Queensland Independent Schools
BGA
Block Grant Authority

Master Plan Grant
Frequently Asked Questions

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Master Plan Grant
Frequently Asked Questions

About the master plan grant

The objective of the Master Plan Grant is to support schools in developing comprehensive site master plans that reflect their educational vision, strategic direction, and long-term infrastructure needs. A well-considered master plan provides a structured pathway for future development, ensuring that capital works are delivered in a logical, staged manner that aligns with budget constraints and strategic priorities.

Through this grant, schools are encouraged to take a long-term view of their building and infrastructure needs, ensuring that future capital works are purposeful, staged, and responsive to growth, curriculum evolution, and community expectations. A well-developed master plan provides clarity and direction for future investment, helping schools to optimise their site potential while maintaining alignment with pedagogical goals and operational priorities.

The Master Plan Grant enables schools to engage a team of specialist consultants to develop or revisit a site master plan. In line with the Commonwealth Government's Capital Grants Program (CGP), which aims to ensure attention to the refurbishment and upgrading of facilities for existing students while making provision for future enrolment needs, master planning is a foundational step to ensure future projects are well-designed, appropriately prioritised, and aligned with the program objectives.

The master plan grant is provided to support schools in developing a relevant and comprehensive master plan under the following categories:



Master plan

Including a site potential & constraints assessment



Site potential and constraints assessment



Updating an existing master plan

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been compiled to support schools making an application for a Master Plan Grant, and they are supplementary to the following resources that are available on the QIS BGA website:

- Planning & Eligibility Notes
- Application Help Notes

To assist in navigating this document, FAQs are organised into theme headings, accompanied by an interactive contents page that allows you to browse either an entire category or scan the list for specific questions.

If you have a query not addressed in the resource documents or these FAQs, please contact the grant's dedicated key contact, or the QIS BGA office as soon as possible.

These FAQs are continually being updated and revised periodically to incorporate new queries. If printed, please verify on the QIS BGA website that you are using the most current version.

Refer to the version number and date on the cover page.

Intent of Funding

The Master Plan Grant supports schools in undertaking planning activities that result in a comprehensive, strategic and future-focused site master plan. This planning may involve the development of a new master plan, the update of an existing plan, or the completion of a site potential and constraints assessment where one has not previously been undertaken.

The grant is structured across three planning categories:

	 **Development of a master plan ***	 **Site potential and constraints assessment**	 **Updating an existing master plan**
Intent of funding	To develop a comprehensive master plan, inclusive of a site potential and constraints assessment.	Where not undertaken for a previously funded master plan, conduct a site potential and constraints assessment and update the master plan in response.	Where an existing master plan is more than 5 years old, or where there is a fundamental change in operational context, development of an updated master plan.
Timeline horizon	• 10 years	• 10 years	• 10 years

* *Including a site potential &constraints assessment*

Development of a master plan

The Master Plan category supports schools in undertaking a comprehensive site master plan that guides development over a 10-year horizon. This includes the creation of a comprehensive master plan that incorporates a site potential and constraints assessment to inform long-term infrastructure decisions.

Site potential and constraints assessment

The Site Potential and Constraints Assessment is a critical element of strategic master planning. The assessment provides a detailed understanding of the site's capacity and limitations and includes a conceptual design response to guide future development over the 10-year horizon.

Updating an existing master plan

Where schools are seeking to update or revise an existing master plan, funding may be available under this category, which applies where:

- The current plan is more than five years old or
- Where there has been a fundamental change in the school's operational context, such as significant enrolment growth, curriculum or pedagogical reform.
- Where an event impacting the site occurs, such as the acquisition of land or changes to planning or regulatory conditions.

Refer to the Planning & Eligibility Notes for additional information about the master plan grant categories and the intent of funding.

1. General Information About the Master Plan Grant

1.1. What is the Master Plan Grant for?

The Master Plan Grant helps schools develop or update a strategic site master plan that aligns with their educational vision and long-term infrastructure needs. It creates a mechanism to ensure future capital works are well-planned, staged, and responsive to growth, curriculum changes, and community expectations.

1.2. What types of planning activities are funded?

Funding is available for three categories: developing a new master plan, updating an existing one, and conducting a site potential and constraints assessment. Each category supports different planning needs based on the school's context, previous master planning to date, and the strategic direction.

1.3. What is QIS BGA's expectation of a 'good' master plan?

A good master plan includes a 10-year horizon of considered and staged projects including cost estimates, design principles, consultation outcomes, and a strategy for monitoring progress. It should reflect the school's strategic goals and be technically robust, educationally relevant, and financially feasible.

1.4. What are 'future drivers'?

Future drivers are strategic factors that help to justify the need for a master plan. The master plan application provides an opportunity for applicant schools to provide details on their future drivers under the following specific categories:

- Growth factors
- Pedagogical/curriculum considerations
- Local/state planning requirements
- Natural/built environment considerations
- Site safety and security
- Other strategic drivers

'Future drivers' should be embedded in the school's Strategic Plan to align with long-term vision and values.

