Queensland Independent Schools
BGA
Block Grant Authority

Master Plan Grant
Planning and Eligibility Notes

Revision 01

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Master Plan Grant
Planning and Eligibility Notes

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

These notes are intended to guide and support schools through the process of preparing an application, and are presented across the following sections:

- Intent of Funding
- Available funding and eligibility
- Timeline
- Pathway to a master plan application

The notes should be read in conjunction with the following supplementary resources developed to support this program, all available on the QIS BGA website:

- Application Help Notes
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- QIS BGA's Master Plan Guide

Master plan and capital assistance

A current, well-developed site master plan is required for any school seeking capital assistance through QIS BGA. The master plan must be submitted with an application, and it will be used to assess the correlation between the

strategic plan and educational need, and to provide context for the long-term vision / continued relevance of the proposed capital project.

From 2027 onwards, master plans submitted in support of a capital application must align with QIS BGA's Master Plan Guide. While a master plan will define and document the short, medium, and long-term spatial planning for current and future built assets, the guide also establishes QIS BGA's expectations for a comprehensive master plan.

Qualities of a good master plan: A Master Plan that aligns with QIS BGA's Master Plan Guide

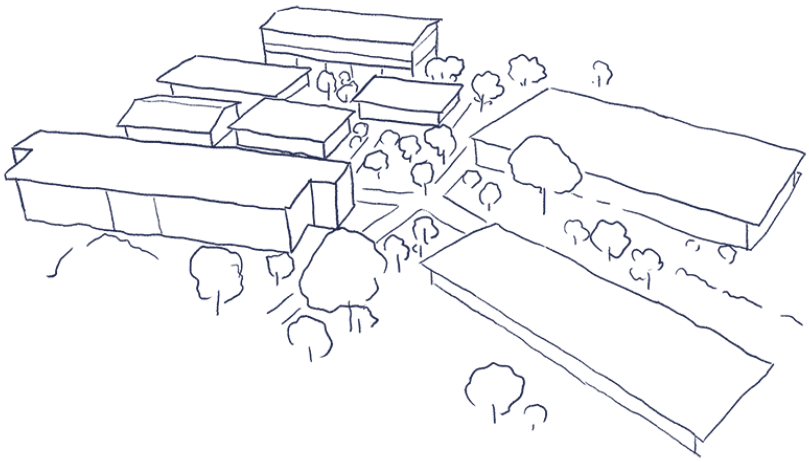
In addition to spatial planning, a master plan that aligns with the QIS BGA Master Plan Guide will include:

- A **staging plan for building projects**, outlining the proposed sequence of building projects over a 10-year horizon.
- A corresponding **staging plan for internal site infrastructure**, detailing the required upgrades or expansion of infrastructure to service the built assets.
- A **cost estimate** providing detailed costings itemised for all stages of building and infrastructure development across the same 10-year period.
- A clear set of **design principles**, established to define the school's vision and guiding values for future development.
- A **community consultation statement**, consolidating the key themes and outcomes that have informed the design principles.
- A **site potential and constraints assessment** documenting key site characteristics, investigations and assessments influencing the master plan and future projects.
- A **timeline**, showing when each stage of the master plan is planned to be delivered.
- A **strategy for evaluating progress** against the master plan, including how the school will monitor and review implementation.

TIP: The above-listed expectations for a master plan that aligns with the QIS BGAs Master Plan Guide could be used to facilitate early discussion with potential consultants to help define the scope and specific outputs required for your master plan.

Contact us

If you have a query not addressed in the resource documents, please get in touch with the grant's nominated key contact to discuss further. Additionally, any school considering applying for a master plan grant is encouraged to contact QIS BGA to confirm eligibility and discuss the progress and timing of your application.



1.1 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.

