

AREA CALCULATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

1. Background

- 1.1 In assessing a Project's eligibility for a Grant, the Commonwealth requires the BGA to aim for a Minimum Viable Project that meets the objectives of the Capital Grants Program (CGP), is based on sound student enrolment projections for the period closely following the completion of the project and meets the educational needs of the school in a way that is cost effective over the life of the facilities. [CGP Guidelines 73 a) b) c)].

Educational facilities have evolved over time and include innovative and flexible learning environments which are replacing a traditional classroom. New flexible spaces encourage varied teaching and learning approaches such as teachers to work in teams and work in spaces that are transparent. The future direction of facilities requires more space than a traditional classroom to incorporate breakout space, wellness areas and outdoor learning.

The BGA adopted the area standards of 7.5m²/student for Primary facilities and 12m²/student for Secondary facilities. These measurements are used as a guide only when determining practicality of a project. The current CGP Guidelines does not imply a specific area per student as a requirement.

- 1.2 In considering a school's application for a Capital Grant, the BGA takes into account the total building area of a school, excluding only the area of any buildings used for boarding purposes.

The BGA considers buildings on a school campus for all levels of education that are available, or will be available, for staff and/or student use for educational purposes in the relevant data year. This includes facilities that are permanent, temporary, owned, leased, unused, under construction or planned at the time of the application.

Unenclosed travel areas, canteen, staff amenities and plant rooms are automatically discounted in full. In addition, the Committee has discretion to discount areas in certain circumstances for example, unused rooms/buildings that cannot be economically renovated.

2. Procedural Guidelines

The following guidelines outline the way in which the Committee approaches requests for the discounting of areas in various situations.

- 2.1 **Discounting based on usage of school facilities** - The BGA does not generally consider it appropriate to discount the area of school facilities based on the percentage of time that the facilities are used or not used by the school.

An exception would be where the school does not or will not use a facility at all, eg because it is unsuitable for the school's purposes, is in poor condition, or because it is to be relinquished by the school. In these cases, the BGA Committee could consider discounting the area fully.

- 2.2 **Discounting of areas in facilities that were not purpose built as schools or that were built as schools under previous building design standards** - Some schools occupy buildings that were not designed as schools, or that were built under previous school building standards, with the result that some spaces could be considered excessive.

The BGA Committee will assess claims for discounting of this type case by case. The

assessment will generally involve a site visit and will consider such things as: number of learning areas relative to classes, other available spaces, ability to subdivide spaces, and the scope for modifying the building structurally.

- 2.3 **Schools using "external" facilities** - Some schools use "external" facilities for teaching purposes. In this context, "external" facilities mean facilities that are owned and managed by a party other than the school and therefore has the authority to determine the conditions under which the school has access to the facilities.

The use of "external" facilities may be occasional or regular, involve use by the whole school or a small section of it, or be required for a specific purpose or to meet the school's need for general accommodation, and involve the hire or lease of facilities over a long or short term.

The SAIS BGA Committee considers that a school's use of "external" facilities for teaching purposes are not required to be taken into account.

- 2.4 **Halls used primarily for school assemblies** - The Committee acknowledges that assemblies are an integral part of schooling but facilities that are used mainly for school assemblies, worship etc, are not to be counted as part of the school's area. However, where such facilities are used regularly for tuition, physical education or school administration purposes then the areas (or sections of the facilities that are used for these purposes) should be included.

- 2.5 **Guidelines for the Building the Education Revolution (BER) Grants, 2009/2012** - Areas for facilities built under this program are to be excluded from area calculations in the Capital Grants Program¹. The priority projects under this program were Multi-Purpose Halls, Gymnasiums, Science & Language facilities, and Libraries. The BGA will consider the discounting of the areas of these large facilities in a school which has previously financed the construction of these buildings from private school resources, to ensure equity of treatment between schools.

- 2.6 **Trade Training/Skills Centres** - The areas of these Centres are to be included in a school's area calculations.

3. Related Policies

Nil

Revised February 2014

Revised February 2018 titled "Application of Area Discounting".

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¹ BER Guidelines, Version 2, 26 August 2009, page 12)