MSQ Skills Invest

Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Manufacturing Skills Queensland (MSQ) is an independent body established in November 2022 and funded under the Queensland Government's Making it in Queensland: Building a Stronger Manufacturing Sector policy. Through the Queensland Government's $70 million investment in manufacturing skills and training, MSQ helps strengthen the capability, productivity and resilience of Queensland's manufacturing workforce.

Queensland's manufacturing sector continues to evolve in response to advanced technologies, digital transformation, changing workforce demands and global competition. A skilled and adaptable workforce is essential to meeting current and emerging industry needs. MSQ works closely with industry to identify workforce priorities and invest in practical solutions.

The Skills Invest program provides flexible funding for industry-led workforce development projects that address identified skills and workforce needs. Funding may support accredited training and, where appropriate, non-accredited training that responds to genuine manufacturing priorities. Through collaboration between eligible organisations, participating manufacturing businesses and training delivery partners, Skills Invest supports practical solutions that build workforce capability, improve productivity and encourage innovation.

The Skills Invest program supports projects that:

- Address identified workforce and skills shortages.
- Build workforce capability through industry-relevant training and development.
- Support the adoption of new technologies, processes, and innovative manufacturing practices.
- Improve access to training in regional, remote, and thin-market areas.
- Deliver measurable benefits for participating businesses and workers.

Annual Training Plan

MSQ's Annual Training Plan (ATP) sets out its investment priorities for skills, training and workforce development across Queensland's manufacturing industry. Key issues affecting industry productivity include limited awareness of career pathways, constraints within the training system, access to suitable training and the availability of skilled workers.

Developed in consultation with industry, the plan outlines strategic actions across four focus areas to support manufacturers in a changing and growing economy.

- Attraction and Engagement
- Transformation and Leadership
- Training and Skills
- Diversity in Manufacturing

Read the Annual Training Plan in detail here: [Annual Training Plan 2026-27 | Manufacturing Skills Queensland]

ATP Investment – Training and Skills

The Training and Skills focus area is a key investment pillar of MSQ's Annual Training Plan.

Through Skills Invest, MSQ invites proposals from eligible organisations for innovative, customised and flexible workforce development projects that respond to the identified needs of Queensland manufacturing businesses. Projects may include:

- Building operational capability and capacity.
- Introducing or improving manufacturing processes.
- Implementing new technologies.
- Meeting legislative and regulatory requirements, industry standards and tender requirements.

OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

MSQ invests in projects that address identified workforce and skills needs and deliver measurable benefits for Queensland manufacturing businesses. Priority will be given to projects that:

- Support manufacturers to implement new or improved processes and technologies.
- Address regional skills shortages.
- Support small and medium businesses.
- Target thin markets where relevant training is unavailable or has limited delivery, particularly in regional and remote areas.
- Leverage existing Queensland Government and other skills investment without duplicating available subsidies.

HOW IT WORKS

The Skills Invest application process has two stages: an Expression of Interest (EOI) and, if invited, a detailed Business Case Application. The process is designed to confirm alignment with program priorities, industry need, delivery capability, value for money and expected outcomes before funding is approved.

EOIs may be submitted through the Skills Invest page on the MSQ website at any time while funding is available. MSQ will undertake an initial assessment and may contact the applicant to clarify the proposal or request further information. Applicants whose proposals align with the program objectives and priorities may be invited to submit a detailed Business Case Application and supporting due diligence documentation.

Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the demonstrated industry need, alignment with the Annual Training Plan, value for money, organisational capability, proposed outcomes and overall benefit to Queensland's manufacturing industry.
Applicants invited to proceed beyond the EOI stage may be required to complete the following:

Part A – RTO Due Diligence (where required)
Part B – Business Case Application

Project Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Lead Applicant	Develops and submits the project proposal, coordinates participating manufacturing businesses and acts as the primary contact with MSQ throughout the application process.
Contract Holder	Enters into the funding agreement with MSQ and is responsible for the overall management of the project, including governance, expenditure, reporting, evidence requirements, contractual obligations and the performance of any delivery partners or subcontractors.
Participating Manufacturing Businesses	Identify workforce and skills needs, support project development and provide eligible participants for the proposed training and workforce development activities.
RTO Delivery Partner	Where nationally recognised training forms part of the project, the training must be delivered and assessed by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that holds the relevant scope of registration and approval to deliver training in Queensland.
Non-accredited Training Provider	Where non-accredited training is proposed, the provider must demonstrate appropriate capability, experience and subject matter expertise relevant to the proposed project.
Other Delivery Partners or Subcontractors	May contribute specialist services or project activities where appropriate. Responsibility for their performance remains with the Contract Holder.

The Lead Applicant and Contract Holder may be the same organisation. Where they are different, the proposed governance and accountability arrangements must be clearly explained in the Business Case Application.

