



**NCSEHE**

National Centre for Student  
Equity in Higher Education



Curtin University

# EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST GUIDELINES & EOI FORM

Competitive grants to improve low socioeconomic status (SES) student, low SES Indigenous student, and low SES regional and remote student and student influencer access to information about higher education study options, pathways, and careers

# Advertisement

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National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE)  
Curtin University

Expressions of Interest invited

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training is funding a program of 'Competitive grants to improve low SES student, low SES Indigenous student, and low SES regional and remote student and student influencer access to information about higher education study options, pathways, and careers'. The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) at Curtin University has been charged with establishing, implementing and managing the Program.

Therefore NCSEHE is pleased to invite Expressions of Interest from Table A Universities for up to two projects under each of the following two themes:

**Theme 1:** Key influencers of low SES students, low SES regional, rural and remote students, and low SES Indigenous students towards higher education pathways and career choices

**Theme 2:** Higher education careers advice for low SES students, including low SES Indigenous students and low SES regional, rural and remote students

Project Funding: Theme 1 \$200,000-\$250,000 per project (max: 2 projects)  
Theme 2 \$100,000-\$150,000 per project (max: 2 projects)

**Duration:** 12 months, although duration may vary depending on contractual agreement. Grants are expected to commence in July 2019.

A two-stage application process has been established to make the process less onerous for applicants. Stage One is the Expression of Interest (EOI). EOI Submissions are due on **Friday 3 May 2019**

Following consideration by the Advisory Committee, full proposals will be invited from selected applicants based on the demonstrated strength of the EOI proposals. Those not selected will be advised accordingly.

Instructions for applicants can be obtained from the NCSEHE website [here](#) or by contacting

Professor John Phillimore on +61 8 9266 2849  
or via email [ncsehe@curtin.edu.au](mailto:ncsehe@curtin.edu.au)

Proposals must be submitted by 5pm Western Standard Time  
on Friday 3 May 2019

**How to apply:**

[Guidelines EOI Document](#)  
[EOI Form](#)

# Lodgement details

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## Key dates

Advertisement of EOI Process	<b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019</b>
EOI Closing time and date for proposals	<b>5 pm WST Friday 3 May 2019</b>
Acknowledging receipt of EOI	<b>On receipt of proposal via email</b>
Consideration by NCSEHE Advisory Committee	<b>6-17 May 2019</b>
Notification of EOI outcomes & Invitations for Full Grant Applications	<b>20 May 2019</b>
Close of Full Grant Applications	<b>13 June 2019</b>
Acknowledging receipt of Full Grant Applications	<b>On receipt of proposal via email</b>
Consideration of Full applications by NCSEHE Advisory Committee	<b>17-21 June 2019</b>
Notification of outcomes of Full Grant Applications	<b>24 June 2019</b>
Project Commencement	<b>July 2019</b>
Project completion and acquittals	<b>August 2020</b>

## Submission details

Extensions beyond the above closing dates will not be granted under any circumstances. No additional material or information will be accepted after the closing date.

The application process will be a two stepped approach, with an Expression of Interest phase being completed before successful EOI applicants are invited to submit a full detailed research proposal for consideration by the Advisory Committee. Full proposals will be invited on the demonstrated strength of the EOI proposals.

Proposals must be submitted electronically in **PDF and Word document format**, via email, to: [ncsehe@curtin.edu.au](mailto:ncsehe@curtin.edu.au)

NCSEHE will acknowledge receipt of proposals by email immediately following receipt of the application. If applicants have not received acknowledgement of EOI by 6 May 2019 or Full proposal by 20 May 2019, they should contact NCSEHE immediately. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure their proposal has been received by NCSEHE.

## EOI Proposal template

EOI Proposals **must** be completed using the *EOI form* provided with this information kit on the NCSEHE website [here](#).

Please refer to Section 2 of this information kit for guidelines regarding the format and content requirements of the full invited proposal applications.

### Membership of Equity Research and innovation Panel

If one or more members of the project team are also members of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training's Equity Research and Innovation Panel (which provides strategic advice on the National Priorities Pool) then this must be detailed in Part 4.2 (Declarations) of the EOI form to allow the Advisory Committee to determine if there is a potential or material conflict of interest. If required a full declaration form will be required if invited to submit a full application.

Note that the Panel's role is advisory only and that it does not directly scope projects, assess EOIs, or have a decision making role on National Priorities Pool priorities or funding.

Members must be careful that EOIs are not prepared using or with the benefit of information that was confidential to the Equity Research and Innovation Panel or the Department.

EOIs that have been prepared with confidential information may be excluded from consideration.

