



Australian Government

Quality Teacher Programme

2010 BUILDING LEARNING COMMUNITIES APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Grant Details:

Up to \$10,000 - All grants to be fully expended in 2010

Who can apply?

- Groups of schools (Minimum 2 schools and 10 teachers). (Special circumstances may apply to remote schools)
- Groups of teachers within a school (Minimum 10 teachers)

Purpose of grant:

AGQTP Objective: To equip teachers with the skills and knowledge needed for teaching in the 21st century.

- Create projects that connect groups of schools and groups of teachers to develop professional practice to improve student outcomes.
- Create projects that utilise the expertise in the Territory by incorporating organisations with a similar need as a critical aspect of each project.
- To develop an issue or challenge that will improve student outcomes and implement a sustainable professional learning process to address it.
- To measure change through the project.
- To share the project and resources with other professionals in the Territory and the wider community.

Requirements:

1. Grant projects are to include representatives from at least one of the following organisations:
 - **Northern Territory Government Agencies** (eg DET, Department of Health and Families, Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services etc)
 - **Non-Government Organisations** (eg Catholic Education Office, Association of Independent Schools etc)
 - **Tertiary Institutions** (eg. Charles Darwin University)
 - **Professional Teaching Associations**
2. Attendance at one day Enabling Practices, workshop in May covering principles of Professional Learning, principles of Action Learning, effective strategies for creating/maintaining learning communities and sources of data for measuring improvement. NT AGQTP will pay Emergency Relief Teacher and travel costs for 2 people per project.



3. The AGQTP priority areas for 2010 are listed below. You are required to select one only from each of the three categories; Curriculum, Targeted Learning Needs and Cross Curricular / Whole School

Curriculum	Targeted learning needs	Cross-curricular/whole school
Literacy/English Numeracy/Maths Science (including Environmental Education for Sustainability) Civics And Citizenship Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Health Education Languages Vocational Education And Training The Arts History	Indigenous Students Gifted and Talented Students Students with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties ESL Students Early Years Primary Years Middle Years Senior Years	General Pedagogy Whole-School Innovative Teaching Approaches Professional Standards and Leadership National Safe Schools Framework Student Reporting The Innovative use Of ICT across the Curriculum Values Education Studies Of Asia Consumer and Financial Literacy Education Literacy Numeracy Habits of Mind Multiple Intelligences

Eg: project focussing on ICT → Gifted and Talented Students → innovative use of ICT across the Curriculum
Eg: project focussing on Literacy/English → Indigenous Students → Whole School innovative teaching approaches

Limitations:

- Funds cannot be used for International travel or purchase or lease of capital equipment (eg. Computer hardware).
- **Note:** Emergency Relief Teachers (ERT) costs are limited to **15%** of the total grant.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be judged against the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated alignment with two of the AGQTP outcomes

Choose two of the following AGQTP outcome statements

- Teachers will have engaged productively in collegial networks that extend and support knowledge. (2)
- Teachers will in their interactions with students have an increased capacity to measure, analyse and report learning outcomes to build future learning directions. (4)
- Teachers will have worked with their colleagues to create sustained interaction across learning areas to strengthen the relevance of learning for all students. (12)
- Teachers will have worked with their colleagues to strengthen continuity of curriculum within the school and between schools as student's progress through the stages of learning. (14)



2. The quality and innovation of the professional learning idea.

What is the key question that your action learning project is seeking a solution for?

Example:

- What are the critical factors needed to ensure play based learning results in improved student outcomes?
- What are the key factors that result in year 10 boys being motivated and regularly attending school?
- What are the critical factors that need to occur for students to transition successfully from Middle school to senior school learning?

Show how the project will address an issue or problem. Include: Who? What? Why?

(200 words)

Please adhere to the word limit and be concise.

- What is the critical need that the Professional Learning Community will attempt to address and how does it align with the AGQTP outcomes you have selected?
- What is the motivation for your application?
- What is the envisaged pathway for change?
- Who will be the people involved?
- Describe anticipated ongoing benefits of this project for both teachers and students.

3. Alignment of the project to CEO SIRF Priority Areas/AISNT School Activity Plan

List the results that you want to see at the end of the project?

