

# Academy Fellowships

## Teaching Innovation Fellowships

The Teaching Innovation Fellowships provide Teaching Excellence Program (TEP) alumni with funding and support to design and lead transformative teaching and professional learning projects in their schools.

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## 1. Overview

Academy Fellowships contribute to the mission, vision and objectives of the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership and broader dialogue in raising the quality and status of teaching in Victoria. The fellowships will enable highly skilled teachers to enhance their pedagogical knowledge and skills to meet the needs of diverse learners and to share evidence-informed practice within and beyond their school.

Teacher fellows will design and implement an innovation project to transform teacher practice and improve student outcomes in their classrooms or schools.

Through their project, teacher fellows will develop capabilities as “leaders of learning” and will enhance their individual and collaborative expertise by sharing their professional learning and exemplary practices with colleagues in their schools and beyond.

Teaching Innovation Fellowships will be funded for 12 months and are expected to be awarded at the end of Term 4, 2023, with the fellowship beginning in Term 1, 2024. Teacher fellows will undertake professional learning and plan their projects in Term 1, ready for implementation during Terms 2 and 3 with a final presentation of their findings delivered in Term 4. A final report detailing learning outcomes will be submitted early Term 1, 2025.

## 2. Learning outcomes

By undertaking the Teaching Innovation Fellowships, teacher fellows will:

- > define a vision of what excellent teaching and innovation means in the context of their classroom and school, based on a critical examination of relevant, evidence-informed teaching and learning principles and theories
- > synthesise knowledge and evidence to design and implement an innovation project as creative solutions to an identified need or challenge at their school
- > enact and critically examine the values, principles and practices of leadership that effectively enable innovation and change to influence teaching and learning
- > develop a plan to synthesise, communicate and share their learning, both with their school and with a broader audience.

## 3. Domains of action

Teaching Innovation Fellows will cultivate agency and expertise through the following domains of action, in line with the Academy’s Fellowship Model:

**Vision:** Develop a vision for alternative futures in practice, which is driven by a desire to make a difference to the quality of teaching and learning. This will involve thinking creatively about new possibilities for teaching and learning that are responsive to the evolving and varying needs of students.

**Innovation:** Explore, design, implement and evaluate approaches or interventions that enhance teaching and learning. Teacher fellows will be encouraged to think outside the box and experiment with new practices, in order to improve teaching and learning.

**Inquiry:** Engage in evidence-informed, practitioner-led inquiry to investigate professional challenges in context. This will involve a continuous cycle of exploration, experimentation and refinement to improve their practice over time.

**Leadership:** Exercise leadership by building collaborative networks that enhance professional expertise in and across schools. Teacher fellows will lead knowledge production and share practice and support colleagues in and beyond their school.

## 4. Project scope

Projects must align with the Academy Fellowships Model (described in the Fellowships Charter, available in the online application form). Through their projects, teacher fellows will respond to an identified need or challenge at their school that aims to deliver improvements for any of the following:

**Teaching quality:** quality in teaching is seen when instruction meets the demands of the discipline being taught, the goals of instruction, and the learning and wellbeing needs of *all* students in a given context and time (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

**Teacher confidence:** a teacher's beliefs or perceptions about their capabilities to be an effective teacher and to manage or overcome challenges; developed through the application of knowledge and skills as well as through observation, collaboration with others, and reflective practice (Nolan & Molla, 2017).

**Teacher capability:** a teacher's demonstrated knowledge, skills and dispositions that enable responsive teaching in a given context and time (Hammerness et al., 2007; Levine, 2020; Nolan & Molla, 2020).

**Student outcomes** in learning and wellbeing.

- > Learning is the ongoing acquisition by students of knowledge, skills and capabilities, including those defined by the Victorian Curriculum and senior secondary pathways.
- > Wellbeing is the development of the capabilities necessary to thrive, contribute and respond positively to the challenges and opportunities of life (State of Victoria, 2022).