## Privacy

NCSEHE will take all reasonable measures to ensure that any personal information<sup>1</sup> contained in a proposal will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

No applicant shall provide any information, make any statement or issue any document or other written or printed material concerning their application to any of the media without the prior written approval of NCSEHE.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal information includes: personal, sensitive and/or health information as defined in the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

## Queries

If you have any questions in relation to these instructions please contact:

Professor John Phillimore  
Program Director - Research  
National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education  
Curtin University  
GPO Box U1987  
PERTH WA 6845  
Tel +61 8 9266 2849 or 0414 276 104  
Email [ncsehe@curtin.edu.au](mailto:ncsehe@curtin.edu.au)  
Web [ncsehe.edu.au](http://ncsehe.edu.au)

# Section 1:

## Statement of requirement

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The Australian Government Department of Education and Training (“the Department”) is funding a program of ‘Competitive grants to improve low SES student, low SES Indigenous student, and low SES regional and remote student and student influencer access to information about higher education study options, pathways, and careers’. The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) at Curtin University has been charged with establishing, implementing and managing the Program.

Through the NCSEHE at least one and up to two projects will be funded under each of the following two themes:

**Theme 1:** Key influencers of low SES students, low SES regional, rural and remote students, and low SES Indigenous students towards higher education pathways and career choices.

**Theme 2:** Higher education careers advice for low SES students, including low SES Indigenous students and low SES regional, rural and remote students.

### 1.1 Theme 1: Key Influencers

**Title:** Key influencers of low SES students, low SES regional, rural and remote students, and low SES Indigenous students towards higher education pathways and career choices

**Objective:** To identify and better target key influencers of low SES students, low SES regional, rural and remote students, and low SES Indigenous students towards higher education pathways and career choices

**Duration:** 12 months, although duration may vary depending on contractual agreement. Grants are expected to commence in July 2019.

**Project Funding:** \$200,000-\$250,000 per project (max. 2 projects to be awarded)

#### 1.1.1. Project description

Proposals are invited from Table A Universities for up to two projects under this theme. Theme 1 projects will explore and trial interventions that target key influencers of low SES students.

The scope of the projects could include:

- Determining and liaising with the key influencers of low SES students, low SES regional, rural and remote students, and/or low SES Indigenous students in the context of education and careers;
- Understanding how, when and why they influence these students towards higher education pathway and career choices;
- Potential opportunities for interventions (for example behavioural insights) to improve student outcomes;
- Undertaking trials and evaluations of these interventions.

Parents, family members, friends, teachers, school leaders, and career advisors are some of the important individuals that can support low SES students to make the decision to enter, persist with and complete a higher education qualification.

Understanding the role of these key influencers, their drivers and needs, will expand the equity evidence base, and has the potential to inform more precisely targeted interventions to improve outcomes for the low SES cohort overall. The project will gather evidence about opportunities and inform development of intervention measures. Dependent on outcomes, the project could be followed by future longitudinal trials to test interventions that support low SES students to aspire to, enter and complete a higher education qualification.

Many approaches to this topic are possible. Project designs that meet the following criteria will be well considered:

- are founded on a critical review of the existing literature, including appropriate international comparisons, on key influencers on student choice for low SES students, low SES regional, rural and remote students, and/or low SES Indigenous students;
- are evidence based;
- demonstrate clearly articulated methodologies, and rigour in design, sample selection, and the use of replicable and objective data;
- employ quasi-experimental methodologies, comparisons, control groups or counterfactuals as appropriate;
- propose testable positions;
- can sustain the inferences that are made, leading to results that are open to validation or refutation; and
- are neutral / unbiased in their discussion of issues and evidence.

### 1.1.2. Required outcomes

The project(s) will result in the following outcomes:

- identification of the key influencers of the relevant low SES student cohort;
- exploration of the nature of, timing of and motivation for the advice they provide concerning education pathways and career choices;
- exploration of why the advice of these key influencers is meaningful to students;
- exploration of the barriers or areas of uncertainty that key influencers encounter in providing advice;
- identification of potential opportunities for intervention;
- recommendations on how this knowledge can be applied by practitioners and policy makers to inform low SES student choice and improve student outcomes, facilitating improved higher education participation and completion.

### 1.1.3. Research context

This project should, where possible, draw on:

- previously published literature on equity group issues;
- quantitative analysis of data sets on students and Australian youth; and
- original quantitative and qualitative research.