Part A – RTO Due Diligence (where required)

Where a project includes accredited training, the nominated Registered Training Organisation (RTO) may be required to complete Part A – RTO Due Diligence. This allows MSQ to assess the RTO's capability, compliance history and capacity to deliver the proposed nationally recognised training.

Part A will generally be required where the nominated RTO:

- does not have an existing Skills Assure Supplier (SAS) contract with the Queensland Government and/or an existing contract with Construction Skills Queensland;
- has not previously completed Part A for MSQ; or
- previously provided due diligence information is no longer current.

Criteria	Evidence
Experience, capacity, capability and access to qualified personnel to successfully develop and/or deliver accredited training programs.	• Capability and capacity statement • Infrastructure and resources • Examples of successfully delivered programs or contracts

Criteria	Evidence
A history of achieving successful outcomes for students, employees and manufacturing businesses.	• Commencement, completion and cancellation data • Relevant pre- and post-delivery business metrics from previous programs • Minimum of two business referees
A satisfactory ASQA audit history, with no outstanding issues, adverse decisions or findings.	• Most recent audit report • RTO declaration
Current ASQA registration and scope of registration covering the proposed qualifications, skill sets and units of competency, with approval to deliver them in Queensland.	• Training.gov.au (TGA) extract
High-quality, industry-validated training resources and assessment tools.	• Samples of resources and assessment tools • Validation reports • Continuous improvement register
Financial viability.	• Financial statements for the previous two financial years.

Part B – Business Case Application

Applicants invited to proceed must complete the MSQ Skills Invest Business Case Application.

- The Business Case Application must identify the lead applicant, contract holder, participating businesses and delivery partners, and set out the proposed activities, costs, outputs and outcomes.
- Business cases may include accredited training, eligible non-accredited training or a combination of both, where the activities address identified manufacturing workforce, and skills needs.
- An application may cover a single manufacturing business or multiple participating businesses.
- Applicants must provide sufficient information and evidence to demonstrate need, feasibility, value for money and expected outcomes.

MSQ may also approach eligible organisations where a particular manufacturing workforce need or opportunity has been identified.

During assessment, MSQ may request further information or evidence from the applicant, delivery partners or participating organisations. MSQ may also seek advice from employers, industry stakeholders, regulatory authorities and relevant Queensland Government departments. Requested information may include:

- Financial capability information and formal quotes from applicants or third parties.
- Confirmation of any funding from other sources.
- Letters of support from industry and other stakeholders.
- Further qualitative and quantitative data to validate identified needs and priorities.
- Feedback and references from industry, government and other stakeholders.

Once an application has been formally assessed, MSQ will advise the applicant of the outcome.

FUNDING AND PRICING

MSQ will generally consider project investment requests between $50,000 and $150,000. The level of MSQ investment and any required co-contribution will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the size of participating businesses, project need, value for money and available funding. MSQ may fund between 50% and 100% of eligible project costs, including accredited training, eligible non-accredited training and other approved activities.

- Small and medium businesses (up to 200 employees) may be eligible for funding of up to 100% of eligible costs. Employer co-contributions will be viewed favourably and may be required depending on the project.
- Large businesses (more than 200 employees) may be eligible for funding of up to 50% of eligible costs and will be required to make a co-contribution.

Pricing for accredited qualifications, skill sets and units of competency will generally align with Queensland VET Investment pricing, including applicable regional loadings. Other eligible project costs will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and must be reasonable, necessary and directly related to delivery. Examples include:

- Travel directly related to approved delivery in regional or remote areas.
- Development or customisation of approved training and assessment tools and resources where suitable products do not already exist. MSQ will retain ownership of intellectual property developed using MSQ funding.
- Additional mentoring or coaching that directly supports participant outcomes.
- Other services that are directly necessary to deliver the approved project outcomes.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible applicants include Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), Group Training Organisations (GTOs), industry peak bodies and associations, local councils and regional economic development organisations, and other organisations that support Queensland's manufacturing sector. Applicants must be able to manage the proposed project and meet MSQ's governance, reporting and evidence requirements.

Eligible projects must:

- respond to an identified manufacturing workforce or skills need;
- provide a clear benefit to participating businesses and workers;
- use appropriate, industry-relevant training or development activities; and
- deliver measurable outcomes that align with the Annual Training Plan and Skills Invest priorities.

Business Case Applications must address the criteria below.

