



# The VDC Sustainability Fellowship for VET Practitioners (desktop)

The VET Development Centre in partnership with the  
International Specialised Skills Institute

## APPLICATION GUIDELINES

For more information visit  
[www.issinstitute.org.au](http://www.issinstitute.org.au)





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## Introduction

### 2023 VDC Sustainability Fellowship for VET Practitioners [desktop]

The VET Development Centre (VDC) in partnership with the International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute) are offering one (1) desktop learning Fellowship in 2023 valued at \$7,500.

**Applications are open 1 January - 31 March 2023**

The VDC works in partnership with the International Specialised Skills Institute by funding the VDC Sustainability Fellowship for VET Practitioners [desktop]. This desktop learning Fellowship focuses on developing opportunities within the VET sector to support sustainable practices and innovation.

### About this Fellowship

The VDC Sustainability Fellowship for VET Practitioners [desktop] looks to support and enhance sustainable practices in the Vocational Education and Training sector. This involves researching what innovations are occurring overseas and what products, services or processes are being adopted to generate long term social and environmental benefits.

This Fellowship provides the opportunity for VET Practitioners to learn international best practice without travel. The ideal candidate has a strong research agenda that can be conducted online and/or within Australia. The Fellowship can be completed through online conferences, short-courses, zoom interviews or meetings with national / international experts, and/or use the funds to assist desktop learning and research.

### The VET Development Centre (VDC)

The VDC was established in 2005 by the Victorian Government to promote the development and raise the professional standing of people working in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Sector. The VDC specialises in providing continuing professional learning webinars, workshops, and seminars for teachers, trainers and educators in the Australian VET sector. The VDC is providing this fellowship opportunity to all Australian VET practitioners as part of its national program. In addition, VDC delivers and facilitates Victorian Government funded continuing professional learning and evaluation activities to the Victorian VET workforce.

### International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute)

The ISS Institute was founded 30 years ago, by a small group of innovative leaders who had a vision of building a community of industry specialists who would lead the up-skilling of the Australian workforce. Investing in the development of talented, passionate and innovative Australians to travel abroad to develop new skills and knowledge and return to Australia to disseminate their learnings has, and continues to create a 'better skilled Australia.' Our Fellows represent a broad cross-section of industries and our Fellowship program creates impact in many ways including economic benefits, skills preservation, the personal and professional advancement of our Fellows, new thinking, practice and increased innovation in the workforce.

[www.issinstitute.org.au](http://www.issinstitute.org.au)

1. Each successful applicant (Fellow) receives a maximum of \$7,500 towards their Fellowship costs. Any expenses in excess of this amount must be borne by the Fellow.
2. Each Fellow must be employed by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

### What is Sustainability

In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

For more information about the United Nations Sustainability goals, please review the following webpage: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

## **What is International Applied Research?**

Applied Research is an approach used to solve practical problems. This type of study and research is often used in education, training and across industries with the intention of generating actionable knowledge, to find solutions or develop innovative practice that has direct application to the world. ISS Institute's Fellowship program invests in Australians to undertake applied research outside of Australia and apply their learnings in an Australian context on their return.

## **How to apply for this Fellowship?**

To apply for this Fellowship, you are required to:

- Complete the application form
- Provide a current curriculum vitae (resume)
- Provide one letter of support which indicate that your Fellowship field is relevant and will benefit the industry (e.g. peak industry bodies, government agencies, professional associations)
- Provide an Employer Endorsement Letter indicating that you will be supported to meet the obligations associated with this Fellowship (this letter should be from your current CEO, director or manager).

Email these documents to [applications@issinstitute.org.au](mailto:applications@issinstitute.org.au)

## **What are the Fellowship Priority Areas?**

Innovation in sustainability in the Vocational Education and Training Sector, with specific attention to what has been implemented within Australia.

## **Who can apply?**

- An Australian Permanent Resident (PR or citizen) over the age of 18.
- Applicants living in any state or territory in Australia.
- VET practitioners who are employed within a national Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), including TAFEs and private RTOs.

## **What does a Fellowship involve?**

- Fellows must use their Fellowship payment to undertake applied research - online or interstate.
- Online Fellowship research may include meeting knowledgeable leaders, conducting interviews, observation, online workshops, conferences, undertaking specialised training.
- Fellows must manage their Fellowship funds.
- Fellows must prepare a formal Fellowship report documenting findings and recommendations for addressing the identified priority area within 12 months of receiving their Fellowship. ISS Institute will assist with the editing, design and publication of this Fellowship report.
- Fellows must participate in a Fellowship induction program and will be supported by ISS Institute staff throughout the Fellowship period (and beyond).
- If required, Fellows may arrange time off work to complete components of this Fellowship.