#### 1.1.4. Presentation of outcomes

This project will be established under Conditions of Grant. In addition to submitting the Final Report and Acquittal Report, the successful applicant must submit a Research Report which includes:

- an executive summary
- detailed descriptions of the methodologies employed
- a literature review of relevant research
- a description of the data and data sources used
- a detailed presentation of the research outcomes
- an analysis of the research outcomes (including their strengths and weaknesses), and
- conclusions and recommendations.

The Research Report is to be of commensurate quality with work submitted to reviewed academic journals for publication.

#### 1.1.5. Required skills and expertise

The successful applicant will have demonstrated that it:

- can successfully deliver the high quality quantitative and qualitative analyses required for an investigative project of this nature; and
- has experience in efficiently and effectively delivering project outcomes within an agreed budget and timeframe.

### 1.2. Theme 2: Careers

**Title:** Higher education careers advice for low SES students, including low SES Indigenous students and low SES regional, rural and remote students

**Objective:** To improve higher education careers and pathways advice for low SES students, including low SES Indigenous students and low SES regional and remote students, to promote uptake of higher education pathways

**Duration:** 12 months, although duration may vary depending on contractual agreement. Grants are expected to commence in July 2019.

**Project Funding:** \$100,000-\$150,000 per project (max. 2 projects to be awarded)

#### 1.2.1. Project description

Proposals are invited from Table A Universities for up to two projects under this theme. Theme 2 projects will explore and trial interventions that support careers and pathways advice and industry engagement for low SES students, to promote uptake of higher education pathways.

The scope of the projects could include the following:

- identify and critically assess relevant existing research and initiatives completed in the Australian education context;
- identify best practice and new opportunities for innovative approaches in careers and pathways advice for low SES students, including low SES Indigenous students and low SES regional, rural and remote students;



- trial and evaluate best practice and/or innovative approaches as evidence-based interventions (for example behavioural insights) with low SES students.

Analysis of Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY) data demonstrates the benefits to the individual of attaining a higher education qualification. However, low SES students may have lower aspirations, limited family examples to draw on, and be subject to pre-conceived expectations.

Some research has shown that low SES students are more likely to face uncertainty and misalignment in occupational aspirations and unmatched educational expectations, and may lack the knowledge and connections that would provide reliable insight into how to achieve career ambitions.

Targeted, timely and advice on study options and career focussed pathways can assist low SES students to better understand the value of higher education and its implications for their employment options, and how to best plan their future.

This project will also align with recommendations from the *Higher Education Standards Panel Final Report: Improving retention, completion and success in higher education* concerning the provision of careers advice and the sharing of best practice, and complement the *National Career Education Strategy* implementation.

The project team is expected to consult with key stakeholders, such as Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia and the Careers Industry Council of Australia.

### 1.2.2. Required outcomes

The project(s) could result in the following outcomes:

- exploration and trial of interventions that support career pathways and industry engagement for low SES students in different contexts, to promote uptake of higher education pathways;
- an evaluation of the interventions identified;
- a project report which sets out the findings and, where appropriate, may include best practice guidance for practitioners or resources for students or educators, based on an analysis of existing programs and interventions.

### 1.2.3. Presentation of outcomes

This project will be established under Conditions of Grant. In addition to submitting the Final Report and Acquittal Report, the successful university must submit a Project Report which includes:

- an executive summary
- detailed descriptions of the methodologies employed
- a literature review of relevant research
- a description of the data and data sources used
- a detailed presentation of the research outcomes
- an analysis of the findings (including their strengths and weaknesses)
- conclusions and recommendations, and
- any resources or tools developed.

## 1.2.4. Required skills and expertise

The required skills and expertise of the applicants are:

- demonstrated ability to successfully deliver the high quality analysis required for a project of this nature;
- demonstrated ability to effectively liaise with stakeholders; and
- demonstrated experience in efficiently and effectively delivering project outcomes within an agreed budget and timeframe.

## 1.3 Funding available

Funding for a maximum of two grants per theme will be available through a competitive selection process. It is anticipated that Theme 1 projects will be funded for between \$200,000 and \$250,000 each; with Theme 2 projects being funded for between \$100,000 and \$150,000 each.

Funding allocations will not necessarily be of equal value between each of the successful applicants. NCSEHE reserves the right to negotiate budgets with preferred applicants based on NCSEHE's overall requirements.

## 1.4 Related research

Applicants should not duplicate existing research. However, they are encouraged to ensure proposals build on the current body of knowledge, including their own current research.

## 1.5 Timeframe

Successful applicants will be engaged to provide research services to NCSEHE for approximately 12 months, commencing July 2019, although duration may vary depending on contractual agreement. Projects must be concluded and acquitted by August 2020.