A range of different projects could be pursued through a fellowship. Some examples are to:

- > implement an innovation in curriculum, pedagogy or extracurricular activities
- > create a new and contemporary program and activities for students or staff
- > implement an extended practitioner inquiry
- > explore regional, national or international collaborations
- > create joint programs with community, business or educational institutions
- > develop professional learning programs for staff
- > undertake residencies, conferences or relevant courses.

## 5. Fellowship benefits

### Project funding

The fellowship provides teacher fellows and their school \$5,000 to design and implement an innovation project focused on transforming teacher practice and professional learning at their school.

Project funding can be used for:

- > resources associated with project implementation, including purchasing and/or creating teaching and learning resources and materials and other incidental project costs.
- > professional learning costs, including professional learning fees or support for the teacher fellow that are directly related to project design and implementation;
- > costs of designing and delivering professional learning programs and planning improvement initiatives at their school.
- > travel and accommodation costs associated with project implementation; these costs can only account for a maximum of 10% of the budget.

Project funding may not be used for:

- > capital work expenses
- > professional learning costs not directly associated with the project
- > salaries
- > casual relief teaching unless this is necessary to support project design and implementation and if the school has not received time release funding
- > resources unrelated to the project
- > tertiary education fees (e.g., a Diploma, Masters or PhD degree).

### Supplementary funding

Fellowships will provide funding to support government and eligible non-government schools to release their teacher fellow to work to deliver their innovation project. Teachers can work in teams within their school or in a collaborative partnership with TEP alumni in other schools.

#### *Time release funding*

Time release funding of up to \$6,000 is available to eligible schools, based on an equity funding model. This is intended to support schools to release the teacher fellow and members of their team to work in the project.

Time release funding can be used for:

- > release the teacher fellow to attend Teaching Innovation Fellowship professional learning
- > release the teacher fellow to attend professional learning associated with project implementation
- > release the teacher fellow and members of the teacher fellow's project team to work on the project

#### *Regional and rural subsidy*

An additional regional and rural participation subsidy of up to \$3,000 per teacher fellow will be paid to regional and rural schools.

The regional and rural subsidy will be used to cover the cost of the teacher fellow's accommodation and travel to TIF activities.

Project funding and supplementary funding will be paid to the teacher fellow's school in alignment with the conditions outlined in the Teaching Innovation Fellowship agreement.

## **Fellowship professional learning**

Teacher fellows will engage with experts and other highly skilled educators in a series of workshops designed to provide them with strong foundations for pursuing their innovation projects. These workshops will take place in Term 1 and will be delivered over 3 days. Teacher fellows are expected to attend all workshops.

## **Supportive fellows' community**

Once per term in Terms 2 – 4 (for 3 hours), teacher fellows will participate and contribute to online Fellowship Learning Communities (FLCs) where they will build relationships with other fellows and share ideas, learn from each other, and support each other's professional growth. The FLCs will be facilitated by expert practitioners.

## **Guidance from a fellowship advisor**

Teacher fellows and their teams will be guided and supported by a fellowship advisor who will contribute to their innovation project's progress using a collaborative and supportive approach. The advisor will meet with teacher fellows 1-2 times per term and will foster reflective and learning capacities of fellows through dialogue and guidance.

# **6. Eligibility requirements**

To be eligible to apply for a Teaching Innovation Fellowship, teachers must:

- > be a graduate of the TEP, a current TEP participant<sup>1</sup>, or a master teacher alumni
- > have the endorsement and ongoing support of their principal for participation in the fellowship
- > have full teacher registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- > be in a teaching role at the same Victorian school (full-time or part-time) at the time of application and throughout the fellowship
- > be willing to uphold the values and expectations outlined in the Academy Fellowships Charter.

# **7. Fellowship requirements**

To successfully complete a Teaching Innovation Fellowship, teachers will be required to:

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants who have not completed the TEP at the time of fellowship awarding will receive a conditional offer contingent on their TEP completion.