Specifically, a site potential and constraints assessment will incorporate:

- A site infrastructure assessment, to plan for the staged delivery of infrastructure to service future projects.
- Relevant planning overlays for the site, these could include environmental, landscape, land management or heritage overlays, among others.
- A traffic assessment (if required), to understand current and future access, circulation, and parking needs.
- Other considerations unique to the site, recognising that each school site may present distinct planning challenges or opportunities.

Although it is anticipated that master plans funded after 2024 will incorporate a site potential and constraints assessment and corresponding design response, it is acknowledged that some earlier funded master plans may not have included this component. Consequently, and for a limited time, QIS BGA is funding a separate site potential and constraints assessment to provide schools with an opportunity to incorporate this essential element into their master plan.

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.

An updated master plan should continue to reflect a 10-year planning horizon and respond to the school's evolving educational and site development needs. Where a site potential and constraints assessment has not previously been undertaken, it should be incorporated into the update.

Applicant schools unsure which master plan grant category applies to their current situation are encouraged to contact the nominated key contact for the grant to discuss.

1.2 Available funding and eligibility

Applicant Schools must meet the eligibility requirements before applying.

For a school to be eligible to receive a grant under the School Safety Grant, it must:

- Receive Australian Government recurrent funds for education on the site for which the master plan will be developed.
- Have entered into a QIS BGA Participation Agreement (or are in the process of doing so).
- Have a capacity to contribute (CTC) score less than 111.
- Not received previous funding for a master plan in the last 5 years, unless applying to update an existing master plan.
- Exist on a site that is owned by the school/Approved Authority, or leased for more than 22 years.
- Have appropriate insurance in place.
- Have a strategic need for a master plan to be developed.

The following table outlines the level of funding available to schools based on their capacity to contribute (CTC) score:

Safety Initiative	Level of Funding	
	CTC < 97	CTC 97-105
Development of a master plan *	**75%** of master planning cost, capped at **$75,000**	**50%** of master planning cost, capped at **$50,000**
Site potential and constraints assessment	**75%** of assessment costs, capped at **$37,500**	**50%** of assessment costs, capped at **$25,000**
Updating an existing master plan	**75%** of master planning cost, capped at **$75,000**	**50%** of master planning cost, capped at **$50,000**

* *Including a site potential &constraints assessment*

The funding cap is the maximum amount a school can receive to develop or update a master plan for a single site. For schools seeking to master plan across multiple sites:

- Where multiple campuses or precincts exist on one site, the funding cap applies collectively across the site.
- Where sites are not within an immediate vicinity or are in different regions, the funding cap will apply to each site individually.

For example, a school with a junior and senior campus on the same property would be considered one site, and the funding cap would apply to both campuses.

A school operating two separate campuses, not within an immediate vicinity (e.g. in different suburbs or regions), the funding cap will apply separately to each site.

A school with adjacent or proximate sites (i.e. within an immediate vicinity) may be considered a single or multiple sites for funding purposes, depending on the degree of integration and shared infrastructure. Applicant schools in this situation should contact QIS BGA before applying.

1.3 Timeline

The master plan grant is open for applications in three funding rounds annually as follows:

Round one		Round two		Round three	
Application close	**Recommendation to the Minister**	**Application close**	**Recommendation to the Minister**	**Application close**	**Recommendation to the Minister**
Last Friday in February	Last working day in March	Last Friday in June	Last working day in July	Last Friday in August	Last working day in September

Once Ministerial approval of a master plan grant is approved and a QIS BGA Recipient School Agreement is executed, it is expected that master planning work will be completed within 12 months.

1.4 Pathway to a master plan application

The following sections outline the essential steps an applicant school must follow to present an eligible and thorough application for a master plan grant.

Planning	Fee proposals		Apply
1	2	3	4
Establish your 'future' drivers. Why master plan?	**Core master planning team**	**Supplementary specialists**	**Apply online**
Describe the key drivers that demonstrate why a master plan is needed, and identify how these drivers are connected to the strategic plan and long-term vision.	Schools will need to submit fee proposals (either combined or separate) for the core team of professional consultants to deliver the master plan.	Fee proposals are also required for supplementary specialist services that will be undertaken as part of the site potential and constraints assessment.	After completing steps one to four, schools will have all the required supporting documentation to apply for an eligible project.

