

Advancing
Small Business
Queensland

Accelerate Small
Business Grants

Queensland

the place for small business
to **start, grow & employ**



Queensland
Government

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Accelerate Small Business Grants Program

Application guidelines 2016–17

The Accelerate Small Business Grants Program provides targeted assistance to small businesses that demonstrate high-growth and employment aspirations to enable them to engage high-level expertise for their business.

These guidelines contain essential information on the program. It outlines who is eligible to apply for a grant, how to apply, and your obligations as an applicant.

You should read these guidelines before completing an application.

About the program

The Queensland Government through the Office of Small Business (OSB), Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTESB) made these grants available to help eligible small businesses engage business mentors, coaches or an advisory board for a six to twelve-month period. The objectives of the program are to:

- enable small businesses to grow and employ more Queenslanders
- increase the capabilities of small business owners
- improve business confidence and sustainability
- assist small businesses grow to medium-size businesses
- enable more small businesses to embrace new opportunities.

The engagement of a mentor, coach or advisory board for a period of 6 to 12 months will be considered to be a “project” for the purposes of this program.

How much can you apply for and what can it be used for?

Matched funding of up to \$10 000 (excluding GST) may be provided to eligible businesses to engage business mentors, coaches or an advisory board for a six to twelve-month period. The purpose is to provide high-level expertise to encourage growth and job creation through business expansion. The funding must be matched by a cash contribution by the participating business.

Two grant payments will be made directly to the business. 50 per cent of the grant amount will be paid on approval and on receipt of a valid tax invoice from the applicant. A further 50 per cent will be paid on successful completion of the project.

Who can apply?

Established Queensland-based small businesses that are financially sound and have the potential for high-growth within the next two years. High-growth is generally considered to be a 20 percent increase in turnover or employment. The participant must have a business plan in place, as well as the capacity to access finance to fund the growth of their business.

Participating businesses will need to have a clearly defined opportunity and plan for growth, and demonstrate how engaging external advice will allow the business to achieve these goals. It is expected that participating businesses will be seeking support to manage and finance their business expansion, including but not limited to:

- increasing employment
- improving management processes and systems to increase productivity and efficiency
- introducing product processes or systems innovations
- entering new markets
- increasing turnover/sales.

What are the eligibility criteria?

To be eligible for this grant, the business must:

- have a trading history of a minimum of four years
- have a minimum turnover of \$750 000
- have a maximum headcount of 20 employees at the time of applying for the grant
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- have Queensland headquarters or significant Queensland operations
- have competitive opportunities in domestic or international markets
- be experiencing growth and have clearly defined high-growth opportunities
- declare if any owners or directors of the business are an undischarged bankrupt or insolvent.

The participating business must provide OSB with a progress report after three months and a final report on completion of the project outlining the advice received, its implementation, and the impact on the business including the results and outcomes achieved.

Businesses will be surveyed 12 months after the completion of the project.

Only one application per annum will be accepted from an individual ABN or business address.

What won't be funded?

The grant is specifically aimed at funding access to expert advice and assistance, therefore there are a range of matters that will not be funded:

- fees for services provided by related parties (such as companies with common shareholdings or directorship with the applicant, and employees or immediate family of the applicant)
- franchise fees
- purchase of stock
- salaries
- general business operating costs (including bookkeeping/accounting and tax returns)
- purchase of assets such as plant or equipment.

When must the project be completed?

All projects approved for funding must be completed within 15 months of the date of approval.

If these timeframes are not met, the offer of funding may be withdrawn and funding may not be available to pay the consultant or service provider.

When and how can you apply?

Applications open in October 2016.

You can lodge an application online at www.business.qld.gov.au/accelerate.

Your application must contain all the information specified in the application form and should be submitted online. If you cannot submit an application online, email your details to smallbusiness@dtesb.qld.gov.au and you will be contacted about other options.

You may only lodge one application at a time. Successful applicants may only apply for funding once per 12 month period.