Participating Businesses and Participants

- Participating businesses must operate in Queensland and undertake eligible manufacturing activities. Manufacturing encompasses a broad range of industries and generally involves transforming materials, substances or components into new products. Eligible manufacturing capabilities include, but are not limited to:
  - Aerospace and Defence

    - General Manufacturing and Engineering
    - Food and Beverage Production
    - Chemicals, Hydrocarbons, and Refining
    - Furnishings and Other Products
    - Meat and Seafood Processing
    - Textiles, Clothing, and Footwear
    - Printing and Graphic Arts
    - Pulp, Paper, and Packaging
    - Polymers, Plastics, and Rubber
    - Pharmaceuticals and Medical Technology
    - Renewables and Low-Carbon Technologies
    - Timber and Wood Products
    - Supporting Capabilities, including but not limited to laboratory operations, sustainability practices and process plant operations.
- The proposed project must support one or more of the manufacturing capabilities listed above.
- The project must provide a clear additional benefit to participating businesses that would not be achieved without MSQ investment.
- Applicants must demonstrate support and commitment from participating manufacturing businesses.
- Participants must be Queensland residents and meet any project-specific eligibility requirements.
- Skills Invest funding will not duplicate an existing government-funded training subsidy or program for which participants are eligible, including Career Start, Career Boost, Apprenticeship and Traineeship Funding, Fee-Free TAFE, Trade Skills Assessment and Gap Training. Where participants may be eligible for existing Queensland Government investment, MSQ may facilitate engagement with an appropriate Skills Assure Supplier (SAS)-approved RTO.

Value for Money

Business cases must demonstrate value for money. MSQ will consider:

- Number of participants trained.
- Cost per participant.
- Impact and outcomes for manufacturing businesses.
- How the proposed project leverages other available skills and training funding, including Queensland Government VET investment, Fee-Free TAFE and employer contributions.
- The proportion of requested funding allocated to direct training delivery and related assessment, where applicable. As a guide, MSQ expects at least 85% of requested funding to support these activities.

To achieve value for money, MSQ may:

- Offer the applicant a funding amount that is less than proposed.
- Require applicants to seek a co-contribution from participating businesses.
- Require applicants to access other sources of investment.

Accredited Training Delivery Requirements

- The RTO must hold current ASQA registration.
- The proposed qualifications, skill sets and units of competency must be listed on the RTO's current scope of registration.
- The RTO must be approved to deliver the proposed training in Queensland.
- The RTO must have suitably qualified personnel, appropriate delivery and assessment resources, and systems capable of supporting the proposed delivery.
- Where qualifications are listed on the Subsidised Training List, RTOs must have an existing SAS contract with the relevant qualifications on their SAS profile.

Qualifications, Skill Sets and Units of Competency

MSQ may fund full qualifications, recognised skill sets and single or multiple units of competency, as well as eligible non-accredited training. Accredited training must be drawn from a nationally endorsed Training Package and directly support the identified manufacturing workforce need. For non-accredited training, applicants must explain why existing accredited training does not meet the need, demonstrate the provider's capability and show how measurable workforce outcomes will be achieved.

WHAT CAN PROJECT FUNDS BE USED FOR?

Project funds may only be used for approved costs directly associated with delivering the project and achieving agreed outcomes. Eligible costs may include:

- Delivery of accredited training and, where approved, eligible non-accredited training.
- Development or customisation of approved training products, resources and assessment tools.
- Travel directly required for approved regional or remote delivery.
- Approved mentoring or coaching that directly supports participant outcomes.
- Other approved services directly necessary to deliver the project.

Ineligible Costs

Funding and/or subsidies will not be approved for:

- Recurring organisational costs, including wages, ongoing staff costs, established positions, normal operating overheads (such as utilities, telecommunications and building lease costs) and core organisational functions.
- Purchase of capital equipment or other significant assets, including buildings or vehicles.
- Retrospective payments for expenses incurred before funding approval or for work already undertaken.

- Costs for consultants, contractors or other service suppliers that are associated entities of the applicant.
- Any other costs deemed ineligible by MSQ.

Development of Training Products and Services

Where training products, resources or services are developed using Skills Invest funding, MSQ will retain copyright and ownership of the associated intellectual property. MSQ may make these materials available through its Learning Management System (LMS) and, at its discretion, grant third-party access under licensing arrangements.

OTHER CONDITIONS

Promotion of MSQ Programs, Products and Services

Funded organisations must ensure participating manufacturing businesses are informed about relevant MSQ programs, products and services. MSQ will provide an up-to-date list during project delivery, which may include:

- Workforce Development and Planning services.
- Women in Trades Mentoring Program.
- Supply Queensland.
- Leadership Excellence Series.
- Mental Health Awareness and Building Resilience short courses for leaders and employees.
- Manufacturing General Induction.
- Diversity programs and resources for businesses.

Performance Conditions

If a project is approved, the successful applicant will enter into a funding agreement with MSQ. The agreement will set out the approved scope, funding, project outcomes, milestones, key performance indicators, evidence requirements, reporting obligations and payment arrangements. All funding received from other sources must be disclosed to MSQ. Payments will be subject to satisfactory achievement of agreed milestones and deliverables, compliance with reporting requirements and acquittal of previous payments. Unless otherwise agreed, monthly reporting will be required. At project completion, the recipient must provide a final acquittal and return any unspent or surplus funds to MSQ.