Each step will produce specific outputs or documents that will form the basis for assessing master plan grant applications. The following sections provide a detailed overview of each step, along with a checklist of key activities to guide you through the process.

Planning & preparation

1 Establish your ‘future’ drivers

A master plan is your blueprint for the future; it shapes how your school site will evolve to meet long-term educational and financial goals. Before applying for funding to develop or update a master plan, schools must first define the future drivers that will shape it. These drivers should be anchored in the school’s Strategic Plan and reflect its vision, priorities, and growth objectives. A clear set of future drivers ensures the master plan will be relevant, purposeful, and aligned with where the school is heading.

This step lays the qualitative foundation for your application and will help guide your internal decision-making and consultant engagement.

The purpose of identifying future drivers is to establish the need for a master plan and to show how site development will support the school’s strategic priorities. Your responses to the application questions will help QIS BGA assess alignment with educational objectives and confirm that the timing and scope of the master plan are justified.

The master plan application allows you to provide your prepared responses to questions about your future drivers in the following categories. You do not need to demonstrate a driver in every category, as not all may apply to your school. Still, by responding in the categories relevant to your school’s current situation, you demonstrate how your Strategic Plan supports the identified drivers and why they justify embarking on master planning now.

- **Growth Factors**: Is there a plan to extend or reduce the year levels provided, or will additional streams be added to any year levels?

  This future driver relates to your school’s plan to maintain, increase, or reduce the number of year levels or class streams. Indicate where this intent comes from (for example, your Strategic Plan or a board resolution) and note any current indicators that support it, such as enrolment trends or waiting lists.

- **Pedagogical/Curriculum Considerations**: Are there philosophical or pedagogical changes occurring that require specific facilities or facilities renewal?

  This driver relates to planned changes in a school’s educational philosophy or teaching approach that will affect how existing facilities are used, or create a need for new facilities. These changes may be part of a broader strategic shift in curriculum delivery, learning environments, or pedagogical models.

- **Local/State Planning Requirements**: Are there any local or state planning requirements that the school must respond to?

  This driver is established by identifying specific local or state planning requirements that influence future capital development on the school site. These requirements may arise from:

  - Conditions attached to an approval to develop
  - Planning overlays (e.g. ecological, water, heritage, etc.)
  - Traffic management obligations
  - Changes to legislation, planning or regulatory frameworks

  While the full scope of planning implications may not be known at the outset of your master planning process, early engagement with your proposed consultants can help identify key planning considerations. This collaboration will also help determine which supplementary specialists may be needed to inform and support the development of your master plan.

- **Natural/Built Environment Considerations:** Are there any natural or built environment considerations impacting the school site?

  This driver is relevant where environmental factors — either natural or built — influence the school’s future planning needs.

- Natural environment considerations may include climate-related impacts (e.g. limited shelter from sun and rain in tropical regions), site-specific risks (e.g. flood-prone land), or ecological constraints.
- Built environment considerations relate to the condition and suitability of existing buildings, how well current facilities support the school's operations, the spatial layout of the site, and the adequacy of supporting infrastructure (refer to Appendix One).

Where applicable, briefly describe how these factors affect the school's ability to deliver its educational program and how they inform the need for future capital works.

- **Site Safety and Security**: Is there any need for an update to on-site safety and security measures?

  This driver applies when improvements to onsite safety or security measures are required to support the school's safe and secure operation. If applicable, briefly outline the current safety or security issues, and the specific safety or security measures being considered, such as fencing, lighting, surveillance, access control, or emergency management infrastructure, and how these changes will be incorporated into a master plan to enhance the overall safety of students, staff, and visitors.

