



NCSEHE

National Centre for Student
Equity in Higher Education



Curtin University

EQUITY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

2024 Round: Guidelines

Make tomorrow better.

ncsehe.edu.au

Acknowledgement of Country

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) and Curtin University acknowledge the First Nations people of this country and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

We deeply respect their cultural, spiritual and educational practices and aspire to learn from their ways of working.

Curtin University is honoured and grateful to have the privilege to maintain campuses on Whadjuk and Wungatha Country.

1. The Equity Fellowship Program

1.1 Introduction

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) is launching the 2024 Equity Fellowship Program.

The Program will provide fully-funded annual fellowships for researchers and practitioners in higher education, to complete a project that will inform an area of higher education practice and policy, via a combination of research, research translation, best practice implementation, evaluation, and knowledge transfer.

Fellowships are open to staff of Australian universities currently receiving funding for equity programs through the Australian Government's [Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program](#) (HEPPP).

Applications are encouraged from staff from a broad range of backgrounds (practitioners, researchers, managers), areas (any areas that contribute to enhancing student equity/student experience, including, but not limited to, designated equity roles) and career stages (early, middle, later).

Up to **three** Equity Fellowships will be awarded for 2024. The value of each Fellowship will be up to \$230,000 for one year.

1.2 Key Dates

Applications open	Monday, 21 August 2023
Closing date for applications	Thursday, 28 September 2023 – 8pm (AWST)
Acknowledging receipt of applications	On receipt of proposal (via email)
Consideration by the NCSEHE <i>Equity Fellows Selection Committee</i> and Grants and Fellowships Committee	6 October to 20 November 2023
NCSEHE Advisory Board confirmation of projects	Late November 2023
Notification of outcomes of selection process	Late November 2023
Funding agreement finalisation	February 2024
Project work	February 2024 to February 2025
Presentation at the NCSEHE Fellows Forum	February/March 2025
Project completion and acquittals	March 2025

2. Aims and Obligations

2.1 Aims

The Equity Fellowship Program will fund proposals that:

- Contributes to the existing research and practice knowledge base on equity issues in Australian higher education, building on previous research undertaken or funded by NCSEHE.
- Strengthen Australia's overall capacity in higher education practice and implementation in relation to equity issues.
- Enable ground-breaking, robust, high-quality, and internationally competitive research that will build the peer reviewed evidence base and contribute to evidence-based policy development and practice.
- Facilitate interdisciplinary, collaborative approaches.
- Demonstrate leadership in translating high quality contributions of equity researchers to inform practice, and developing, implementing, enhancing, and promoting institutional evidence based best practice that improves access to and participation in Australian higher education.
- Raise the profile in higher education institutions of student equity and efforts to widen participation of people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Produce outcomes that can be applied nationally and/or be adopted by universities, including outcomes that are potentially *portable* across institutions and *scalable* across Australian higher education.
- Establish and build on national and international partnerships and collaboration in widening higher education participation.

2.2 Obligations

The NCSEHE, through the Equity Fellowship Program will:

- Provide an exemplary training environment, and support for Fellows through the *Expert Reference Group*. Build world class capacity and capability among equity in higher education researchers to develop Australia's next generation of research leaders.
- Develop Equity Fellows' research skills, so that they can improve the understanding of research outcomes by equity practitioners, thus developing practitioners capable of better practice leadership at a national level.
- Develop a national skills base to successfully translate and implement research outcomes and provide evidence for the delivery of programs for Australian higher education students.
- Develop Equity Fellows' connection to the national policy environment, providing skills and opportunities for communicating with policy makers.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The National Centre for Equity in Higher Education

The NCSEHE's responsibilities in relation to the Equity Fellowship Program, include:

- Convening the NCSEHE Grants and Fellowships Committee and its selection committee – the *Equity Fellows Selection Committee* – whose duties include assessing Equity Fellowship applications (see Section 5.4).
- Entering into a funding agreement with each Equity Fellow.
- Liaising with potential applicants to provide preliminary information and advice.
- Liaising with Equity Fellows, once selected, to negotiate and clarify the detail of specific aspects of the proposed projects (including timeline, milestones, objectives and deliverables) which includes assisting in designing an individual program for each Fellow based on individual needs. This may include such things as, but not limited to, research methodologies, statistical and analytical approaches, media / research communication training, understanding the policy landscape and evidence-based policy formulation.
- Assisting in facilitating an *Expert Reference Group* for each Equity Fellowship.
- Monitoring the progress of the projects, once underway, and assisting in facilitating collaboration, consultation, and testing of the Equity Fellow's project findings, outcomes and recommendations with the Australian Government Department of Education, as required.
- Supporting and disseminating the work of Equity Fellows, through a production process (including peer review, proofreading and editing processes) that ensures Fellows' reports are of quality acceptable to the Australian Government and higher education sector.
- Organising the NCSEHE Fellows Forum to facilitate dissemination and discussion of project processes and outcomes of the Equity Fellowships.
- Conducting an evaluation of the outcomes of the Equity Fellowship Program.

