



DEFENCE INDUSTRY GROWTH & RESILIENCE (DIGR) VOUCHER PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Contents

About the Voucher Program	2
Activity Streams	2
1. Business Uplift	2
2. Technical & Testing	2
3. Workforce Connect	2
What can the money be used for?	2
Business Uplift	3
Technical & Testing	3
Workforce Connect	3
Funding	4
Funding Model	4
Funding limits	5
Voucher Program Funding rounds	5
Voucher Project / Activity period	5
Eligibility	5
Who can apply?	5
Criteria for companies	5
Industry obligations	6
Application	6
Supporting Material	6
In-kind contributions	6
Restrictions	7
Application	7
Capital Assets	7
International Travel	7
Application Process	7
Voucher rounds	7
Application	8
Selection Process	8
Grant evaluation	8
Grant review panel	8
Assessment Criteria	8
Application outcome	8
Successful Applications	9
Grant agreement	9
Project/ Activity Reporting requirements	9
Transfer of Funds	9

Defence Trailblazer is a collaborative partnership between the University of Adelaide (UoA) and UNSW, supported by the Australian Government's Department of Education. In collaboration with over 95 industry partners, academia and government, the Defence Trailblazer aims to strengthen Australia's defence capabilities by developing cutting-edge technologies and solutions, while simultaneously equipping the next generation of innovators with specialised knowledge and skills to meet the current and future needs of Defence.

Defence Trailblazer is launching a **new \$2.5 million** Defence Industry Growth & Resilience (DIGR) voucher program to our existing industry partners.

About the Voucher Program

The DIGR program aims to create stronger and more resilient defence businesses enabling businesses to scale and compete to deliver sovereign capability to our Australian Defence Force and potentially our allies.

The DIGR program will provide cash funding to support projects or activities conducted within your business designed to strengthen your business' position in the defence industry. These initiatives must align with the DIGR program's activity stream/s and demonstrate a clear focus on growth, resilience and enhancing your business's role within the defence sector.

Activity Streams

The three streams will support industry-led projects and activities in the following areas:

1. Business Uplift

To help businesses increase their defence readiness and develop and execute strategies for company growth, product, new markets or business resilience.

2. Technical & Testing

To help businesses to undertake design, prototyping, testing and evaluation, validation and verification, demonstration and trials, and de-risking activities required to commercialise new defence or dual-use products, processes or services.

3. Workforce Connect

To support workforce talent engagement and retention, talent attraction, upskilling and training, mobilisation of UNSW, UoA or TAFE students, graduates and Defence veterans into the defence industry.

What can the money be used for?

The DIGR voucher can be used to supplement the cost of the project or activity to build growth and resilience within your business. The focus of the project/activity needs to align with increasing the business's competitiveness in the defence industry.

Any growth and resilience activities that align with your strategies or plans and are within Defence Trailblazer's remit can be considered. Each stream has a list of suggested activities.

Business Uplift

Develop and/or execute:

- product development and/or R&D strategies
- a company growth strategy
- an export strategy
- IP protection strategy
- commercialisation pathway development
- a new dual-use or international market/s strategy
- branding and/or marketing strategy development targeted at Defence customers, primes, and government stakeholders

Uplift Defence readiness:

- prepare a Defence market strategy
- assist with the cost of employee security clearances
- achieve or upgrade DISP membership level
- achieve ISO27001 certification, or other defence related certification

Uplift business resilience:

- business, Defence, and/or investment readiness
- pricing strategies
- cyber uplift
- legal and compliance support tailored to Defence
- collaborations.

Technical & Testing

- To access equipment, facilities or expertise within the Defence Trailblazer Proto-Lab Network – including equipment, facilities or expertise within:
 - the University of Adelaide or UNSW
 - Defence Trailblazer quantum and electronics bonders, robotic additive manufacturing, and optics freeform generator equipment packages operated by CSIRO
 - External parties who have joined the [Proto-Lab Network](#) as a supplier.
- To access equipment, facilities or expertise outside the Defence Trailblazer Proto-Lab Network if the required equipment, facilities or expertise is not available inside the Network
- To purchase equipment and consumables required for the project or activity
- For other related expenses such as travel, postage, design services, etc.

Workforce Connect

Vouchers can support businesses by providing financial support for the hiring of student interns, post-docs, graduates, academics or upskilling new and existing staff.

Student internship placement

Provides financial support to the business for student intern wages (minimum \$1,200 weekly rate) for 12 weeks/450 hours (or pro-rata) for University of Adelaide (UoA) and/or UNSW students.