## 1.6 NCSEHE contracts

Acceptance of a proposal will be subject to negotiation and execution of a contract, a draft copy of which will be provided to applicants selected to proceed to Stage 2.

NCSEHE may accept the whole or part of the proposal offered. The final project will be defined in negotiation with the successful applicants.

## 1.7 Quality assurance processes

The following is a summary of the range of quality assurance processes undertaken by NCSEHE. These processes should be taken into consideration when planning projects, timelines, outputs and dissemination activities:

- Progress reports and discussion with NCSEHE at negotiated points during the term of the research project will be required, including reporting on specified milestones. The progress reports provide NCSEHE with an opportunity to

review and comment on the scope of the research, the methodology and research instruments being used, and any emerging issues.

- Where a research report is a contracted output, NCSEHE will require submission of **edited** draft reports, which will be reviewed by NCSEHE and an independent reviewer of NCSEHE's choice. Written feedback will be given to the researcher to act upon prior to submission of subsequent drafts. Approximately 4 to 6 weeks should be allowed in timeframes for the return of review comments.
- Research reports will be required to be written in an 'easy to read' and accessible manner. A report template will be provided to ensure that NCSEHE house style is followed. Reports must contain an Executive Summary which can be converted into a media release. They must also contain Recommendations/ Key findings and Referencing should be consistent with either 'Chicago' or APA style.
- While many reports are rich in content they often require extensive editing before publication. **NCSEHE requests that researchers arrange for an editor to proof read the final report before submission to NCSEHE.**
- For all projects that are quantitative in focus, researchers must have a system for assuring the quality of the data they report and for **conducting final data checks prior to submission of the report to NCSEHE.** If the program of research involves developing and conducting a survey, researchers are to lodge the final data set to NCSEHE, with a view to making the data available to future researchers.
- NCSEHE requires ongoing dialogue with researchers regarding progress and direction of projects, including discussions about the ways in which the impact of the research can be maximised.
- In negotiation with NCSEHE, researchers may be required to make presentations at seminars, meetings or events. Where NCSEHE has requested this, the researchers may be asked to provide their time and NCSEHE will cover reasonable associated costs.

This list is not exhaustive and NCSEHE reserves the right to negotiate additional requirements where appropriate at the time of contracting.

## 1.8 Research ethics

Projects undertaken by researchers employed by the higher education sector are guided by the National Health and Medical Research Council/Universities Australia Joint Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice and individual university policy and procedures. Most researchers associated with universities will be required to obtain ethics clearance for projects, and the outcomes of this process will form part of the contract milestones.

**State and territory training authorities:** Researchers should bear in mind that there may be state/territory protocols that need to be followed when conducting research involving VET institutions in their jurisdictions.

**Secondary schools:** Researchers should bear in mind that any research involving schools requires the gaining of an ethics approval from the Department of Education in each state and territory before the project can proceed.

## 1.9 Selection Criteria

EOIs found eligible for assessment will be assessed by against the following assessment criteria.

	Criterion	Detail	Weight
(1)	<b>Evidence-based EOI</b>	<p>This criterion will assess the proposed project, considering:</p> <p>1.1 The extent to which the approach to the project and the proposed methodology are demonstrated to be appropriate, feasible, and robust.</p> <p>1.2 Demonstrated understanding of the project requirements and the extent to which the expected outcome(s) will effectively address the project scope and deliver the project objectives.</p> <p>1.3 The extent to which the evidence provided, including the background and references, substantiate the proposed approach.</p>	45%
(2)	<b>Capacity to deliver the project as described</b>	<p>This criterion will assess the extent to which the proposal has demonstrated capacity to deliver the project on time and as described, considering:</p> <p>2.1 The extent to which the project team demonstrates the experience, expertise and capacity to deliver the project as described.</p> <p>2.2 The extent to which the project plan demonstrates a realistic plan (including clear milestones, timeframes and key performance indicators) for delivering the desired project outcome(s) as required and on time.</p> <p>2.3 The extent to which the risk management strategy is comprehensive and appropriate across the lifetime (including the development, implementation and ongoing management phases) of the project.</p>	30%
(3)	<b>Value for money</b>	<p>This criterion will assess the extent to which the proposed project achieves value with public money and delivers outcomes commensurate with, or exceeding, the level of investment, considering:</p> <p>3.1 The extent to which the proposed budget is appropriate, clearly justified, and transparent.</p> <p>3.2 The demonstrated potential to achieve the project outcomes in a high quality and cost-effective manner.</p> <p><i>Please note that assessors will consider the whole EOI against criterion 3.</i></p>	25%

# Section 2:

## Application & Selection Process

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NCSEHE has established an Advisory Committee to assist with the selection process. The Advisory Committee includes representatives from the department, academics, senior managers and equity practitioners from a range of Australian universities.