3.2 Equity Fellow's Home Institution

The responsibilities of the Equity Fellow's home institution include:

- Entering into formal agreements with:
 - The NCSEHE to cover project funding and milestones.
 - Other organisations, where this is required to cover details of the Fellow's placement.
- Managing the receipt of funding for the Equity Fellowship from the NCSEHE.
- Maintaining responsibility for payments to the Fellow, including existing employee arrangements, such as workers' compensation insurance.

3.3 Organisations Engaging with Equity Fellows

The responsibilities of the organisations hosting Equity Fellows include:

- Confirming suitability to host the engagement activity of an Equity Fellow, particularly in the case of more involved engagements such as short-term placements.
- In the case of short-term placements, facilitate the Fellow's access to departmental personnel, and provide general IT access, building access and a physical place of work, while maintaining responsibility for issues pertaining to occupational health and safety.
- Providing advice and feedback on Fellow's Interim and Final Reports, where sought.

3.4 Australian Government Department of Education

The responsibilities of the Department of Education include:

- Managing the Conditions of Grant for delivery of the Equity Fellowship Program with the NCSEHE.
- Whenever possible, facilitate access to relevant departmental data.

4 Conditions of Grant

4.1 Eligibility and Application Process

Equity Fellowships are open to all staff at eligible higher education institutions.

Eligible Institutions

Applicants must be a staff member at an eligible higher education institution. Eligible institutions include any institution which currently receive HEPPP funding:

<https://www.education.gov.au/hePPP/resources/20102023-higher-education-participation-and-partnerships-program-hePPP-participation-allocations>

Applicants must have the strong support of their home institution for a project that supports the Aims and Obligations of the Equity Fellowship Program set out in Section 2.

Other NCSEHE Equity Fellowships

Recipients of a NCSEHE Equity Fellowship from previous rounds are ineligible to apply for a 2024 Equity Fellowship.

Applications may not be submitted to *both* the 2024 Equity Fellowship and First Nations Fellowship Programs.

4.2 Engagement

Applicants for the Equity Fellowship Program are encouraged to engage with a suitable organisation dealing with issues of equity practice, research, or policy, either in or directly affecting, Australian higher education. These include, but are not restricted to:

- The Australian Government Department of Education.
- State and Territory education departments.
- Other agencies, institutes and organisations engaged with issues addressing equity concerns in access, participation and outcomes across Australian higher education.

Engagement can include one or more of a variety of activities, including a seminar, workshop, or a short-term placement.

Applicants will need to explain why a particular engagement is suitable as a component of the Equity Fellowship and provide an indication of the organisation's capacity to support a visiting Fellow over a relatively short timeframe.

The purpose of an engagement component is to facilitate knowledge transfer and to enhance the ties and understanding between organisations within Australian higher education.

The Equity Fellow is expected to act as a source of advice and knowledge transfer for the staff of the hosting organisation, particularly those in the higher education and related areas.

The nature and length of the engagement, including any work schedule and pattern of attendance, should be specified in the application.

Where necessary, NCSEHE will confer with the Equity Fellow's home institution and the hosting organisation to enter a formal agreement covering the details of more involved engagement activities, such as placements.

4.3 Submission of a Final Report and Attendance at the NCSEHE Fellows Forum

The Equity Fellowship will culminate with the submission and finalisation of a Fellowship Report by early 2025.

This will take place in conjunction with a presentation by the Fellow at the NCSEHE Fellows Forum, also scheduled to take place in February/March 2025.

4.4 Selection Criteria

Criterion	Detail	Weight
<p>Alignment with the aims and objectives of the Equity Fellows Program</p>	<p>The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates alignment with the aims and objectives of the Equity Fellows Program <u>as outlined in Section 2</u> of the document <i>including</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. strengthen Australia’s overall capacity in higher education practice and implementation in relation to equity issues. b. facilitate interdisciplinary, collaborative approaches. c. demonstrate leadership in translating high quality contributions of equity researchers to inform practice, and developing, implementing enhancing, and promoting institutional evidence based best practice that improves access to and participation in Australian higher education. d. raise the profile in higher education institutions of student equity and efforts to widen participation of people from disadvantaged backgrounds. e. produce outcomes that can be applied nationally and/or be adopted by universities, including outcomes that are potentially <i>portable</i> across institutions and <i>scalable</i> across Australian higher education. f. establish and build on national and international partnerships and collaboration in widening higher education participation. 	<p>30%</p>
<p>Capacity of the applicant to play a continuing, significant leadership role in equity in higher education research and practice</p>	<p>The applicant demonstrates a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. track record of academic and/or professional achievement relative to opportunity. b. record of leadership in research, equity practice and/or policy, relative to opportunity. c. capacity for development and potential career trajectory. d. capacity to make a significant ongoing leadership contribution at a national level to higher education research and practice. 	<p>30%</p>

