Practitioner Resource Grants Program

2027 Round – Guidelines

Universities For All

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ACSES Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success

Curtin University

Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (ACSES) acknowledges Indigenous peoples across Australia as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which the nation's campuses are situated. With a history spanning more than 60,000 years as the original educators, Indigenous peoples hold a unique place in our nation. We recognise the importance of their knowledge and culture, and reflect the principles of participation, equity, and cultural respect in our work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and future, and consider it an honour to learn from our Indigenous colleagues, partners, and friends.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement of Country 1
1. The 2027 Practitioner Resource Grants Program 1
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Contact and submission details 1
1.3 Key Dates 2
2. Proposal requirements 3
2.1 Purpose of the program 3
2.2 Structure of the proposal 3
2.3 Resources to be developed 4
2.4 Funding available 4
2.5 Related resources 5
2.6 Timeframe 5
2.7 ACSES contracts 5
2.8 Ethics 6
2.9 Privacy 6
3. Selection process 7
3.1 Who can submit a proposal? 7
3.2 Eligibility and application process 7
3.3 Selection criteria 7
3.3.1 Selection criteria 8

1. The 2027 Practitioner Resource Grants Program

1.1 Introduction

The Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (ACSES) is pleased to open the 2027 Practitioner Resource Grants Program.

This is the second round of a program to fund proposals from equity practitioners in universities listed in Table A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Table A providers) to design, develop, test, and deliver resources that can be utilised by practitioner teams across Australia.

Project Funding: Up to $25,000 (excluding GST) per project, with up to 12 proposals to be funded.

Duration: Up to nine (9) months. Duration may vary depending on the contractual agreement. Projects are expected to commence from January 2027, with projects to be finalised in January 2028 and completion and acquittal taking place thereafter.

Application process: Applications are sought from teams submitting a full, detailed proposal for consideration by ACSES.

Due Date: Proposals are due at **4pm (AWST) on Friday, 30 October 2026**.

1.2 Contact and submission details

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1.3 Key Dates

Milestone	Date
Grant scheme opens	Thursday, 1 October 2026
Closing date for applications	**Friday, 30 October 2026 – 4pm (AWST)***
Consideration by the Assessment Panel	2–13 November 2026
Notification of outcomes	Mid November 2026
Funding agreement negotiation	December 2026 to end January 2027
Project work	February 2027 to January 2028
Project completion and acquittals	Friday, 26 March 2028

* Acknowledgement of proposals will occur via email upon receipt.

Application documentation: The *Practitioner Resource Grants Research Program Guidelines 2027* (this document) and the *Application Pack* are available on the ACSES website.

2. Proposal requirements

2.1 Purpose of the program

The Practitioner Resource Grants Program is focused on funding proposals that do one or more of the following:

- Produce resources that can be readily adopted by other universities.
- Ensure that resources draw on the existing practice knowledge base on equity issues in Australian higher education, building on previous work undertaken or funded by ACSES (and formerly the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education or NCSEHE).
- Ensure that resources can be applied at the national level and/or enable outcomes that are potentially portable across institutions and scalable across Australian higher education equity practice.

All proposals should be able to identify one or more priority (equity) groups who are potential beneficiaries of this work—including First Nations Australian students; students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds; students with disability; and students from regional and remote Australia.

However, proposals are not limited to the stated priority groups listed in the *Application Pack* and can nominate other groups experiencing forms of disadvantage and/or underrepresentation in higher education, in addition to addressing the issue of compounding disadvantage where relevant.

2.2 Structure of the proposal

ACSES is committed to encouraging collaborative proposals led by equity practitioners, but including academic staff, university managers, and equity researchers.

While the proposed resource must be framed in an Australian context, suitable international collaboration, expertise, and comparative work may be undertaken.

Proposals must be clear, concise, and sufficiently comprehensive to allow full analysis of the proposed research without reference to additional material. The proposal should be written for a broad audience.

ACSES encourages proposal writers to utilise strengths-based framing and language in describing their projects rather than deficit discourse and narratives.

2.3 Resources to be developed

The program is intended to fund a variety of resources, such as:

- guidelines
- manuals
- activities
- surveys and instruments
- explainers
- practice guides
- procedures
- digital resources
- evaluation plans
- data matrices
- learning modules.

It is envisaged that funded resources will impact one or more elements of the student lifecycle—from pre-access activities through to attainment and transition out.

An important aspect of ACSES's work is the dissemination of outputs from its funded programs to ensure that this work reaches an audience who can use it. This is especially relevant to projects with practice-focused outputs, which must be in a format that can be dissemination easily across the higher education sector.

The proposed resource must include an evaluable element, that is information and direction on how institutions adopting the resource can evaluate its efficacy, in reference to the Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework (SEHEEF).

2.4 Funding available

- Funding for several resource grants will be available through a competitive selection process.
- Grants will be funded for up to $25,000 (excluding GST) per project.
- Costs should be reasonable and for items directly associated with the preparation, development, and dissemination of the resources.
- Funding allocations will not necessarily be of equal value between successful applicants.
- ACSES reserves the right to negotiate differing amounts with preferred applicants.

