These Guidelines will aid you in preparing your application. You should read them in full, and ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the Program.

**Purpose**

The PEEP Guidelines provide information for applicants wishing to apply for any of the following initiatives:

**PEEP Tier 1:**
- Professional Employment Assistance
- Education & Training
- Personalised Resume Preparation
- Professional Re-registration Payable on Relocation
- Superannuation Set-up courses

**PEEP Tier 2:**
- Education & Training

**Assessment of Applications**

All applications submitted to the Defence Community Organisation (DCO) HQ will be assessed to confirm eligibility.

**Outcome of Applications**

DCO will email applicants with advice of the outcome of their applications. Applicants should anticipate that it will take a minimum of 28 days from receipt of the application form and any necessary evidence as attachments to the application form.

**Your Responsibility**

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that they have read these Guidelines, that their application meets the eligibility criteria and that the information provided in their application is true and correct. Approved applicants **must** advise of any subsequent change in circumstances relating to relationship status, study, locality or ongoing employment with the Australian Public Service (APS). Applicants must also print and sign the application form with an understanding that the Program is Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) reportable.

**Application Assistance**

If you require assistance in completing the PEEP application process, contact DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au

**For more Information**

Go to the DCO website [www.defence.gov.au/dco](http://www.defence.gov.au/dco) or call the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608 or visit your local DCO office.

Please keep these Guidelines for your information
Preface

Under the umbrella of the ADF Family covenant and in accordance with DCO Strategic priorities, the PEEP aims to help achieve a sustainable, self-reliant Defence Community.

These guidelines set out the intent of the Program along with the eligibility criteria that applications will be assessed against.

Applicants should be aware that giving false or misleading information to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth). Where false or misleading information is provided, or relevant information withheld, criminal or disciplinary action under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013, Defence Force Discipline Act 1982, Public Service Act 1999, or the Criminal Code Act 1995 may be taken depending on the circumstances. If the applicant is a member of the ADF, or employed under the Public Service Act, administrative action may also be taken by Defence and sanctions imposed. Applications may be disregarded if, in the belief of the Department, false or misleading information has formed a component of an application.

RAY BROMWICH
Director General
Defence Community Organisation

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Part 1 – Introduction

General

1.1 The requirement for periodic relocations is often an integral part of the Defence lifestyle and can cause disruption to the ongoing employment of the partners of ADF members.

1.2 The intent of the Partner Education and Employment Program (PEEP) is to provide access to funding for Defence-recognised partners of ADF members to assist them in securing employment within their existing career stream when relocated with their partner due to posting.

1.3 PEEP does not guarantee employment; nor is it intended to fund career changes, professional development within career streams (i.e. where the partner already possesses an existing qualification and employment) or self-interest and hobby courses. Rather, it provides assistance toward initiatives which improve the chances of employability of Defence-recognised partners when they are relocated as a consequence of their ADF partner’s military service.

Aim

1.4 PEEP aims to:
   a. provide opportunities for Defence-recognised partners to enhance their employability through a range of DCO funded initiatives;
   b. strengthen family wellbeing and thereby strengthen the capability of the ADF;
   c. build linkages and networks for Defence partners in their local community and address skills shortages within the Australian employment sector; and
   d. aid the retention of ADF members

1.5 PEEP offers two tiers of funding to eligible partners.

PEEP Tier 1

1.6 Tier 1 is open to all ranks and provides an education and employment allowance of up to $12,000 which can be accessed within 10 years from approval. Approved applicants can apply to access up to the capped amount of $6,000 of this allowance for each new posting locality and apply it towards a range of initiatives. These initiatives cover:
   a. professional employment assistance, such as career advice and job search skills; or
   b. education and training courses (up to and including first time undergraduate degrees);
   c. personalised résumé preparation;
   d. professional re-registration costs under State legislative requirements payable on relocation;
   e. superannuation set-up courses

1.7 Any expenditure over and above the $6,000 cap in any posting locality must be self funded, and is not funded under PEEP. Tier 1 is funded by Defence on an ongoing basis but approval of applications cannot be guaranteed and is always subject to the availability of sufficient funding in the financial year.

PEEP Tier 2

1.8 Tier 2 funding is available to the Defence-recognised partners of Private to Sergeant (and equivalent) enlisted ranks and Lieutenant to Captain (and equivalent) officer ranks. Eligible partners are required to nominate their course/s of study upfront.

