

Draft Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) Guidelines

Response from Griffith University

Griffith University welcomes the development of DEEWR's draft *Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) Guidelines* and, in particular, is pleased to note the following:

- Inclusion of community groups and other stakeholders for partnership activities, thus encouraging universities to build on or develop collaborative activities with their key partner organisations (1.70.1 and 1.85.1); and making explicit the need to ensure that partnership activities are focussed on the schools and communities most in need [1.70.1 (b)].
- Recognition of the diversity of the low socio-economic student cohort (1.5.1).
- Provision for appropriately contextualised strategies (1.40.10).
- Attention throughout the document to issues of access, participation, retention and success.

The University appreciates also the opportunity to provide comments on specific areas of the Guidelines. These comments follow:

1. Clause 1.50 – Distribution of Program Funds and Clause 1.80 - Method of Distributing Component B – Partnership Funds 2011-2013

- The grants foreshadowed in the guidelines are proposed for 'a project or in respect of a year' (1.50.15 & 1.80.10). Rather than one-off projects, we believe funding should be made available for the conduct of long-term, sustainable interventions to enhance aspirations and motivation in low SES communities and their schools in particular. Funding should be targeted to those activities that are producing results as demonstrated by increased numbers of low SES students attending and completing university study.

2. Clause 1.55 - Component A – Participation Objectives

- Clarification is needed re the formula for the Participation component in Clause 1.55.7 of this document and the consultations currently underway re the discussion paper *Measuring the Socio-Economic Status of Higher Education Students* (specifically in relation to the use of SEIFA Education and Occupation Index).

3. Clause 1.65 – Eligibility to Receive Participation Funds

- We suggest 1.65.1 (a)(ii) (be reworded thus: “transition programs to support inter-cultural issues; and to support regional and remote Australian resident undergraduate low SES students.”
- We suggest you change the term ‘parents’ to ‘parents/carers’ or ‘primary caregivers’[1.65.1 (a)(v)].
- The development and implementation of partnership activities [1.65.1 (b)] could be included under the Partnership component. Should this dot point remain in this section, it could be reframed as outreach activities and appropriately defined so that student recruitment/marketing activities are not included.
- The reference to administering application and selection processes for Commonwealth Scholarships (CS) no longer applies, with administrative responsibility now residing with Centrelink [1.65.1 (c)]. This clause should specify the Commonwealth Indigenous Access Scholarships only, as these comprise the sole suite of CS administered/allocated by universities.
- With regard to Clause 1.65.1 (d), we suggest that the Guidelines continue to **require** institutions to offer institutional equity scholarships in order to receive the new funding and include this as a specific requirement in the appropriate section.

4. Clause 1.75 - Method for Distributing Component B – Partnership Funds 2010

- The equal sharing of the Partnership Allocation (2010) does not take into account the numbers of low SES students in any one provider institution [1.75.1 (a)].

5. Clause 1.85 – Eligibility to Receive Partnership Funding

- In 1.85.1, the list of principles should commence with (a) **Priorities for Funding**. *Funding will be allocated on a ‘place’ based model to ensure that resources are directed to specific regions which have demonstrated need and are proven areas of greatest disadvantage.*
- 1.70.1 (b) of the Guidelines indicates that partnership activities are to:
 - (b) *support[ing] collaboration between providers to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to identifying and engaging with appropriate schools and communities; and to ensure that those schools and communities most in need are the ones that benefit from involvement in relevant programs. (Page 11)*

However, this would be weakened somewhat by current paragraph 1.85.1 (a) which states that institutions' partnerships will have to collaborate 'with other key stakeholders' of which other universities seem to be but an example.

We suggest that 1.85.1 (a) be strengthened to make collaboration with other institutions (or *providers*) a **requirement** if there are other institutions which recruit students from the institution's region.

- Early Intervention [1.85.1 (b)] – we suggest this should explicitly mention ‘building student capacity’. This also links to and reinforces the importance of ‘academic preparation’ identified as a participation activity in 1.65.1 (a)(iii).
- A final principle should be added to the list which states the need for providers to use funding for the conduct of long-term, sustainable interventions to enhance aspirations and motivation in low SES communities, and in schools in particular.

6. Clause 1.95 – Reporting

- These provisions focus on school-student ‘counts’ which masks the complexities and challenges of some school settings and student cohorts. These measures also do not recognise that some students move in and out of activities due to the impact of their particular circumstances, making their transition to university a longer-term outcome.
- The reporting guidelines in 1.95.10 are potentially onerous and intrusive into school pupils' privacy.
- Reporting Requirements 1.95.10 (c) and 1.95.10 (d) may be problematic if enforced literally.

Rather than (c), the Guidelines could rely on using the socio-economic classification of each partnership school.

Rather than (d), the Guidelines could rely on using whatever standard student progression statistics each school reports on its students. These statistics might differ State by State, but they would still inform an evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention and they would be much less intrusive and expensive to collect than what is currently proposed in (d).

- 1.95.10 (e) is problematic for students who choose a different university from the university with whom their school had a partnership arrangement. This would entail an additional level of data collection and be reliant on the self-report of individual students.