Demonstrated impact of the Equity Fellowship	<p>The applicant demonstrates the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. significance and scale of the issues identified. b. potential value to the sector of the proposed activities, knowledge gain, and knowledge transfer. c. viability of the activities and the proposed methodology for achieving the planned outputs and impact. d. capacity of the proposed project to generate influence and sector-wide impact particularly through interdisciplinary training, collaboration, and mentoring. e. potential for outcomes that can be applied nationally and/or be adopted by other universities. f. potential to produce publications that are of sufficient quality to be accepted by a peer-reviewed journal. 	20%
Value for money	<p>The extent to which the proposed Equity Fellowship project achieves value with public money and delivers outcomes commensurate with, or exceeding, the level of investment, considering the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. outcomes of the Fellowship proposal in relation to the amount of funding sought. b. extent to which the proposed budget is appropriate, clearly justified, and transparent. c. demonstrated potential to achieve the project outcomes in a high quality and cost-effective manner. 	20%

4.5 Use of Equity Fellowship Funding

The Fellowship funding is provided to cover:

- The relinquishing by the Fellow of all, or part of, their normal institutional duties during the period of the Fellowship (normally expected to be 12 months' full-time equivalent, but subject to negotiation of some flexibility and timing, depending on individual circumstances).
- On-costs associated with the Fellow's normal salary level.
- Travel and accommodation expenses to cover any period of placement, and travel nationally or internationally, as appropriate to the project.
- Other costs to be incurred in relation to the specific project to be undertaken.
- Attendance at face-to-face meetings convened by the NCSEHE, including the NCSEHE Fellows Forum in February/March 2025.

The Fellowship funding will not cover:

- Institutional infrastructure charges or overheads.
- Computing hardware or software, unless a case can be made as to why this is not usually available from the applicant's home institution.

4.6 Reporting and Accountability

Throughout the project, the Equity Fellow will report on progress to the Grants and Fellowships Committee, via the NCSEHE, including the submission of an Interim Report.

At the conclusion of their project in February 2024, the Equity Fellow will provide to the NCSEHE, the Final Report, setting out in full, activities undertaken during the Fellowship, the outcomes, the impact, and any materials generated.

The Final Report will be reviewed externally before it is published on the NCSEHE website and made publicly available. Report submission dates will be negotiated with the successful Fellows and recorded in the funding agreement.

Equity Fellows will also be asked to provide drafts and details of any other publications or materials produced that are connected to their Fellowship. Where possible, support from NCSEHE and the Equity Fellowship Program should be acknowledged in all such output.

Fellows will also be required to give a short report of any placement with a hosting organisation.

4.7 Payment

Payments will be made to the home institution in two instalments, one upon execution of the funding agreement (80%) and one on acceptance of the Final Report (20%). The institution will be responsible for making payments to the Equity Fellow.

5 Application and Selection Information

5.1 Application Instructions

The **Application Pack** and **Guidelines** (this document) for the 2024 Round of the NCSEHE Equity Fellowship are available at: <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/grants-and-fellowship/equity-fellowship-program/>

5.2 Lodgement and Processing

Please email your application to ncsehe@curtin.edu.au by **8pm (AWST time) Thursday, 28 September 2023**.

5.3 Receipt of Application

Receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by email to the applicant, signatory of the institution's letter of support and institutional contact officer.

5.4 The Selection Process

The NCSEHE Grants and Fellowship Committee has responsibility for recommending Equity Fellows to the NCSEHE Advisory Board, in accordance with the Selection Criteria set out in Section 4.4.

In undertaking its task, the Committee will perform a review and selection process via its *Equity Fellows Selection Committee*.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an interview with the *Equity Fellows Selection Committee*, which may take place in person or by videoconference. The cost of any travel required to attend an interview will be covered by NCSEHE. As part of this process, NCSEHE will also contact nominated referees prior to final selection of candidates.

The final selection of an Equity Fellow rests with the NCSEHE Advisory Board. Bearing in mind the competitive merit based nature of the Equity Fellowship Program, the NCSEHE Advisory Board reserves the right to not make an appointment where a suitable candidate(s) cannot be found.

Successful Equity Fellows will be expected to commence in February 2024, or as negotiated in the funding agreement.