1.9 This provides an in-financial year (1 July – 30 June), one-off payment of up to $3000 which can be accessed by eligible and approved applicants for education or vocational training, up to and including first time undergraduate degrees. Any funding expended under a successful Tier 2 application will be deducted from the Tier 1 allowance of $12,000, should a Defence-recognised partner subsequently be successful in gaining access to Tier 1.
2.1 Assistance is provided both within Australia and overseas. People posted overseas can access PEEP funding for professional re-registration costs and distance learning through Australian Registered Training Organisations.

2.2 PEEP assistance helps to address the possible disadvantage experienced by the ADF member and their partner because of the disruption to a partner’s employment as a result of a posting to a new locality. PEEP is not a statutory entitlement and is available to Defence–recognised partners strictly in accordance with the terms and conditions of this policy document.

2.3 Defence also provides assistance to partners so that the ADF member can better meet their work and family responsibilities thereby strengthening capability and retention.

2.4 PEEP assistance to a Defence-recognised partner is not to duplicate the support for which families may be eligible through other Government organisations, or that may be provided by their current employer and any such support must be declared on the PEEP application form.

2.5 The allowance is a contribution towards a Defence-recognised partner’s training and education needs; it should not be regarded as Defence’s responsibility to fund the full cost where the cost exceeds the PEEP funding cap for a posting location.

2.6 Education and training assistance only includes the course tuition costs. PEEP does not cover subscription fees, administration fees, workshops, police or working with children checks, textbooks, course material costs, uniforms, internet costs or equipment associated with the course. Nor does it cover accommodation, meals, counselling sessions, driving lessons, postage and travel to and from any venue or location from which the training is being conducted.

Changes you should tell DCO about

2.7 DCO should be advised as soon as possible in the event that:

   a. you separate from your partner; or
   b. you have a change of address, telephone or contact details; or
   c. you move to another posting locality, including a move to your own home; or
   d. you stop undertaking study, or leave a training course before it ends, or
   e. you have a change in employment status, particularly if you gain ongoing employment with the Commonwealth or State Government.

   NOTE: Advice of any of the above changes can be provided via the PEEP Application form.
3.1 PEEP eligibility is based on the following criteria:

a. Applicants must be recognised on Personnel Management Key Solution (PMKeyS) as a partner of a full time ADF member on effective service.

b. ADF members must have completed four years continuous full time service in the ADF before partners may apply for PEEP. Lateral recruits may count effective military service in other countries, but must provide evidence of length of service.

c. ADF members who have completed four years continuous full-time service, separate for greater than two years and then re-enlist will be assessed against the re-enlistment Service date.

d. Applications must be lodged within two years of the ADF member’s partner being granted a removal to a new posting location within Australia.

e. Defence must have relocated the partner to a new posting locality upon the posting of the ADF member, or on marriage or recognition of an interdependent relationship resulting in relocation. If the ADF member proceeds on a posting unaccompanied, the partner is not eligible for PEEP funding.

f. Tier 2 only applies to partners of ADF members with the worn rank of Private (E) to Sergeant (E) or Lieutenant (E) to Captain (E).

g. PEEP is not available to partners of ADF members who are separating from the ADF. Once the intention to separate is recorded on PMKeyS, any further entitlement to PEEP ceases.

h. Current ADF members are not eligible for assistance under PEEP. Former ADF members may be eligible if they provide evidence that they are not eligible for, or have not received other similar assistance offered by Defence through the Career Transition Assistance Scheme (CTAS).

i. Defence-recognised partners who are also ADF reservists will be considered and assessed against all other eligibility requirements. Defence recognised partners who are undertaking continuous full time Service are not eligible for PEEP funding.

j. Defence Australian Public Service (APS) employees who are the recognised partners of ADF members can seek assistance from PEEP as per H4.1 of DECA 2012-14, this eligibility only remains extant under DECA 2012-14. All ADF partners who currently have ongoing employment with Commonwealth, State or Local Government or have non-ongoing employment with the APS will be considered and assessed against all other eligibility requirements.

k. Defence-recognised partners who have regular employment or are on paid maternity leave will not be eligible for any assistance that replicates training that could be provided by, or is deemed to be the responsibility of, their current employer.

l. Should the ADF member die during Service, an approved applicant may access PEEP funds for up to two years after the member’s death.

m. Defence-recognised partners who are approved for assistance under PEEP Tier 1 must access funding within twelve months of approval or they will be required to re-apply. An application for Tier 1 must include the proposed course of study.

n. Approval will be granted for one course of study at a time, application forms with multiple courses listed will not be considered - Proof of completion of proposed course will be required before any further courses will be considered. Applications for additional courses will require transcripts or results. Should these not be unavailable at the time of applying for further funding assistance, partners may still apply but approval or funding may be delayed until this evidence is received.
Part 4 – Initiatives Available

Professional Employment Services Assistance (Tier 1)

4.1 Funding assistance of up to $1,000 is available upon receipt of a quote for an applicant to choose a professional employment service provider of their choice to provide the following assistance:

a. career transition assessment and advice; and/or
b. job search techniques and strategies; and/or
c. preparation and presentation for interview; and/or
d. application and selection criteria preparation; and/or
e. identifying job options.