- > attend the Teaching Innovation Fellowship professional learning workshops
- > attend and contribute to the fellowship learning communities
- > engage and collaborate with a fellowship advisor to facilitate progress and delivery of their innovation project
- > lead the design, implementation, and evaluation of an innovation project at their school
- > complete a series of reflective tasks that document their learning journey
- > if applicable, share any resources and artefacts directly resulting from the project with other teachers and schools
- > present and share their project journey and outcomes at an end-of-year event
- > meet reporting milestones as set out in the funding agreement
- > submit a final report documenting project milestones and financial acquittal.

## 8. Application process

Before applying for a Teaching Innovation Fellowship, teachers must ensure they meet eligibility requirements, including having their principal's endorsement and commitment of ongoing support.

To apply, teachers must submit an online application, which must include:

### **Vision and Leadership**

- > a short statement describing why they would like to undertake the fellowship
- > a short statement of how they will apply their dispositions, skills and capabilities to succeed as a fellow
- > a short statement demonstrating their experience in developing and sustaining collaborative relationships with colleagues to drive change and improvement at school

### **Enabling school relationships and structures**

- > a signed statement of support from their school principal or line manager
- > a signed Fellowships Charter, including principal or line manager's signature

### **Inquiry and innovation**

Submit a completed problem analysis template which outlines:

- > a description of the classroom or school challenge (the problem) that forms the basis of the investigation
- > academic and practice evidence as to possible causes of and solutions to the identified challenge, including bibliography

- > a feasible, tight area of focus with up to 2 evidence informed recommendations to address the problem identified and explanation as to why these align with the applicant's school improvement priorities

Applications can be started via [the Academy's website](#) and submitted via the Academy's online application system (Awards Force).

## 9. Selection process

Applications will be assessed by cross-sectoral expert panels using a set of pre-determined criteria. Panels will evaluate applications across 3 criteria:

Selection criteria	Weighting
<b>Inquiry and innovation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The problem is clearly identified and analysed, and there is academic and practice evidence as to the causes and possible solutions to the challenge.</li> <li>&gt; The description of the problem is well-defined and aligned to school priorities and TIF scope.</li> <li>&gt; A feasible, tight area of focus to inform a future innovation project has been identified.</li> <li>&gt; There is clear and appropriate use of research and evidence throughout the problem analysis, including a basic bibliography.</li> </ul>	50%
<b>Vision and leadership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The applicant presents a clear personal vision for alternative and enhanced practice aligned with the <a href="#">Academy's objectives</a>.</li> <li>&gt; The applicant has demonstrated experience, skills and capabilities to lead the design and implementation of an innovation project.</li> <li>&gt; The applicant clearly demonstrates their capacity and drive for collaboration and implementing change across their school.</li> </ul>	30%
<b>Enabling school relationships and structures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The fellowship charter has been signed by school principal or line manager.</li> <li>&gt; The letter of support demonstrates a strong commitment from school leadership to enable the fellow to undertake the fellowship.</li> </ul>	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 10. Timelines

A list of core TIF activities with corresponding date ranges has been provided in the table below. Please note these dates are for planning reference only and are subject to change.

### Application dates

Year	Term	Milestone	Date start	Date end
2023	3 + 4	Application process opens	23 Aug	16 Oct
	4	Applications reviewed and selection process	17 Oct	10 Nov
	4	Fellowships awarded (agreements executed)	4 Dec	22 Dec

### Program dates

Year	Activity	Duration	Term	Mode
2024	Professional learning	2 days	Term 1 Week 3	Face to Face
	Professional learning	1 day	Term 1 Week 9	Face to Face
	FLC 1	3 hours	Term 2 Week 5	Online
	FLC 2	3 hours	Term 3 Week 6	Online
	FLC 3	3 hours	Term 4 Week 3	Online
	Advisories	1 hour	6 x Term 1 - 4	Blended
	End of year presentation	TBC	TBC	TBC
2025	Final report	n/a	Term 4	Online



## 11. Conditions of award

The awarding of a Teaching Innovation Fellowship is subject to the fellow and their school accepting the conditions laid down in an agreement between their school, the fellow and the Academy.

**Please note:** Applicants who have not completed the TEP at the time of fellowship awarding will receive a conditional offer contingent on their TEP completion.

## 12. References

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