

# 2026 Peter Doherty Awards

for Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education



## Application guide: 2026 Outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior STEM Student Awards

In this guide, you will find information to assist you with your application for a **Peter Doherty Outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior STEM Student Award**. Please read through this information carefully and complete the application checklist on page 4 before submitting your application.

### Eligibility requirements

To be eligible to receive a **Peter Doherty Outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior STEM Student Award**, you must:

- be an Aboriginal person and/or Torres Strait Islander person;
- have completed Year 11 in a Queensland state or non-state school;
- have attained an A standard of achievement or equivalent in at least two Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) or other approved curriculum science, technology, engineering or mathematics General subjects in Year 11;
- be currently enrolled in at least two Year 12 QCAA or other approved curriculum science, mathematics, engineering or technology General subjects in a Queensland state or non-state school; and
- not have previously received a Peter Doherty Award.

A list of award-eligible General subjects can be found on page 3.

### *Documentation for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent*

Providing of any of the following documents will be accepted for the purposes of your award application:

- letter from the school principal or community education counsellor;
- evidence of having previously received ABSTUDY support;
- evidence of support received from any other reputable organisation where proof of descent has been a requirement of receiving support;
- a letter (on letterhead bearing a common seal), where other supporting documents are not available, signed by the Chairperson of an Aboriginal incorporated organisation and/or Torres Strait Islander incorporated organisation in which you live or have previously lived.

Applicants can nominate themselves or be nominated.

If the applicant is nominated by another person, the applicant must:

- agree to the nomination;
- provide the nominator with the necessary information so they can address all selection criteria; and
- have their application endorsed by the Principal.

## How to apply

Once you have determined that you are eligible to apply for the award, you will then need to:

- write a statement of no more than 1,000 words in support of your application that responds to the selection criteria outlined on page 3;
- have the details of two referees who agree to endorse your application. The referees may be asked to provide more information about aspects of your written statement;
- have the Principal's verification of results and enrolment form completed by your school principal to verify your Year 11 results and your Year 12 enrolment;
- include written evidence of being recognised as a member of an Aboriginal community/ies or Torres Strait Islander community/ies or being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person; and
- click on the [Entrant Portal](#) to create an account and submit via upload:
  - your application;
  - details of two referees;
  - each application must be endorsed by the Principal;
  - Principal's verification of results and enrolment; and
  - written evidence of heritage.

All forms should be completed electronically and submitted with your written statement.

## Written statement

Your written statement provides you with an opportunity to tell us about yourself, your achievements and interests in STEM, and why you should receive a **Peter Doherty Outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior STEM Student Award**.

Your statement should be no more than 1,000 words and should clearly respond to the selection criteria outlined in the table on the following page. A selection panel will use these criteria to assess your application. Please note the selection panel will not assess statements beyond 1,000 words.

When writing your response, make sure you are succinct — consider using dot points where appropriate to summarise — and give examples of your achievements and experiences in STEM. You should also include data to support the claims you make in your statement, for example the award level in a competition, research location and time commitment, university name, number of local forums and names.

### ***Selection criteria: Outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior STEM Student Award***

#### **The applicant:**

- **Demonstrates a commitment to deep learning in STEM that goes beyond school curriculum requirements.**

This criterion is demonstrated through evidence of:

- a commitment to participating in school and wider community STEM events and activities (including those online), reflecting a strong passion for any STEM subject;
- involvement in STEM extracurricular activities (forums, events, activities including those online) as a participant, initiator, leader or invited guest;
- a depth of learning undertaken in one or more STEM fields (examples could include research undertaken, work experience completed, STEM competition participation and achievement, STEM forum participation, ambassador roles for STEM events and volunteer work); and/or

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- excellence in STEM (examples could include outstanding achievement in STEM, recognition of scientific work by school partner organisations, selection to participate in camps, on-country experiences, and forums, awards for excellence in science or technology or engineering or mathematics).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Exhibits a well-developed plan to pursue a STEM pathway beyond school.</b></li> </ul> <p>This criterion is demonstrated through evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- details of the university STEM pathway that the applicant plans to pursue;</li> <li>- understanding of both the requirements of the pathway and the prerequisite steps needed to reach the goal;</li> <li>- clear and concise reason for selecting this pathway, such as a specific career goal, a general enjoyment of STEM or the influence of school and/or teachers (if applicable) on the decision-making process;</li> <li>- how participation in STEM-related activities inspired the applicant into further STEM studies and action in the community (e.g. advocacy, tutoring, mentoring, organising activities, on-country experiences); and/or</li> <li>- demonstrated work ethic required to achieve the desired goals (examples could include previous achievements and actions, work experience and voluntary work).</li> </ul>

## More about the awards

### Award-eligible General subjects

Below is a list of science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. To be eligible, you need to have achieved an A standard or equivalent in at least two of these subjects in Year 11, as well as be currently enrolled in at least two of these subjects in Year 12. Comparable International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, or other approved science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects, and relevant Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications and school-based apprenticeships and traineeships will also be accepted for the purposes of eligibility.

(Source: QCAA General Subjects <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects>)

- Agricultural Science
- Aerospace Systems
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Design
- Digital Solutions
- Earth and Environmental Science
- Engineering
- Food and Nutrition
- Marine Science
- General Mathematics
- Mathematical Methods
- Specialist Mathematics
- Physics
- Psychology

## How the award is to be used

The **Peter Doherty Outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior STEM Student Award** is to be used to:

- undertake activities associated with tertiary science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics (STEM) courses;
- attend conferences, forums or events that will extend your experiences in STEM;
- purchase equipment that can assist your learning and development in STEM (equipment purchased remains your property and responsibility); and/or
- undertake research projects, including experience in a research laboratory.

## Award ceremony

Recipients of the **Peter Doherty Outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior STEM Student Award** will be invited to attend the August awards presentation ceremony in Brisbane. It is anticipated that successful applicants will attend the awards ceremony.

If required, travel and accommodation expenses for **Outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior STEM Student Award** recipients will be paid by the Department of Education. The travel and accommodation expenses will also be paid for two adults accompanying the student, if required.

## Application checklist

Before submitting your application, please ensure that you have:

- read carefully through the application guide;
- checked that you meet the eligibility requirements for the award;
- Provide written documentation for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.
- written a statement of no more than 1,000 words that clearly responds to the award selection criteria;
- included the details of two referees;
- completed the Principal's endorsement of application form; and
- completed the Principal's verification of results and enrolment form.

Once you have completed all items on this checklist, click on the [Entrant Portal](#) to create an account and submit your application.

All forms should be completed electronically and submitted with your written statement.

## Further information

If you would like further information or if you have any questions about the Peter Doherty Awards for Excellence in STEM Education, please email [peterdohertyawards@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:peterdohertyawards@qed.qld.gov.au).