Education/Training (Tier 1 and 2)

4.2 PEEP may fund vocational courses and tertiary study up to and including a partner’s first undergraduate degree. Defence-recognised partners accessing this initiative overseas may only study via distance learning through Australian Registered Training Organisations.

4.3 Courses covered by PEEP must be:

a. accredited;
b. provided through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO);
c. likely to add employment related skills; and
d. GST free.

4.4 Courses and training can be provided:

a. via face-to-face attendance;
b. online; or
c. by correspondence.

Limitations on Assistance

4.5 Defence-recognised partners must clearly demonstrate the relevance of the proposed course of training or study to their present or likely future employment opportunities. PEEP assistance is not available under either Tier to fund a career change, ongoing professional development within a partner’s established field of work, self-interest or hobby courses.

4.6 Postgraduate study will ordinarily not be approved as, consistent with the intent of PEEP, applicants who already hold undergraduate qualifications are considered to have the requisite skills to obtain employment. However, where there is an acknowledged national skills shortage, applications for discretionary approval will be considered on a case by case basis for certain additional tertiary courses. Examples of exceptions may include bridging courses for nurses or teachers.

4.7 Under PEEP, a career change will be deemed to be any variation to your current employment stream or educational qualifications. Whilst it is acknowledged that career change can occur for a number of reasons, PEEP is to assist Defence-recognised partners secure employment within their current employment stream when posted with the member, not to assist with increasing personal fulfilment by trying a new career because of a changed location. Should a Defence-recognised partner find it difficult continuing their chosen career in a new posting locality or has been unemployed in that career stream for over two years, approval may be given if it can be clearly demonstrated that opportunities do not currently exist in the posting locality and the proposed study will provide employment opportunities.

4.8 Under PEEP, professional development will be deemed to be skills and knowledge attained for personal development to assist in career advancement within current employment stream. Assistance will not be offered for courses of study that are deemed to be those that should be provided by a current employer.

4.9 Self interest or hobby courses will not be funded under PEEP as these courses are not likely to improve a partner’s ability to be competitive in the job market.
4.10 There is no limitation placed on the length or duration of a nominated course of study. However, funding for Tier 1 is capped at $6,000 per posting locality. Any cost of the course that will not be met within the funding cap is the responsibility of the applicant.

4.11 Courses that attract GST will not be funded under PEEP.

4.12 PEEP assistance will only be granted if the vocational course is accredited and provided through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). Refer to link www.training.gov.au for Registered Training Organisations (RTO’s).

4.13 All PEEP applicants who have been approved for their nominated course of study and wish to access additional PEEP initiatives or undertake subsequent courses must complete the PEEP Application form located on the DCO website www.defence.gov.a/dco. This form also enables partners to update their address when they relocate. Proof of completion of a proposed course/s of study will be required before any future applications for assistance will be considered.

Long Term Study
4.14 If partners are undertaking longer term study under Tier 1, approval must be obtained each financial year for the intended units/course of study during that year. When applying for additional units or courses, evidence must be attached that the previously funded study has been completed.

Open Universities Australia
4.15 Defence has a partnership with Open Universities Australia (OUA), which offers higher education and vocational study options from single units to entire degree programs. Partners are encouraged to take up distance learning through OUA, as it allows you to learn at your own pace and from wherever you are currently posted.

4.16 OUA’s value-added offer for Defence includes an advisory support team, financial assistance with text books, and tutorial support. Partners do not need to be a PEEP applicant to access the services offered by OUA. The offer extends to ADF personnel, Defence APS employees and their immediate families. Visit the OUA website at www.open.edu.au/peep for more information.

Personalised Resume Preparation (Tier 1)
4.17 Funding assistance of up to $500 is available upon receipt of a quote for a personalised resume to be prepared by a professional service provider of your choice.

Professional Re-registration Payable on Relocation (Tier 1)
4.18 Defence-recognised partners who relocate to a new locality on posting (whether in Australia or overseas) and who are required to re-register due to State legislative requirements in order to be able to continue in the same profession in their new locality, can apply for payment of such professional re-registration costs. This does not include annual registration fees. Overseas funding is only paid in Australian currency.