- 5 dot points maximum What would be your ideal outcomes?

How does the project align with the CEO SIRF Priority Areas/AISNT School Activity Plan?

- 6 dot points maximum

What will the professional learning gains be for the teachers involved in the Professional Learning Community?

- The outcomes might include things like increased understanding, access to different opportunities and feedback, increased capacity to work in a particular environment, increased understanding and performance in a specific area or development of skills.

4. A clear and realistic budget. (Maximum 15% of the grant can be used for ERT)

Background reading:

- 'Teaching and Learning in a Community of Thinking' - Yoram Harpaz.
- What are the characteristics of a professional learning community?

These articles can be found on the CEO website in the AGQTP Project area under the **CURRICULUM** tab <http://www.ceo.nt.catholic.edu.au>



Timeline:

Action:	Timeline:
Advertising of BLC Grants Grants available: \$3,000, \$5,000 & \$10,000	Term 1, 2010
Application Open Application assistance available: Georgie Wynne Phone: 8984 1429 georgie.wynne@nt.catholic.edu.au Danielle Cavanagh Phone: 8984 1423 danielle.cavanagh@nt.catholic.edu.au	Week 7 Term 1, 2010
Applications Close: 29th March 2010	Week 10, Term 1 2010
Selection Panel Convenes	Stand down
Applicants notified	Week 1, Term 2 2010
Grant funds distributed (3 weeks allowed for processing)	Week 4, Term 2 2010
Enabling Practices Workshop	Week 5, Term 2 2010

Attachment A

ACTION LEARNING

Action Learning is:

- Aimed towards improvement
- A cyclical process
- Pursued by systematic inquiry
- A reflective process
- Participative
- Determined by the practitioners

(Kember, 2000)

Defining Action Learning

- Action learning is a systematic process whereby practitioners voluntarily engage in a spiral of reflection, documentation and action in order to understand more fully the nature and/or consequences of aspects of their practice with a view to shaping further action or changing their situation preferably in collaboration with others. (Ceridwen Davis, 1985)

Planning an Action Learning Project

- Generate list of potential areas of focus
- Select one and state as an observation/statement + question (selection criteria)
- Reflect on, describe and explain the area of focus (reconnaissance)
- Document principle question and sub-questions
- Conduct preliminary inquiry
- Identify people involved
- Decide on initial plan of action
- Determine what data will be collected and how
- Develop a timeline for project
- Decide on methods of documentation and dissemination

Criteria to help choose an area of focus

- Choose a topic that is important and exciting to you
- Focus on something that you would like to change or improve
- Choose an area that is within your locus of control and compatible with your resources and skills
- Consider fieldwork relations
- Be practical (think *small*) and be careful (action learning tends to take a lot of time).



Learning Communities

Learning Communities describes a process of building professional relationships and actively engaging in professional learning within the workplace. Schools that view themselves as professional learning communities acknowledge and value the shared nature of professional learning that is anchored in their daily work.

What makes an effective Professional Learning Community?

Effective Learning Communities:

- Have shared vision and clarity of purpose
- Focus on learning for all
- Work collaboratively
- Acknowledge collective responsibility and commitment
- Are supported by appropriate structural conditions and human resources
- Have an action orientation
- Reflect on and evaluate learning

Common Reasons Why Applications Are Not Approved

Focus on experts or conference/workshops workshops	
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'One off' activities with 'Experts' are not a learning community • Reliance on 'Experts' rather than collegial collaborations
Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how attendance at conference/workshop or expert involvement will be linked into the learning communities activities and how the participants will share this information/awareness and how it can impact on practice

Focus on students and not on teachers professional learning	
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on grant is on students and providing resources <u>for students</u>
Solution	Focus on changes to teacher practice through professional learning to lead to increased student outcomes

Focus is a project:	
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project has a distinct life/timeframe
Solution	PLC have sustainable elements and focus on development over an extended period of time

No evidence of measuring impact	
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad statements with no or limited evidence gathering proposed
Solution	Need to gather data at start and end of project through a variety of different methods

Focus on one person undertaking every activity	
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No real collaboration, nominated associations/organisations not consulted
Solution	Consultation with association/organisations, linkages and collaboration clearly identified

Applications close 29th March 2010