The application process will be a two stage approach, with an Expression of Interest stage being completed first. A selection of EOI applicants will then be invited to submit a full detailed research proposal for consideration by the Advisory Committee. Full proposals will be invited on the demonstrated strength of the EOI proposals as per the selection criteria listed under section 1.9 above.

In evaluating EOI and full proposals, the Advisory Committee will:

- consider the selection criteria;
- assess the overall risk to the NCSEHE of engaging the researchers identified in the proposal. This will include an evaluation of prior or current work undertaken for NCSEHE, with a focus on the quality and timeliness of such work;
- consider the extent to which the proposal builds on or duplicates previous or concurrent research.

### 2.1. Stage 1: Expression of Interest Submission

Applicants are invited to complete and submit the [Expression of Interest Form](#) outlining their project proposal against the researcher's chosen theme.

Applicants must address each of the selection criteria and use the guidelines (Section 1.1 or 1.2) and proposal template provided with this information kit.

The purpose of the EOI is to:

- Describe the research project and its proposed methodology, including any specific focus, such as SES cohort, influencer group, career initiatives, etc.
- Demonstrate how it will meet the required outcomes as specified in Section 1.
- Demonstrate a research team with the expertise to undertake the project.
- Advise of likely or intended partnerships and stakeholders that will be involved in the project.

The research proposal does not need to be fully developed at the EOI stage. The research objectives, methods and budget can be draft and indicative. It is not necessary to provide extensive and technical detail on the research design and methodology as these aspects will not be assessed at this stage. Research partnerships can be unconfirmed in the EOI, however must be established should the applicant be invited to submit a full application.

EOI applicants will be notified on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2019 on the outcome of their EOI application and successful applicants will be invited to submit a full detailed submission as outlined in the Stage 2 Guidelines document for final consideration.

Full Research proposal will again be evaluated by the Advisory Committee before the successful applicants are notified on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and contract negotiations finalised soon thereafter, with commencement in July 2019.

## Expression of Interest Form

Competitive Grants to improve low SES student, low SES Indigenous student, and low SES regional and remote student and student influencer access to information about higher education study options, pathways, and careers.

Please use **minimum** 10 point Arial font.

Submit via email 2 electronic copies, one in Word and the other as a PDF, to [ncsehe@curtin.edu.au](mailto:ncsehe@curtin.edu.au)

Submission Deadline: Arrive **by 5pm on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019**.

Receipt of your email will be acknowledged.

### 1. WHICH THEME ARE YOU APPLYING TO?

Theme 1: Key Influencers

Theme 2: Careers

### 2. CHIEF RESEARCHER DETAILS

Title:	First Name:	Last Name :
Any other names you published under:		
Email Address:	Date of award of PhD:	
Research Centre/School/Department/University where the project will be based:		

### 3. DETAILS OF PROJECT

3.1 PROJECT TITLE	
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### 3.2 PLAIN ENGLISH PROJECT SUMMARY *(in max. 200 words outline the aims, significance, expected outcomes and benefits of this project. Please use plain English)*

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### 3.3 PROJECT DETAILS *(outline the significant problem/challenges being addressed, methodology, relevant partners & stakeholders, timelines and any proposed trials – max 3 pages)*

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**3.4 HOW WILL IT MEET REQUIRED OUTCOMES (max. ½ page)**

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**4. DETAILS OF RESEARCH TEAM**

**4.1 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH TEAM FOR THIS PROJECT**

Name	Institution	Role on this project (eg, CI, PI)	What expertise will this team member bring to the project?

<input type="checkbox"/>	I confirm that I have attached CV's for each research team member (max 1 page each)
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**4.2 DECLARATION: Do any project team members also hold membership of the Equity Research and Innovation Panel? If so, a declaration form will be required if invited to submit a Full application**

- No Panel Members are part of the project team
- The following Panel Members are part of the project team

Name	Role in proposed project.	Involved in preparation of this EOI?
		YES / NO
		YES / NO

**5. BUDGET (indicative)**

5.1 ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIRED	
Personnel – Research – Administrative Data Purchase Survey and Field Expenses Trial costs (if appropriate - give basic details) Other Costs (give examples)	

Save your form as a PDF file using the following naming convention:  
**Lead CI Surname\_Organisation\_EOI.pdf** (Eg. Smith\_Curtin\_EOI.pdf)  
and email the form to [ncsehe@curtin.edu.au](mailto:ncsehe@curtin.edu.au)