

APPLICANT GUIDE

Your Future Starts Here

**Everything you need to
know to submit a great
application**



**SH
CF**

Southern
Highlands
Community
Foundation



WELCOME

THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS EDUCATION & APPRENTICESHIP FUND

Investing in young people. Building brighter futures.

You've already taken the first step

Choosing to continue your education or begin an apprenticeship is exciting. It's also a big commitment - and for many young people, it comes with financial challenges.

That's where the Southern Highlands Education & Apprenticeship Fund (SHEAF) can help.

SHEAF has been created by the Southern Highlands Community Foundation to support local young people as they pursue university, TAFE and apprenticeship pathways.

Through financial assistance, we're helping remove some of the barriers that can stand in the way of achieving your goals.

In the guide you'll discover

- ✓ Who can apply
- ✓ Which grant is right for you
- ✓ What the selection panel is looking for
- ✓ Tips for writing a strong application
- ✓ What happens after you apply



WHICH PATHWAY IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

TWO PATHWAYS

In 2026 the following SHEAF grants are available

**McLean University
Scholarship**
\$12,000 p/year
For three years

Designed to support students with essential living expenses while undertaking university study.

The scholarship can help with:

- Accommodation
- Living expenses
- Travel
- Technology and IT requirements

**SHEAF Apprenticeship
Grants**
\$500 - \$5000
One-off payment

One-off financial assistance to help with the practical costs of getting started or progressing in a trade.

Funding may be used for:

- Tools & equipment
- Travel costs
- Technology
- Establishment costs



COULD YOU APPLY?

LET'S FIND OUT IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE

If you can tick most of these boxes, we'd love to hear from you.

- ✓ I live in the Southern Highlands of NSW
- ✓ I'm between 16 and 25 years old
- ✓ I'm planning/undertaking further education/training
- ✓ I have financial need or hardship
- ✓ I'm committed to achieving my career goals
- ✓ I meet the entry requirements for my chosen course/apprenticeship

TIP!

If financial support would help you continue your education, it's worth applying.



THE APPLICATION JOURNEY

1 Check you are eligible to apply

2 Choose the pathway that suits you

3 Complete and submit the online application form

4 Applications close 30 September

5 Applications are reviewed

6 Successful applicants notified

7 Winners announced and funds paid

TIP!
The application process is not meant to be difficult, rather it should get you thinking about what you want and how you'll get there.



THE APPLICATION FORM

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE APPLICATION FORM

And make yours stand out!



TIP!

We want to get to know you. Tell us who you are and where you want to go.

Use examples

- Show us how you've overcome challenges or worked towards your goals.

Ask for help

- Ask a teacher, mentor or family member to review your application before submitting.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT APPLICATION FORM?

Tell your story

- Why does this opportunity matter to you?

Explain your goals

- What do you want to achieve?

Be specific

- Tell us exactly what you would use the funding for (with estimated costs where possible).

Explain your circumstances

- Help us understand the barriers you are facing.





FAQ'S

The Southern Highlands Education & Apprenticeship Fund

Your questions answered

Do I need to study within the Southern Highlands to get a SHEAF grant?

- No, where you study/train does not need to be Southern Highlands based

How do I show proof of my chosen pathway?

- For the University Scholarship we will award the scholarship once university places have been finalised for 2027. Receipt of the scholarship will be contingent on acceptance and enrolment in a university course. We recognise that applicants may not have this acceptance yet and still encourage you to apply in this round and notify us once acceptance has been received.
- For Apprenticeship Grants you must be enrolled in a course or apprenticeship and provide evidence of this.

Can I already be studying?

- Yes, SHEAF apprenticeship grants are open to those already enrolled in a course. However the McLean University Scholarship is for new students enrolled from 2027.

How do I demonstrate financial need or hardship?

- We will ask for a written response, a tick box declaration and a letter of support from your school, Tafe, educational institution, workplace or university.

What can I spend a SHEAF grant on?

- You can spend it on any reasonable living expense to do with your tertiary education. It can't be spent on the course or education itself.

How do report on what I've spent?

- You will need to keep receipts for all of your costs/expenses under the grant agreement and provide the receipts as part of your grant reporting process after 12 months.



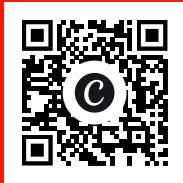
NEXT STEPS

APPLICATION FORM LINK & CHECKLIST

What happens next?

START YOUR
APPLICATION
FORM

shcf.org.au



Before you press Submit...

- ☐ I've checked that I'm eligible
- ☐ I've completed every section
- ☐ I've clearly explained my goals
- ☐ I've described how the funding will help me
- ☐ I've checked my spelling and grammar
- ☐ I've included my supporting information
- ☐ I've submitted before the closing date



What happens next?

The application closing date for SHEAF is September 30, 2026.

Successful applicants will be notified in late October.

If you would like to talk to us, contact office@shcf.org.au

Good Luck!