- **Other Strategic Drivers**: Are there any other aspects of the school's Strategic Plan that need to be supported by the development, extension, or revision of the master plan or completion of a site potential and constraints assessment?

  This driver applies where elements of the school's Strategic Plan influence the need for capital development, master planning, or a site potential and constraints assessment. These may include:

  - The introduction of specialist programs
  - Strategic goals related to sustainability, wellbeing, or community engagement
  - Plans to expand or diversify educational offerings
  - Initiatives to improve operational efficiency or future-proof the school's infrastructure, such as sustainability.

  If applicable, briefly describe how these strategic priorities are expected to shape the physical development of the site and inform the direction of the master plan.

Each response should be concise and to the point, as the online application will accept up to 2,000 characters per question (about 300 words).

Remember when answering the application questions, to establish clear links between each future driver and the goals or initiatives outlined in your Strategic Plan. You may quote or summarise relevant sections, or explain how the driver will influence the development of your master plan. This connection is essential to demonstrate that the proposed planning activity supports the school's long-term vision.

Step 1 - Checklist

Key activities to complete:

- ☐ Obtain and review a copy of your school's Strategic Plan.
- ☐ Identify the relevant goals and priorities in your Strategic Plan that require a master plan.
- ☐ Arrange the relevant goals and priorities into responses to the 'future' driver questions of the master plan application.
- ☐ Ensure you have the required approval/consent of the approved authority to apply for a master plan grant.

Fee Proposals

2 Core master planning team

Schools must identify a lead master planning consultant to guide the development of their master plan. This consultant is typically an architect with relevant experience in the education sector and site planning. The lead consultant may be an incumbent, with a long-standing relationship with the school and its site, or they may be engaged through a competitive request-for-proposal and selection process.

The remaining professionals on the core team will support the lead master planning consultant by providing technical input and specialist guidance for master plan development. Typically, these professionals may include:

- Civil engineer
- Electrical engineer
- Hydraulic engineer
- Other specialists as required (e.g. mechanical engineer, landscape architects, etc.)

Most importantly, before finalising your core master planning team, schools should carefully review the qualities of a good master plan that align with the QIS BGA Master Plan Guide. This ensures that the proposed scope of work can be fully delivered and aligns with expectations for strategic, educational, and technical planning.

A Quantity Surveyor (QS) is an essential professional in this process. Their expertise in cost estimation, staging, and financial planning supports the development of realistic and achievable master plan outcomes. The QS can provide early advice on budget alignment, help assess the feasibility of proposed works, and contribute to the sequencing of capital projects over time.

Schools must submit fee proposals for their core team either individually or the lead master planning consultant may present the fees for other disciplines within their submission. All proposals should clearly outline the scope of services and roles within the master planning process.

Engaging the right professionals early ensures the master plan is informed by technical expertise, regulatory awareness, and a clear understanding of the school's strategic direction.

Step 3 - Checklist

Key activities to complete:

- [ ] Familiarise yourself with the qualities of a good master plan that aligns with QIS BGA's master plan guide.
- [ ] Identify and obtain a fee proposal for the lead master planning consultant.
- [ ] If not included in the lead master planning consultant proposal, obtain fee proposals for the remaining professionals of the core master planning team.
- [ ] Identify and obtain a fee proposal for the quantity surveyor.

Fee proposals

3 Supplementary specialists

As part of the master planning process, schools may need to engage supplementary specialists or consultants to support specific technical aspects of site analysis and planning. These consultants may not always be part of a typical core master planning team, but may be required to address site-specific gaps or complexities identified during early planning. This is where the site potential and constraints assessment plays a critical role in shaping the development of the master plan.

A site potential and constraints assessment contributes to the direction of a master plan by ensuring appropriate technical input that informs realistic cost estimates for future stages. Typically, when site potential and constraints are not investigated early during master planning, they can result in significant, unexpected delays and costs later — often due to site conditions, infrastructure limitations, or compliance requirements that only emerge during delivery of a specific project.

