



National Tax Clinic Program Expansion Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Introduction

This FAQ provides answers to questions asked by the public throughout the consultation process and open competitive grant. This document will be updated by the ATO as questions are submitted to the ExpansionofNationalTaxClinics@ato.gov.au.

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Tax Clinic Operation

Q: Do I need to hire a Tax Agent for my tax clinic?

A: You do not need to hire/employ a registered Tax Agent in a tax clinic. This is because each clinic operates using a hybrid of employed (including for a nominal fee) and pro-bono registered professionals who may or may not use their registration status to assist tax clinic clients. There are, however, benefits to having a registered tax agent involved in the clinic, including, their ability to use their registration to represent clients (i.e. add them to their client list to undertake client work) and receive the same level of service as all tax professionals when engaging with the ATO.

Q: How long does my tax clinic need to be open for? Is it on a continuous 12-month basis, or only during semesters or during tax time?

A: There is no set duration for how long a tax clinic needs to be open for.

However, applicants should align their grant funding request to the proposed operational periods of the tax clinic and the services that they intend to provide.

Generally, tax clinics operate throughout the semester period according to their educational institution's calendar, which may include tax time (July to October).

To date, tax clinics experience the most demand for services during tax time, which would be an ideal time to have the tax clinic open, subject to capacity. Applicants can apply for different funding amounts across the three years (capped at a maximum of \$100k per year) to account for factors such as set-up costs and changes in operating models over time.

Q: Will there be reporting templates available?

A: Yes, the ATO will provide a template which outlines reporting requirements. More information about reporting requirements will be contained in the ATO Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Grant Process

Q: How does the grant process work?

A: The ATO is undertaking consultation with key stakeholder groups via a consultation paper available on the ato.gov.au website. Once consultation has concluded, the Grant Opportunity Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect, which is anticipated to be late May 2024 at this stage.

You will receive communications to advise of next steps, in due course.

***This FAQ previously advised Grant Opportunity Guidelines were anticipated to be published late March, early April 2024.**

Q: How long is the grant process expected to take?

A: At this stage, we anticipate the process will occur from May 2024 to July 2024. The aim is to have the tax clinics operational from January 2025.

There will be more information provided in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Note: It was previously advised that the process will occur from March 2024 to July 2024.

Q: Where do I submit a question about the consultation or overall grant process?

A: Further questions or any further enquiries, please email ExpansionofNationalTaxClinics@ato.gov.au.

Q: What timeframe will applicants have to apply for the Grant?

A: The timeframe applicants will be given to apply is current planned to be between 6-7 weeks.

Q: My TAFE institution focuses purely on BAS and GST services; we do not handle general taxation. Am I still eligible to apply?

A: This factor alone does not deem your organisation ineligible to apply for the upcoming grant. The Grant Opportunity Guidelines will include more information on the eligibility criteria. Tax clinics will offer varying tax product services to the community and there is no set criteria of services to be offered, as long they fall under the Australian taxation system.

Consultation

Q: Is consultation mandatory to participate in?

A: No, however we strongly encourage feedback from key stakeholder groups as the feedback will be used to inform the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Note: consultation has closed as of 9 February 2024.

Q: Do I need to respond to all questions on the consultation paper?

A: No, only those questions that you wish to provide responses to.