- Fellows will be supported throughout their Fellowship by the ISS Institute team.
- Fellows must develop local connections with the VET sector to ensure the knowledge being gained from the proposed Fellowship is being shared and/or applied within the education and training sector as well as relevant industries.
- The Fellow must complete a minimum three (3) dissemination sessions within three (3) months of their report being printed.
- The Fellow must agree (where practicable) to participate in speaking opportunities identified by the VDC and/or the ISS Institute.

## **Selection Process**

- Each submission will be evaluated by the VDC and ISS Institute team members, who may draw upon specialist experts when evaluating applications.
- Short-listed applicants will be interviewed by a selection panel, made up of the VDC representatives and ISS Institute team members.
- Interviews may be conducted by video conference.
- Given the number of applications, individual applications will not receive feedback.
- Each applicant will be advised of the outcome of their application.

## **Conditions of Entry**

1. A Fellowship application, including the attachments (curriculum vitae, one (1) letter of support, one (1) employer endorsement letter) must be received by the ISS Institute by the closing date.
2. Successful applicants will enter into a contractual agreement with ISS Institute to ensure that all Fellowship requirements are met.
3. Fellows must prepare both a brief and a detailed Fellowship report outlining their research, findings and recommendations.
4. The Fellowship, including publication of the final Fellowship report, must be completed within 12 months.
5. Fellows agree to disseminate their Fellowship learnings, findings and recommendations to peers, industry leaders and other relevant bodies and report back to the ISS Institute about these.
6. Our Fellows agree to be ambassadors of ISS Institute throughout their Fellowship and into the future.
7. Our Fellows agree to take part in periodic evaluation, generally via surveys, so we can capture the impact that a Fellowship has had at a personal, professional or industry level over time.
8. While Fellowship applicants can be undertaking tertiary studies, the Fellowship cannot be used to gain a tertiary qualification.
9. The selection panel's decision is final and binding.
10. Unsuccessful Fellowship applicants are welcome to reapply for a Fellowship in the future.

## **Preparing your Fellowship application**

Before you complete your application form you may want to consider these tips and ideas:

## About the application form

- ISS Institute prefers that Fellowship application forms are submitted online via our website, or sent as a PDF via [applications@issinstitute.org.au](mailto:applications@issinstitute.org.au).
- When preparing a Fellowship application form, it is a good idea to type it up as a Word document and save locally. Once completed you can then cut and paste it into the application form online.
- When submitting your Fellowship application form please save the file as your surname and year (e.g. Jones2017) and then email it (along with the attachments) to [applications@issinstitute.org.au](mailto:applications@issinstitute.org.au)

## What are letters of support?

Letters of support indicate that your Fellowship field is relevant and will benefit your industry or sector. Letters of support can come from a peak industry body, industry/sector partner, government agencies, professional association or key partner. The best letters of support describe how they may support your Fellowship, convey enthusiasm and lends credibility to the need for your Fellowship topic and the outcomes of your research.

Before approaching individuals who could provide you with a letter of support, it is a good idea to make a list of potential supporters. Contact them, preferably over the phone or via email, and ask if they would be willing to provide you with a letter of support. It is a good idea to have a brief summary of your proposed Fellowship and explain how it will benefit your industry/sector/community when asking for a letter of support.

Ensure your letter of support has an appropriate letterhead and is signed and dated.

## What is an Employer Endorsement Letter?

An Employer Endorsement Letter shows that you have discussed your Fellowship application with your employer (e.g. CEO, director or senior manager). While it is the Fellow, and not the Fellow's employer, who receives the Fellowship, it is important that your employer is aware that you are applying for a Fellowship. This ensures that your employer understands you may need to take leave from work (e.g. annual leave, professional leave etc.) to complete research, possibly travel interstate, write a report, and seek opportunities within and beyond your work place to disseminate your Fellowship learnings and findings.

Your employer may also want to assist you while you are developing your Fellowship application and the priority areas you want to investigate.

## About the Fellowship application questions

- Please avoid industry/sector jargon in your application and write in plain English.
- Make sure your answers are succinct, clear and to the point – there are restricted word limits per question.
- Consider having a friend or colleague who is not in the sector read your application form for clarity.