To help identify which specialists may be required, schools are encouraged to complete the Site Potential and Constraints Checklist in collaboration with their proposed lead master planning consultant. This checklist prompts consideration of key site factors, limitations and opportunities, and may highlight areas where a master plan may benefit from additional professional expertise.

Specialist consultants may include:

- Town planner – for overlays, zoning, and development approvals
- Traffic engineer – for access, circulation, and parking assessments
- Landscape architect – for site layout and outdoor learning spaces
- Other technical specialists depending on site needs (e.g. acoustic, bushfire, heritage, sustainability, etc.)

Schools should also consider whether site investigations are required to support the master plan. These may include:

- Geotechnical investigation
- Site survey and service location
- Flow and pressure testing
- Other site-specific investigations as may be relevant (Condition assessments, service location, etc.)

Schools must obtain fee proposals for any supplementary consultants and investigations identified. These may be submitted individually, or the lead master planning consultant may include them within a consolidated proposal.

Engaging the right mix of specialists and undertaking appropriate investigations ensures the master plan is technically robust, costed, and responsive to the site's unique characteristics.

Step 4 - Checklist

Key activities to complete:

- [ ] Complete the site potential and constraints checklist.
- [ ] Identify and obtain fee proposals for supplementary specialists required.
- [ ] Identify and obtain fee proposals for required site investigations.

Apply

4 Complete the application online

After completion of steps one to three, schools will have all the required supporting documentation ready to apply for a master plan grant.

Applications are to be made online through the Enquire grant management system. The online form will guide applicant schools through completing the required sections and also prompt to upload the necessary documentation.

Further Help Notes specific to making an application online are available on the QIS BGA website.

If you require assistance accessing or using the Enquire grant management system, please contact the QIS BGA office.

Step 5 - Checklist

Key activities to complete:

- [ ] Enter the school's information and prepared responses into the online application.
- [ ] Upload the school's Strategic Plan.
- [ ] Upload the school's Sustainability Strategy (if in place at the time of application).
- [ ] Upload professional fee proposal/s for the core master planning team.
- [ ] Upload any supplementary specialist fee proposals.
- [ ] Upload a completed site potential and constraints checklist.
- [ ] Finalise and submit the application.



APPENDIX A – Site Potential & Constraints Checklist

Queensland Independent Schools BGA Block Grant Authority

Site Potential and Constraints Checklist

Version 02 – Nov 2025

Introduction

For the Site Potential and Constraints Checklist a "Traffic Light" system is used to record a preliminary assessment of current status, with the aim of identifying areas where additional consideration or investigation may be required.

The description of each colour is as follows:

- **Green** – Requirements for the Item are satisfied or not applicable, and no further work is required.
- **Orange** – It is unknown if the Requirements for the Item are satisfied, and further work to identify what further works are required is needed.
- **Red** – Requirements for the item are known to be unsatisfied and further work is required.

School Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Site Address: Click or tap here to enter text.

Item	Requirement	Initial Assessment			Comments
Local and State Planning Considerations					
1.1 Town Planning	Relevant planning approvals for the school are in place.	☐	☐	☐	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Local Government overlays have been reviewed and site constraints identified.	☐	☐	☐	Click or tap here to enter text.
	State Government overlays have been reviewed and site constraints identified.	☐	☐	☐	Click or tap here to enter text.
	National overlays have been reviewed and site constraints identified.	☐	☐	☐	Click or tap here to enter text.
1.2 Contamination	The site is not on a contaminated land register, nor is an approved contamination management plan in place.	☐	☐	☐	Click or tap here to enter text.
1.3 Other Planning Considerations	Other planning considerations unique to the site.	☐	☐	☐	Click or tap here to enter text.
Natural Environment Considerations					
2.1 Flood Hazard	Potential flooding sources for the site have been identified and their impact assessed.	☐	☐	☐	Click or tap here to enter text.

SAMPLE