project.

5.1. Evaluation process

An independent assessment process will be undertaken to recommend Sponsorship recipients, Sponsorship amounts and Sponsorship durations to DEED and the Minister for Science.

Where sponsorships are allocated, it will be on a competitive basis to highly ranked eligible applicants most strongly demonstrating that they meet the relevant evaluation criteria.

Evaluation of applications will be determined by the application's alignment with:

- The Program objectives contained in these Guidelines; and,

- The Program evaluation criteria contained in these Guidelines.

Applications may also be subject to due diligence, technical, financial and economic appraisals. The evaluation will also consider the level of funding sought by the applicant compared to how the application meets these requirements.

Assessors reserve the right to request additional evidence to support claims against the evaluation criteria to assist them in making their recommendations.

The deliberations of assessors and all related information and material will be kept strictly confidential, subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 1992.

Assessors' recommendations and the Minister for Science's decisions are final, and no further correspondence will be entered into.

6. Application Process

To be considered for funding under the Sponsorship, your application must be submitted via the online application portal by the application closing date.

6.1. Key dates

Item	Key Dates
Applications Close	Tuesday, 28 April 2026 at 10:00am (WST)
Outcome Notification	Mid-June 2026

Late applications or changes to applications will not be accepted after the closing time.

All applicants will be notified via email as to the outcomes of their application.

For all enquiring regarding the Program contact DEED by email at science@DEED.wa.gov.au.

6.2. Notification of outcomes

Notification of outcomes throughout the process will be sent to the registered email address provided in the online application submission.

All decisions are final and made at the State's absolute discretion.

7. Conditions and Obligations

For successful Sponsorship recipients:

1. Enter into a Sponsorship Agreement with the Department

Successful applicants under the Sponsorship are required to enter into a written Sponsorship Agreement with the Department that administers the Sponsorship. No rights to funds are accrued until such time as the Sponsorship Agreement has been entered into by the relevant parties².

The Sponsorship Agreement will outline the terms and conditions under which the Department provides the sponsorship, including project performance, publicity and reporting issues. The Department specifies the conditions and obligations of the sponsorship prior to the disbursement of any funds.

Organisations recommended for sponsorship may be required to provide more detailed information about their organisation. Applications may be subject to due diligence, technical, financial and economic appraisals.

2. Cyber safety responsibility

Recipients of the Sponsorship are expected to keep their sponsored programs 'cyber-safe'. The onus is on the recipient to ensure all customer and other data is kept secure. The Department will not be held responsibility for the cyber security, or otherwise, of sponsored programs.

3. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

Successful applicants will be required to submit completion reports and provide evidence of completion, including financial statements and achievement of agreed outputs, outcomes and key performance indicators to the satisfaction of the Department. Due dates for these reports will be agreed between both parties in the Sponsorship Agreement.

The final report submitted at the conclusion of your program is to summarise your program including the outcomes and impacts. A statement of financial acquittal must be provided to support the final report.

All Sponsorship recipients will be required to collect feedback from participants to inform their final report. It is expected that recipients will demonstrate how this feedback will be incorporated into future program design.

² DEED reserves the right to check the financial stability of all selected applicants before Financial Assistance Agreements are finalised.

Successful applicants will be required to cooperate with an evaluation that is undertaken during and/or after completion of the investment. This includes reporting against KPIs, including evidence and financial statements, as part of milestone payments under the FAA and Sponsorship acquittal.

4. Claiming sponsorship funds

Sponsorship payments to successful applicants are via electronic funds transfer (EFT).

The Sponsorship payment schedule will be negotiated and outlined in the funding agreement.

5. GST included

The Department regards sponsorship as supply, and as such sponsorship funds will be inclusive of GST. Recipients must provide the Department with a tax invoice for the GST inclusive value of the Sponsorship.

6. Freedom of Information, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

Applicants are informed that the Department is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA) ('FOI Act'), which provides a general right of access to records held by State agencies and local governments. Under the FOI Act, applicants should be aware that information pertaining to the receipt of State Government funding may be tabled in the Western Australian Parliament. This information could include the names of recipients, the amount of funding the name of the project/activity and, possibly, a brief description thereof. This could result in requests for more detail to be released publicly.

Successful applicants should be aware that their organisation's name, investment name and amount of funding approved will appear on the Department's website and potentially in media releases.

State agencies are subject to the legislative and administrative accountability and transparency requirements of the State, including disclosures to the Western Australian Parliament and its Committees. As such, applicants should be aware that disclosure of information outside of State agencies may occur if the information is required or is authorised to be disclosed by law.

7. Media and promotions

All media enquiries or public announcements relating to the Sponsorship are coordinated and managed by the Department's Media team. Where possible, all media and communications about investments will be undertaken jointly with successful applicants. Recipients must:

- a. seek and obtain the Department's approval before making public statements, or contacting or responding to the media, regarding successful or unsuccessful applications;
- b. provide the Department with at least 10 business days' notice of any proposed media event; and provide any proposed media or public statement to the Department for approval prior to its release as well as make any changes or amendments to the form, content or manner reasonably requested by the Department.

8. Code of Conduct

Successful applicants for the Sponsorship will comply with all relevant laws and ensure the services they provide and/or participate in proactively address, manage and where possible avoid any unwelcome behaviours that offends, humiliates or intimidates a person. Unwelcome behaviour can include physical, verbal or visual conduct (e.g. in the form of posters, email or SMS messages). Successful applicants are expected to treat all people with respect and courtesy. The Department reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to discontinue the provision funding or not provide funding to any successful applicant that acts contrary to the code of conduct.

8. Disclaimers

The provision of financial assistance under the Western Australian Government's STEM Engagement Sponsorships program is at the absolute discretion of the Department. Nothing in the application process, the selection process or any associated documentation shall give rise to any:

- a. legal relations or any process or other contract between the Minister or the Western Australian government on the one hand and the applicant on the other;
or
- b. legitimate expectations on the part of the applicant.