## Fellowship application questions guidance

You will be required to provide a short response (min. 200 words – max. 300 words) against each of the key selection criteria below:

### 1. Please provide a succinct description of your Fellowship? 100 words

In this question you have a chance to pitch your Fellowship proposal in a clear and thoughtful way. In many respects this is how you will convey your proposed Fellowship to your employer, those you are seeking letter of support from, and your peers. Please write this as an 'elevator pitch' in third person.

Example:

*Molly intends to enhance her practice in technical wool knitwear through exposure to the world's capital of textile craftsmanship, Italy. Molly aims to address the knowledge gap of yarn spinning in Australia, whilst exploring heritage and new wool recycling methods to develop the quality of knitwear in Australia, further*

supply chain knowledge, and subsequently promote circularity. Through understanding state-of-the-art yarn spinning technology, Molly can apply and share knowledge to encourage innovative textile applications, whilst investigating opportunities to support the ongoing demand of one of Australia's largest export commodities, Merino wool.

## **2. What area of sustainability do you intend to focus on?**

In this question we want you to describe the sustainability practices that you would like to focus on and develop. Please describe how you could implement these practices into the VET sector.

## **3. Research and evidence: Please identify the research you have conducted and the evidence you have collected to indicate the need for, or importance of, your proposed Fellowship?**

In this question you have an opportunity to discuss research undertaken and/or the evidence you have collected which indicates how your Fellowship would assist in addressing the priority area you have selected. You may find that the evidence is a mix of formal research, action research or anecdotal evidence.

## **4. Outcome for the VET sector: In what ways do you think the sector will benefit from your proposed Fellowship and how would you ensure this?**

The Fellowships is intended to examine innovative approaches in sustainability that demonstrate potential benefits for application in Australia. A desired outcome of the Fellowship is the development of effective approaches and sustainable practices within the VET sector.

While you may not have the answers now, you will have no doubt thought about the ways in which your Fellowship may have a positive influence in Australia and this question is a chance to discuss that. In addition, this question provides you with a chance to discuss leading practice occurring overseas but which may not be evident or occurring in Australia.

## **5. Local partnerships: What local connections have you formed within the VET sector in Australia - ones that will help to ensure the knowledge garnered from your proposed Fellowship will be shared and applied within the education, training and industry sectors? Please identify the the networks and organisations that you are involved with and details of your relevant industry partnerships?**

A core component of any Fellowship is disseminating learnings and ideas with colleagues, peers and influential organisations/individuals. In this question we are interested in learning about who you believe would benefit from the outcomes of your Fellowship and the ways you might share that information. Some dissemination examples

## **6. Connections: What international or national institutions, organisations or centres of excellence will you be connecting with during your proposed Fellowship and why have you selected these? Please provide details of the innovative work practices that the organisation/s have implemented which aren't currently evident in Australia.**

To answer this question we don't expect you to have organised a detailed itinerary or travel plan as yet. However, there is an expectation that you will have identified leading practice and skill enhancement opportunities, including where these are located, who you may wish to meet and/or the type of connections (e.g. shadowing, meetings, immersion, conferences).

## **7. Implementation and impact: List a minimum of three (3) strategies you could potentially implement upon returning from your proposed Fellowship that will create change and impact.**

The response to this question should include actions that you envision you could implement on returning from your Fellowship travels based on your Fellowship learnings. Be bold.

**8. Professional capacity development: How will the proposed Fellowship benefit you in your professional capacity and development as a VET practitioner? How will it enhance your position as an expert in your field? How will you support peers' professional capacity? What is your plan in relation to influencing and leading innovation in your sector beyond your Fellowship?**

In this question, we are interested in learning about how this Fellowship might assist you in achieving career goals now and into the future. In addition, we are keen to learn about ways you might be able to assist and contribute to the professional development of colleagues and peers, and the broader sector.

**9. Have you ever undertaken another Fellowship, awarded by another organisation, that was related to this Fellowship topic? If yes, please describe. 150 words**

While you may have undertaken a Fellowship provided by another organisation in the past, we prefer that it does not closely resemble this one. However, if this Fellowship application builds upon your previous one it will still be considered.

## **Enquiries**

ISS Institute welcomes applications from any individual who meets the conditions of entry. Whether you are familiar with preparing submissions or have never done so in the past, do feel free to contact us prior to or during the preparation of your Fellowship application.

If you have any questions please contact the ISS Institute team:

Phone: 03 9347 4583

Email: [applications@issinstitute.org.au](mailto:applications@issinstitute.org.au)

Website: [www.issinstitute.org.au](http://www.issinstitute.org.au)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ISSInstitute](http://www.facebook.com/ISSInstitute)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/ISS\\_Institute](http://www.twitter.com/ISS_Institute)