Resource Engagement

Hiring UoA, UNSW and/or TAFE Student, Graduate or Academic Talent

Businesses can apply for a voucher to support the financial costs associated with employing (either through a casual, part-time or permanent arrangement) UoA, UNSW and/or TAFE Talent for the duration of a role for up until November 30, 2026.

“Talent” is defined as current students, graduates (up to 2 years from graduating), academics from either UoA, UNSW and/or TAFE. This talent can be either new or previously associated with Defence Trailblazer. For example, industry partners can use a voucher to further extend engagement with previous Defence Trailblazer student interns or staff mobility initiatives under a casual, part-time or permanent employment arrangement.

It is the responsibility of the business to identify and hire the talent. A voucher can cover costs associated with hiring for multiple roles.

Veteran employment

Businesses can apply for a voucher to support the financial costs associated with employing (either through a casual, part-time or permanent arrangement) a veteran from the Australian Defence force for the duration of a role for up until November 30, 2026.

For the purpose of this voucher program a “Veteran” is defined as an individual who has transitioned from continuous full-time service (SERCAT 7 or SERVOP C) with the Australian Defence force, within the last 2 years.

It is the responsibility of the business to identify and hire the talent. A voucher can cover costs associated with hiring for multiple roles.

Upskilling and training your staff

- Utilising the Universities (UNSW/UoA), TAFE and/or registered training organisations (RTOs), the voucher can provide financial support for costs associated with training and upskilling new and existing employees. This includes coursework, travel and accommodation.
- University-based coursework (e.g. Combat Systems Engineering (CSE) micro-credentials, IPAS photonics, CSC Capability Systems Centre)
- Vouchers can also be used to pay for course and training fees for students employed by industry partners.

Funding

Funding Model

Defence Trailblazer will provide the industry partner with a cash voucher funding to assist with their project/activity.

The funding model will provide **\$1** for every **\$3** of industry contribution, to a maximum of **25%** of the project/activity cost. That is, for every **\$1 of cash** provided by Defence Trailblazer, we require a ratio of **\$3 cash and/or in-kind equivalent** contribution from industry.

There are no specific requirements for the proportion of cash expenditure and in-kind contribution that makes up to the industry contribution. For example, an industry’s contribution may be all in-kind rather than cash. However, please note that for student intern placements under the Workforce Connect stream, industry contribution(s) must include cash to cover 75% of student wages.

If there is university involvement in the project, then the university contribution will not be considered in the industry co-contribution calculations.

Funding limits

The maximum voucher amount per application is \$100,000 or up to 25 percent of the project/activity cost. A single application encompassing multiple activities across all streams will be considered, provided it supports on unified objective.

Projects and/or activities exceeding this amount will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Contact programs@dtb.solutions prior to application to discuss your application and project/activity needs.

Voucher Program Funding rounds

The voucher program will be released in rounds based on available funding.

The first round will begin on the first Monday of June (2 June) and the application period will close on the last Friday of June (27 June).

All future round dates will be updated on the Defence Trailblazer website.

Voucher Project / Activity period

There is no minimum length of time for the project and/or activity included in the application, however, all work must be completed by 30 November 2026.

Project and activities included within the voucher program must conclude no later than 30 November 2026.

A post funding agreement closure report is required to be submitted to Defence Trailblazer within two weeks of the project or activity completion or the 15 December 2026, whichever is earlier. Industry will be provided with a closure report template for this purpose.

Eligibility

Who can apply?

- The DIGR program is open to all Defence Trailblazer industry partners, defined as industry partners that have contributed cash/or in-kind to a Defence Trailblazer R&D project or a Workforce, Innovation or Culture activity including DINAMIC program participants (from Entrepreneurial Foundations for Defence, High Growth Incubation or Technical Incubation program).
- Proposed activities may be extensions of related work undertaken through TDA, ASIC, Cyber Security Voucher Program or DINAMIC programs, or maybe new activities.

Defence Trailblazer reserves the right to invite other companies to submit applications.

Criteria for companies

- A valid/current ABN / ACN
- Based in Australia
- Small to Medium Enterprise (Business Uplift streams only)
- Current public liability insurance of at least \$20 million AUD per occurrence (required for Workforce Connect stream – Student Internships)

Industry obligations

Application

Submit an application using the online DIGR Application form, including:

- detailed project costing using the provided template
- outline all in-kind contributions
- provide any supporting documentation (e.g. quotes)
- demonstrate that industry funding obligations are met (1:3).