What should you include in your application?

Your application must include:

- clearly defined outline of the opportunity and plan for business improvement
- detail of how the services of an adviser/s will allow you to achieve this improvement
- your business plan
- projected business figures, including declaration of turnover and employee headcount
- how the funded activity will help create jobs in Queensland
- confirmation of your matched financial contribution
- declaration that the work is not part of the everyday operations of your business.

A project proposal and quote must be submitted with your application, and include:

- the services the adviser/s will provide, including a break-up of key activities
- adviser service delivery costs
- delivery timeframes
- names of key people who will undertake the project work.

How will applications be assessed?

All applications will be assessed on meeting the eligibility criteria. Further assessment will include:

- the extent to which the services will support the development of the business
- potential and likelihood the activity will deliver jobs growth
- value for money.

Applicants will need to meet both the eligibility criteria and show merit against the assessment criteria to be successful.

What is the process?

An assessment panel consisting of business experts and staff from OSB will assess eligible applications against the assessment criteria and will provide recommendations to the delegate for approval.

The delegate will consider the applications and recommendations, as well as the available funding. You can expect to receive a decision within two months of application.

OSB may also give consideration to ensuring successful applications are equitably distributed across the state and industry sectors.

If your application is successful, you will receive an approval letter advising that you have been successful. The letter will also reiterate that you have agreed to the terms and conditions of funding.

You will then have three months from the date of the approval letter to commence the project. OSB will withdraw the offer if the project is not started within this timeframe.

You must not begin or pay for the project, in part or full, until you receive the approval letter to ensure that you have confirmation that the project has been approved.

OSB will carry out random audits of a sample of applications to ensure that the information provided is true and correct. Where it is found that false or misleading information has been provided, penalties may apply, including refunding of some or all of the grant funding.

Application timeframes

The tables below summarise the important 2016–17 dates and timeframes in the application process.

Dates	
October 2016	Applications open

The program will remain open for applications until the annual budget is fully allocated. At this time the round will close. A new round will commence at the beginning of the next financial year.

Timeframes	
2 months	Recommended number of months that the application should be lodged prior to starting the project
3 months	Number of months within which the project must start after an approval letter is issued
15 months	Number of months in which project must be completed after an approval letter is issued

NOTE: Participants will be required to submit a report three months after the project commences and at the completion of the project. Participants will be required to complete a survey 12 months after completion of the project.

Funding Payment Timeframes

On approval	50% of the grant amount will be paid on approval and on receipt of a valid tax invoice from the applicant
On completion	Final 50 per cent payment to consultant upon acceptance of a final project report and the completed grant acquittal

Feedback

If your application is unsuccessful, you may ask for feedback. Email an Accelerate Small Business Grants Officer at smallbusiness@dtesb.qld.gov.au.

Complaints about the outcome of an application will be dealt with according to DTESB's complaints management policy. To view this policy, visit www.dtesb.qld.gov.au.

Frequently asked questions

What do I need to do if I receive a grant?

You must:

- enter into a funding agreement with DTESB
- deliver the project as per the funding agreement
- provide a project report three months after commencement date of project
- provide a final project report and grant acquittal within four weeks of the project's completion
- complete a follow-up survey 12 months after the grant has been acquitted.

When will funding be available?

If your application is successful, 50 per cent of the grant amount will be paid on approval and on receipt of a valid tax invoice from the applicant. A further 50 per cent will be paid on successful completion of the project and on presentation of proof of payment to the service provider. The funding will be paid directly to the applicant.

Can I alter my application after funding has been allocated?

If you are unable to complete the approved project, you must immediately notify DTESB in writing. Any change to your project will need to be reassessed to ensure funding will still be granted. If you change your project without approval, DTESB can withdraw the funding.

I have two projects in mind. Can I apply for a grant for each project in this round?

No. You may submit one application per funding round only.

Do I have to be operating an existing business?