Superannuation Set-up courses
4.19 Funding assistance is available upon receipt of a quote to attend specific training to set-up a self managed superannuation fund. This funding is not available to engage brokerage services or to make contributions into a superannuation fund.
Part 5 – How to apply

5.1 Applications for Tier 1 can be lodged throughout the financial year (subject to the availability of sufficient funding). Applications for Tier 2 may be lodged at any time up to 30 June 2015.

5.2 Interested partners need to read the eligibility criteria and then complete the PEEP application form. The form must be printed and signed by both the ADF member and the applicant, and submitted to DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au. If the member is absent due to deployment, training or exercise, please state this in his/her signature field on the application form. Incomplete or unsigned application forms will be returned and not processed until all mandatory fields are completed.

5.3 Partners need to clearly demonstrate the relevance of the proposed initiative to their chosen field of employment.

5.4 Applications must be lodged prior to commencing a course. There is no discretion to approve applications for assistance retrospectively.

5.5 PEEP staff will assess applications in the order in which they are received against the eligibility criteria. Applicants should anticipate that it will take a minimum of 28 days from receipt of the application form (and any necessary evidence as attachments to the application form) for an assessment to be made. Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

5.6 Approved applicants may be required to supply evidence at any stage subsequent to their approval to confirm their continuing eligibility having regard to the requirements and aim of PEEP.

Approved PEEP Applicants

5.7 Defence-recognised partners who have previously been approved for PEEP and want to access their funding for further study must complete the PEEP application form available from the DCO website. This process applies to partners wanting additional funding assistance for other PEEP initiatives or new course requests.

5.8 Evidence must be attached that PEEP previously funded study has been completed. Should transcripts or results be unavailable at the time of applying for further funding assistance, partners may still apply, however, approval or funding may be delayed until this evidence is received.

5.9 If circumstances change and the Defence-recognised partner cannot undertake the training through ill health or for any other reason, it is the Defence-recognised partner’s responsibility to negotiate or arrange with the service provider to have the training deferred to a later date or for the money to be reimbursed back to Defence. Approved applicants are required to contact DCO to advise of the changes. If this is not undertaken then no further funding will be approved.
Part 6 - Payment or Reimbursement

6.1 Following approval of a PEEP Tier 1 application and subject to the availability of funds, the allowance is able to be accessed for ten years from the date of approval, subject also to the ADF member continuing in effective service during that period. Applicants must access approved funding within twelve months of the date of notification of eligibility and is limited to only $6,000 for each new posting locality.

6.2 If a partner is undertaking longer term study under Tier 1, approval must be obtained each financial year for the intended course of study during that year. Evidence must be provided that any previously funded study has been completed before further funding is provided.

6.3 Funding approved under Tier 2 must be expended in the financial year in which it is approved.

Payment/Reimbursement

6.4 DCO may pay the service provider on a partner’s behalf upon receipt of an authorised invoice. Alternatively, the partner may pay the provider and seek reimbursement from DCO. The expense will be reimbursed to the ADF member’s bank account on receipt of evidence of payment.

6.5 Partners must obtain prior approval for their chosen course of study. Applications must be lodged prior to enrolling in a course.

6.6 All requests for payments and reimbursements should clearly state the PEEP ID approval number to enable efficient payment and finalisation of accounts.

6.7 Invoices issued by the ATO for FEE-HELP will not be considered. It is up to the applicant to liaise with their University to amend the payment terms for DCO to process fees with the University directly.

Fringe Benefits Tax

6.8 Payment of this benefit may result in a Reportable Fringe Benefit Tax Amount (RFBA) being recorded against the ADF member. An RFBA will result when a member has received fringe benefits to the total of $2000.00 in a FBT year (1 April to 31 March). An RFBA does not have any income tax implications, but will have financial impacts if you are in receipt of any Government means tested benefits. Therefore it is recommended that applicants seek independent tax advice prior to lodging an application.

For further information regarding the impacts of a RFBA refer to the ATO website: https://www.ato.gov.au/General/Fringe-benefits-tax/In-detail/Employees/Reportable-fringe-benefits---facts-for-employees/

Summary Letter

6.9 Summary letters outlining the initiatives that have been funded and remaining balance are available on request via email address: DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au
Part 7 – Administration

Disclaimer

7.1 The Australian Government will not accept responsibility for any misunderstanding arising from the failure by an applicant to comply with these Guidelines, or arising from any ambiguity, discrepancy or error contained in an application.

