

Top 10 Tips for a successful ISW Program application

Here are our Top 10 Tips for applying for funding from the International Student Welfare (ISW) Program. Following this advice will give your funding application the best possible chance of success.

1. Confirm you are eligible *before* you apply

There are different eligibility requirements and funding limits for the two ISW Program categories. Decide from the outset which category is the most appropriate for your organisation and proposed activity.

In the past, we have received applications only to discover that the applicant, or the activity they are proposing, does not meet the specific funding criteria for this program.

Only fill out an application if your organisation and activity meet the ISW Program's eligibility criteria. To find out, complete the Eligibility Checklist on the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) page of the funding category that interests you:

FAQs for [Category 1: International Student Group Activities](#)

FAQs for [Category 2: Wellbeing Partnership Activities](#)

2. Speak with someone from the ISW Program team

If you have completed the Eligibility Checklist and are still uncertain about whether your organisation or proposed activity would qualify for funding, speak with a member of the ISW Program team.

Even if you have confirmed your eligibility, we recommend you contact the program team to discuss your proposed activity with them before completing your application.

You can email the program team via: studymelbourne@ecodev.vic.gov.au. Make it clear in the email's subject line that your enquiry is about the ISW Program. Provide a phone number so a team member can call you back.

3. Address the aims of the ISW Program

Read the program's application guidelines to find out the specific aims of the ISW Program and make sure the activity you are seeking funding for will help to address some or all of these aims.

Make sure you can clearly explain in your application how and why your activity will address the program's aims, and provide supporting evidence where available.

4. Involve international students

The ISW Program focuses on supporting the wellbeing of international students in Victoria. It is therefore critical that applicants demonstrate to us that they are committed to giving international students genuine opportunities to contribute and participate in their proposed activity. You need to explain how you intend to do this. If your proposal involves working closely with a student group or organisation, you must provide written evidence of this relationship.

5. Respond to all funding criteria and questions

Read the application guidelines for your chosen funding category and make sure your application clearly responds to the 'must' requirements in those guidelines.

Where possible, explain how your proposed activity will also achieve other positive outcomes that support the wellbeing of international students in Victoria, as mentioned in the guidelines.

6. Explain the 'what, why, who, when, where and how'

When describing your proposed activity in the Application Form, make sure you clearly explain:

- **what** will be delivered – clearly define the scope of the activity you are seeking funding for and list the number of events, sessions, products and/or services to be delivered.
- **why** the proposed activity and the approach you are taking will be effective in helping to improve the wellbeing of international students, and which wellbeing issues will be addressed.
- **who** will be involved in delivering the activity. This includes explaining the roles and intended contributions from any supporting or partner organisations.
- **who** the proposed activity will reach, including the number and type of international students likely to participate.
- **when** and **where** the activity will be delivered.
- **how** the activity will be delivered. For example, how the activity will be coordinated, how you will plan for and manage risks, and how you will provide appropriate insurance cover.
- **how** you intend to involve international students in planning, delivering and/or reviewing the activity.

7. Don't rely solely on ISW Program funding

Wherever possible, find ways to work with other organisations to obtain additional cash or in-kind support for your proposed activity. If you have already attracted extra support, tell us about this in your application.

Study Melbourne strongly encourages organisations to work together to deliver activities that support international students in Victoria. For example, working in partnership is an essential requirement when applying for funding under [Category 2: Wellbeing Partnership Activities](#).

8. Provide sufficient supporting material

The quality of the information you provide in supporting documents is extremely important.

Similarly, if you have the support of one or more other organisations to deliver the proposed activity, you need to provide written evidence of these relationships and what the other organisations have committed to.

If you are applying for more than \$10,000 in funding, you must provide your organisation's financial reports for the last two financial years.

Think about what other relevant supporting information you can provide that will strengthen your application and give the assessment panel confidence in your proposed activity and your ability to follow through if funding is approved.

9. Pay attention to the detail in your application

If your application contains vague or insufficient information, budget figures or numbers that don't add up when checked, typos, spelling mistakes and bad grammar, this will significantly reduce the impact the application has on our assessment panel. It may even be rejected before it reaches the panel.

Make sure you respond to all the sections and questions in the online Application Form. For Category 2, complete the Budget and Expenditure Forecast spread sheets and double-check that the figures and calculations are correct.

Cross check between the Application Form and your supporting documents to make sure the content is consistent. Label all supporting documents and cross reference them with the content in your Application Form.

Finally, give yourself enough time to re-read the application to pick up any mistakes or gaps in content. Ask one or two colleagues to read the application and supporting material. A fresh set of eyes may pick up issues that the writer does not see.

10. Get your application in early

Plan ahead so you can submit your application before the closing date. Late applications will not be accepted once each funding round has closed.

If possible, submit your application well before the closing date. This gives us time to review your proposal and get back to you with any questions or suggestions while there is still time to update and re-submit the application if required.