Yes. Your application must be for an existing business in Queensland operating for a minimum of four years.

Where can I find an adviser?

The Queensland Government's OSB can suggest mentors from the Mentoring for Growth program for you to consider. Alternatively, your closest Business Enterprise Centre or local Chamber of Commerce may be able to help you find someone with the relevant experience to help you.

Can I use my own adviser?

Yes. However, it is recommended that before doing so consideration is given to the sort of advice you require and the best source of that advice. This may be a person with skills that you have not previously accessed.

Can I use more than one adviser?

Yes. You can use one or more adviser, noting the total grant limit is \$10 000 (excluding GST) which must be matched by your business. For example, you may wish to engage a number of people to act as an advisory board.

Do I have to be located in Queensland?

Yes. The business must have Queensland headquarters or significant Queensland operations.

Do I need to be registered for GST?

Yes.

How will payments be made?

Two grant payments will be made directly to the business. 50 per cent of the grant amount will be paid on approval and the remaining 50 per cent will be paid on successful completion of the project. The final payment will be made on presentation of proof of payment to the service provider. For each payment, the applicant will need to issue a tax invoice to DTESB. The value of the grant payment will be increased to compensate for any GST.

What are my tax obligations?

Grants are treated as assessable income for tax purposes, unless exempted by law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your tax obligations.

Further information

For more information about the grants or advice on your application, call the Office of Small Business on **13 QGOV** (13 74 68) or email smallbusiness@dtesb.qld.gov.au.

Additional information for businesses

Business Queensland Online has a wealth of information on starting and developing businesses. Visit www.business.qld.gov.au to find out more.

You can also visit www.business.gov.au which is an online government resource for the Australian business community provided by the Australian Government.

To find answers to your tax questions, go to www.ato.gov.au.

The Australian Business Licence and Information Service (ABLIS) helps you find the government licences, permits, approvals, registrations, codes of practice, standards and guidelines you need to know about to meet your compliance responsibilities. Find out more by visiting www.ablis.business.gov.au.

My checklist

- read and understand the guidelines
- speak with a consultant about the advice you need
- get a proposal and quote from the consultant
- complete the online application form
- read and understand the terms and conditions in the application form
- submit your application
- wait for notification
- start the project.

Privacy statement

DTESB is collecting information to assess and coordinate grants in relation to the Queensland Accelerate Small Business Grants Program.

DTESB, its officers, employees, agents and subcontractors may use and disclose any of the information provided with the application to Queensland Government departments or agencies, Queensland Government bodies, non-government organisations and/or the Commonwealth, states or territories for any purpose in connection with the administration of the Queensland Accelerate Small Business Grants Program. Successful applications may also be the subject of media releases and disclosure as otherwise provided in the approval letter, the terms and conditions in the application, and the terms and conditions in these guidelines.

Submitted documents may be subject to disclosure under the *Right to Information Act 2009*, subject to the exemptions under that Act.

DTESB's privacy guide in relation to the treatment of personal information collected may be viewed at www.dtesb.qld.gov.au.

Disclaimer

This publication has been prepared as a guide only and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the information contained in this publication is accurate at the time of publication. The State of Queensland accepts no responsibility and gives no warranty, guarantee or representation about the accuracy, reliability, timeliness or otherwise of the information contained within the publication. No warranties or assurances can be given about the suitability of this information for any particular purpose. The State of Queensland expressly excludes legal liability in all jurisdictions in relation to the use or reliance of any information contained in this publication. Any direct or consequential loss or damage suffered as a result of reliance on this information is the sole responsibility of the user. Persons using this information should conduct their own enquiries and rely on their own independent professional advice. This exclusion shall extend to both the user himself or herself and to any other person who may suffer loss as a result of the use of material, and shall apply notwithstanding any negligence by the state.

Advancing Small Business Queensland

Find out more

To find out more about the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy, visit <https://www.dtesb.qld.gov.au/smallbusiness>

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