False or Misleading Information

7.2 Applicants should be aware that giving false or misleading information to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth). Where false or misleading information is provided, or relevant information withheld, criminal or disciplinary action under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013, Defence Force Discipline Act 1982, Public Service Act 1999, or the Criminal Code Act 1995 may be taken depending on the circumstances. If the applicant is a member of the ADF, or employed under the Public Service Act, administrative action may also be taken by Defence and sanctions imposed. Applications may be disregarded if, in the belief of the Department, false or misleading information has formed a component of an application.

Our Service Commitment

7.3 PEEP aims to provide a valuable service to its clients. As part of managing the Program, the following processes and procedures are applied ensuring that the needs of ADF partners are met in an efficient and effective manner:

- telephone queries are answered within 48 hours; and
- new applications and requests for payment are processed within 28 days, approved applicants will be notified when the payment has been processed.

Approving Authority

7.4 The Director General DCO is the approving authority for PEEP. However, the day to day approval of applications has been delegated to the PEEP staff that will assess applications and provide a response to each application where necessary.

Discretionary Provisions

7.5 If a partner is not eligible for assistance under the provisions of Tier 1 or Tier 2, they may apply in writing to the delegate requesting discretionary approval for special/exceptional circumstances. This must be sent to the PEEP mailbox (DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au) and be accompanied by a completed application form and supporting comments. When forming their view the delegate will consider the following factors:

- where there is a recognised dependant with special needs, or
- there has been a long employment break due to parental responsibilities; or
- previous employment or qualifications not recognised in new posting locality; or
- any other factors relevant to the application.

Appeals Process

7.6 Where an applicant wishes to dispute the outcome of their PEEP application an appeal in writing must be forwarded to the PEEP mailbox (DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au) for consideration by a higher delegate. A detailed statement of claims must be included as part of the appeal.

Evaluation

7.7 DCO HQ will conduct regular assessments and evaluations of PEEP to assess that the aims of PEEP are being met and where necessary, adjust the initiatives to improve the assistance to ensure that the intent of the Program is met.
Privacy

Why we collect information

7.8 The Defence Community Organisation collects personal information in order to provide quality services, on behalf of Command, to ADF members and their families. This includes assessing and evaluating issues that might impinge on the wellbeing of a family and/or harm their relationship with Defence.

How we collect information

7.9 DCO, in collecting personal information of current ADF members and/or their family’s circumstances, is required to comply with the Privacy Act 1988 which regulates the manner in which the organisation collects, handles, stores, secures, maintains, provides access to, uses and discloses personal information.

Who uses the information, and how

7.10 Who has access to the information, and under what circumstances, depends on the situation, and the nature of the request for DCO services. Information may be used by:

- Command,
- an ADF members Commanding Officer, and/or
- other military agencies such as service career managers including to support individual preparedness for operations.

7.11 In general, DCO will use the information directly for the purpose it is collected. If required, for a use other than for that related to the primary purpose of collection, express consent will be sought from the client concerned.

7.12 This information may be recorded as a social work report, DCO report, case notes, DCO case plan, or a transition support separation plan, and filed in a DCO client file. DCO collects uses and/or discloses ONLY that information which is related to a function of the organisation.

Disclosure of your information

7.13 DCO may sometimes need to disclose personal information about you and/or your families’ circumstances to other domestic or international Agencies or organisations. These organisations may include those operating in such sectors as:

- health,
- community,
- medical,
- educational, and/or
- legal.

7.14 When a disclosure of personal information is made to an international authority, Defence will take reasonable steps to ensure that your information is only handled by those organisations that can practically provide an assurance/expectation of limited exposure.

More information can be found at http://www.defence.gov.au/dco/DCO_Privacy_Policy.htm
| **Member** | A member is an officer or enlisted member of the Permanent Forces or a Reserve officer or enlisted member on Continuous Full Time Service. |
| **Removal** | Removal means a Defence approved removal on posting to a new locality and includes a removal on marriage or on recognition of an interdependent partner vide DI (G) PERS 53-1. It does not include a discharge removal. |
| **Partner** | A partner is a person who has been officially recognised by Defence as either the spouse or a Defence recognised interdependent partner vide DI (G) PERS 53-1. |
| **New Posting Locality** | New Posting locality means a new locality within Australia or overseas where the Service member or partner has undertaken a Defence approved removal. It does not include postings within the same geographic area. For example: Brisbane to Amberley or from one side of Sydney to the other. |
| **Effective service** | Effective service means service that meets all these conditions. |
| | a. It is continuous full time service. |
| | b. It is paid. |