2. Eligibility and Funding

2.1. Who is eligible to apply?

Schools must receive Australian Government recurrent funding, have a CTC at or below 105, and either own or hold a long-term lease greater than 22 years (1 year master planning, 1 year capital application, 20 year contingent liability) on the site.

Applicant schools must also be able to demonstrate a strategic need for master planning and that they have appropriate insurance in place.

2.2. How is funding calculated?

Funding is calculated based on the CTC score of the applicant school, and a corresponding % of eligible costs up to a maximum cap per site.

Refer to the Planning & Eligibility Notes for additional information about the level of funding available.

2.3. Can we apply for multiple sites?

Yes. For sites that are physically separated and not within an immediate vicinity, each site must submit a separate application and is eligible for an independent funding cap. For sites that are integrated via shared services or common infrastructure, one funding cap will apply across both sites.

Schools should contact QIS BGA to clarify if unsure about the level of integration between adjacent or proximate sites.

2.4. Can we apply if our existing master plan is less than five years old but outdated?

It depends. An update of an existing, QIS BGA-funded master plan that is less than 5 years old will only be considered eligible if:

- There has been a fundamental change in the school's operational context, such as significant enrolment growth, curriculum or pedagogical reform, or;
- An event impacting the site occurs, such as the acquisition of land or changes to planning or regulatory conditions.

Applicant schools considering applying to update their funded master plan that is less than 5 years old, are encouraged to contact QIS BGA to discuss prior to applying.

3. Master Plan Costs and Consultants

3.1. Who should be in the core planning team?

Every master planning journey will be different any may require more, or less specialist input depending on the site, previous planning efforts undertaken and the schools specific 10-year building horizon.

A 'core' planning team would include a lead master planning consultant (usually an architect) and a quantity surveyor with additional specialist disciplines such as civil, electrical and hydraulic engineers.

3.2. Which supplementary specialists are required?

The supplementary specialists required will depend on specific considerations and attributes of the site and the inputs required to inform planning and cost estimates. Such specialists may include town planners, traffic engineers, and landscape architects among others.

Applicant schools should refer to Step 3 'Supplementary specialists' of the Planning & Eligibility Notes, and complete the Site Potential and Constraints checklist to assist in identifying the supplementary specialists required.

3.3. What site investigations might be needed?

The types of investigations that might be required for a particular site depend on the specific attributes and planning inputs required. For example, potential site investigations that may be relevant include geotechnical studies, site surveys, hydraulic flow and pressure testing, hazardous material/contamination, ecology and condition assessments, among others.

The specific site investigations required to inform a site's master plan should be determined in collaboration with the consultant team.

3.4. Can I submit a consolidated fee proposal (from an architect for multiple disciplines)?

Yes, schools may submit individual proposals or a consolidated fee proposal from the lead consultant. All proposals must clearly outline scope, roles, and deliverables.

3.5. Can sustainability initiatives be included?

Yes, planning for sustainability initiatives is encouraged to be included as part of the development of a master plan.

3.6. What level of detail is expected in the cost estimate?

The estimate should be itemised for delivery of all building/project stages over the a 10-year horizon.

4. Site Potential & Constraints

4.1. What is a site potential and constraints assessment?

It's a technical evaluation of the site's characteristics, limitations, and opportunities. This includes overlays, infrastructure capacity, traffic flow, and other factors that influence future development and inform the master plan.

4.2. What is a site potential and constraints checklist?

The Site Potential and Constraints Checklist is a tool that should be completed in collaboration with the lead master planning consultant.

The checklist prompts consideration and identification of work that needs to be undertaken, or aspects that need to be considered as part of the master planning process including limitations and opportunities. Completing the checklist helps determine which supplementary specialists or site investigations are needed to ensuring the master plan is technically informed, strategically aligned, and responsive to the unique conditions of the site.

5. Application Process and Timeline

5.1. When do applications close?

There are three rounds annually, with applications closing on the last Friday of February, June, and August. Recommendations to the Minister will be made following the QIS BGA board meeting in the subsequent month.

5.2. How long do we have to complete the work?

Once approved by the Minister, schools have 12 months to complete the master planning work and submit the claim.

5.3. How do we apply?

Applications are submitted online via the Enquire grant management system. The system guides applicants through each section and prompts for required uploads. There are also Application Help Notes available on the QIS BGA website.

5.4. What documents must be submitted?

In addition to completing the online application, the following supporting documents are required to be submitted:

- Strategic Plan
- Fee proposal/s

5.5. What support is available during the application process?

Schools can access the full suite of supporting documentation via the QIS BGA website, or contact the grant's key contact or QIS BGA office for guidance.