Eligible expenditure items:

- Personnel (for example, staff buy-out, hourly costs, etc).
- Costs related to resource planning/development workshops or related events.
- Costs related to testing, pilot implementation, data collection and analysis.
- Costs associated with the preparation of resources, such as graphic design, audiovisual production, editing, accessibility review, or publication.
- Reasonable dissemination costs, including presentation of project outputs at relevant conferences, forums, webinars, or sector events, where a clear dissemination and sector engagement benefit can be demonstrated.

Conference and dissemination costs:

- Applicants may include conference-related costs where these form part of a clearly articulated dissemination strategy and support sector awareness, uptake, and use of the resource.
- Conference and dissemination costs will be assessed carefully as part of the value-for-money assessment.
- Such costs should be proportionate to the overall project budget and may not exceed **15% of the total funding requested**.
- Preference will be given to dissemination approaches that maximise reach, accessibility, and benefit to the student equity sector.

Ineligible expenditure items:

- Costs that are essentially the subsidisation of monies already expended to create an existing resource.
- Institutional overheads.
- Assets, for example, computers, office furniture.

2.5 Related resources

Applicants are encouraged to ensure that proposals draw lessons from current work, including previous work funded or undertaken by ACSES (and formerly as NCSEHE).

2.6 Timeframe

Successful applicants will enter into a funding agreement and contract with ACSES for approximately 12 months, commencing from January 2027. Projects must be concluded by January 2028 and acquitted no later than end March 2028.

2.7 ACSES contracts

Successful applicants will be required to enter a contract with Curtin University, the host institution for ACSES, of up to 12 months duration, commencing from January 2027. Project leads and team members must be capable of providing consistent high-quality and timely output for that period.

Acceptance of a proposal will be subject to negotiation and execution of the funding agreement and contract. A draft version of this can be made available by ACSES upon request. ACSES may accept the whole or part of the proposal offered. The final project will be defined in negotiation with the successful applicants.

2.8 Ethics

Where there is a research component to the design of a resource, the design and conduct of the research should be guided by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)/Universities Australia *Joint Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* and individual university policy and procedures. In this case, project leads and teams will be required to obtain ethics clearance for projects, and the outcomes of this process will form part of the contract milestones.

Applicants should bear in mind that projects requiring activities in other parts of the education system will often require special clearance. There may be state/territory protocols that need to be followed when conducting work involving vocational education and training (VET) institutions in their jurisdictions. Further, work involving schools requires obtaining ethics approval from the Australian Department of Education in the relevant state or territory before the project can proceed, even where the proposed project builds on an existing activity.

2.9 Privacy

ACSES will take all reasonable measures to ensure that any personal information 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 proposal to any of the media without the prior written approval of ACSES.

3. Selection process

3.1 Who can submit a proposal?

Applications from individuals or teams should be led by practitioners from universities listed in Table A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Table A providers) and submitted through the listed institution.

Multi-institution teams are eligible so long as a submitting institution is identified, with the project lead situated at that institution. Team members from other institutions are required to sign a consortium declaration that permits the submitting institution to act on their behalf.

3.2 Eligibility and application process

ACSES will establish a selection panel to evaluate all proposals against the selection criteria, before making recommendations to ACSES.

The panel will comprise ACSES program staff and external independent members with relevant equity practitioner experience. The panel will provide a balanced assessment of applications, drawing on both program knowledge and independent expertise to ensure proposals are assessed fairly, consistently and against the stated criteria.

3.3 Selection criteria

Applicants must address each of the selection criteria and complete the *Application Pack* to prepare their submissions.

In evaluating proposals, ACSES will:

- Consider the selection criteria listed below.
- Assess the efficacy of engaging the project teams identified in the proposal. This may include evaluation of prior or current work undertaken for ACSES (and formerly as NCSEHE), with a focus on the quality and timeliness of such work.
- Consider the extent to which the proposal builds on previous or concurrent research.
- Consider the balance of proposals in relation to the identified research themes and priority groups of interest.

3.3.1 Selection criteria

Criterion	Detail
The resource (50%)	a. The overall purpose, scope, and intended use case for the proposed resource, including the specific equity challenges, practitioner needs, and student outcomes it seeks to address. b. The anticipated benefit of the resource to the student equity sector and to students from equity cohorts. c. The sector need and demand for the proposed resource, including the extent to which it addresses an identified gap in equity practice, policy, evaluation, or capability. d. How measures or approaches will be developed or included to assist practitioners in adopting continuous quality improvement or evaluating its impact, in relation to the Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework (SEHEEF).
Team experience and expertise (25%)	a. The skills and experience of the project team, including allocations of project team members' time and contribution to the project, are clearly identified. b. Applicant(s) experience working with equity student cohorts and incorporating student perspectives, lived experience, and co-design approaches where appropriate. c. The composition of the project team includes a mix of skills and has networks and relationships that will support engagement, dissemination, adoption, and impact across the student equity sector. d. The project team can confirm availability for the duration of the project.
Project quality and value for money (25%)	a. A clear project management approach, including governance arrangements, quality assurance processes, and risk management strategies that will support the delivery of timely, relevant, and high-quality resource. b. A realistic and achievable delivery plan, with evidence that the proposed timelines, milestones, resources, and staffing allocations are appropriate. c. A dissemination and implementation strategy that supports awareness, adoption, and ongoing use of the resource across the higher education equity sector.