An example of the amount of industry contribution required for a voucher follows:

Total Project/ cost	Minimum total industry contributions (cash and/or in-kind)	Voucher Cash Amount
\$20,000	\$15,000	\$5,000
\$40,000	\$30,000	\$10,000
\$80,000	\$60,000	\$20,000
\$120,000	\$90,000	\$30,000
\$170,000	\$130,000	\$40,000
\$210,000	\$160,000	\$50,000
\$400,000	\$300,000	\$100,000

Supporting Material

Industry is responsible to source all applicable quotes, estimates and costings related to the project / activity. The supporting material can be provided as part of the application.

Industry is responsible to keep records of all activity associated with the proposal for auditing purposes.

If the industry partner requires assistance from Defence Trailblazer with external provider, supporting partner or Proto-Lab network introductions, contact the team at digr@dtb.solutions.

In-kind contributions

In-kind commitments from industry may include but are not limited to salaries including staff or student supervision, travel costs, software and licenses, access to facilities including office space, specialist labs, IT facilities and security clearance fees.

For the purpose of the DIGR program, in-kind contributions can also include cash expenditure required by the business to complete the project/activity in the proposal.

Refer to the DIGR industry contribution guidance document located on the DIGR website for more information.

Restrictions

DIGR voucher funding cannot be used for the following:

- Projects or activities that replicate activities that are already funded through other Defence Trailblazer initiatives.
- Projects or activities are already funded through alternative grant agreements.
- Projects or activities funded through vouchers cannot be retrospective.

Application

Businesses can apply for vouchers to all three streams at one time but only one application per stream is permitted per round but must demonstrate the ability to deliver all activities for which funding is sought.

Capital Assets

Funding over \$50,000 on an individual asset requires approval from the Department of Education.

Defence Trailblazer will initiate these approvals for successful applications.

International Travel

International travel requires approval from the Department of Education

Defence Trailblazer will initiate these approvals for successful applications.

Application Process

Voucher rounds

Grant Round	Round Opens	Round Closes	Assessment / Panel Review	Notification
1	Mon 2 June	Fri 27 June	Mon 30 June – Fri 11 July	By Fri 18 July

- **Additional rounds after Round 1 will be based on available funding.*

Possible dates for future rounds

Grant Round	Round Opens	Round Closes	Assessment / Panel Review	Notification
2	Tues 1 July	Fri 25 July	Mon 28 July – Fri 8 Aug	By Fri 15 Aug
3	Mon 4 Aug	Fri 29 Aug	Mon 1 Sept – Fri 12 Sept	By Fri 18 Sept
4	Mon 1 Sept	Fri 26 Sept	Mon 29 Sept – Fri 10 Oct	By Fri 17 Oct

Round dates, frequency and duration may be adjusted as needed.

All details relating to future rounds will be published on the Defence Trailblazer website.

Application

Industry will submit an application via the Defence Trailblazer website online application form. Applications will be accepted up to the round close date.

All applicable sections must be completed and supporting documentation provided, including all project costing. A project costing template will be provided on the website and will need to be attached to the application as part of the supporting material

A notification of receipt will be sent to the applicant upon completion of the application.

Selection Process

Grant evaluation

All applications will undergo an initial assessment to verify that the application meets the voucher program criteria. This assessment will be conducted by the DIGR Program manager and stream leads.

DIGR Program Manager or stream leads may consult with applicants as part of the assessment process.

Grant review panel

The grant review panel will consist of members of the Defence Trailblazer team, University stakeholder/s, nominated external parties. The panel review members will vary depending on the stream activity within the application.

Applications that meet criteria will progress to panel review.

Applications will undergo review against voucher requirements and criteria

The review panel will assess each application based on the criteria.

Assessment Criteria

Overview of planned project / activity aligns business to increase their competitiveness in the defence industry.

Proposal aligns with Defence Trailblazer objectives and demonstrates that the applicant has the resources required to deliver proposed outcomes and expend awarded funds in the project or activity timeframe.

Contributions meet 1:3 cash/in-kind (\$1 DIGR Voucher: \$3 Industry partner cash and/or in-kind contribution).

Application outcome

All applications will be notified of the outcome of their application by email.

Notification dates are provided in the table above (Voucher rounds).

Successful Applications

Grant agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into an agreement with Defence Trailblazer based on the application proposal.

The DIGR funding agreement will be provided to successful applicants.

Project/ Activity Reporting requirements

Defence Trailblazer will coordinate reporting with the industry partner:

- Bi-annual Report
- Grant Closure report

It is the responsibility of the industry partner to keep track of all records pertaining to this agreement and their fulfillment of the funding agreement.

Transfer of Funds

Once approved for the voucher program, the Defence Trailblazer team will discuss all details for payment schedule, payment terms and transfer of funds with the applicant.

Payment terms will be in accordance with an agreed payment schedule outlined in the Funding agreement.