

Skills First Program: Student Eligibility Requirements

THIS FACT SHEET PROVIDES EXAMPLES AND A FLOW-CHART TO ASSIST TRAINING PROVIDERS TO MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING THE *SKILLS FIRST* ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AS SET OUT IN THE 2017 VET FUNDING CONTRACTS AND THE 2017 *GUIDELINES ABOUT DETERMINING STUDENT ELIGIBILITY AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE*.

Overview

Eligibility for enrolment in subsidised training under the *Skills First* program is comprehensively described in the VET Funding Contracts and the *Guidelines about Determining Student Eligibility and Supporting Evidence*. The Department of Education and Training has developed some additional information to assist Training Providers to meet their obligations in assessing students' eligibility.

Providers' attention is particularly drawn to the requirement for students to meet the **citizenship/residency** and **'up-skilling'** criteria and the limitations on the number of commencements and enrolments for individual students:

- *The maximum number of commencements in government subsidised courses allowed for an individual student in a calendar year ("2 in a year")*
- *The maximum number of enrolments in government subsidised courses allowed for an individual student at any one time ("2 at a time"); and*
- *The maximum number of commencements in government subsidised courses at the same qualification level allowed across an individual student's lifetime ("2 at level").*

Provided below are:

- three enrolment scenarios that individual students may experience;
- a flow chart describing an eligible student's course enrolment options; and
- the eligibility criteria that students do and do not need to meet as part of particular initiatives. (Note that providers should refer to the Contract and relevant guidelines for specific details on the requirements for each of the Initiatives listed.)

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Please note: This document is a guide only and subject to change

EXAMPLE 1 — STUDENT SEEKING TO ENROL IN AN APPRENTICESHIP

- Sarah is 35 and has previously commenced two Certificate III qualifications. She completed one, but withdrew from the other. Both were government subsidised. Sarah now wishes to undertake a Certificate III level Apprenticeship.
- Sarah is not able to commence a third government subsidised Certificate III level qualification because of the '2 at level' limit. It does not matter that Sarah is seeking to enrol in an Apprenticeship, nor that she only completed one of her two commencements.
- As she is over 20, Sarah is only eligible to undertake further government subsidised training at Certificate IV level or above (the 'upskilling' requirement).

EXAMPLE 2 — STUDENT UNDER THE AGE OF 20

- Mohammed is 18 and has completed two Certificate III level qualifications under government subsidy. Both were commenced in this calendar year. Mohammed wants to do another Certificate III.
- Mohammed is exempt from the upskilling requirement (because he is under 20), but the '2 at level' limit means he cannot commence another Certificate III under government subsidy; he has also already commenced two qualifications this year. From next calendar year, he may undertake further training at Certificate IV level or higher, or Certificate II level or lower (as he will still be under 20).

EXAMPLE 3 – COMMENCEMENTS THAT WERE NOT GOVERNMENT SUBSIDISED

- Stefan is 23 and has previously commenced two Certificate III qualifications, of which he completed one. Only one of Stefan's two previous commencements was under government subsidy. Stefan is now seeking to enrol in a further Certificate III level qualification.
- Stefan is eligible to enrol in any qualification at Certificate IV level or above or one Certificate III level Apprenticeship (the '2 at level' limit has not been reached because only one of Stefan's previous commencements was government subsidised, and people seeking to enrol in an Apprenticeship are exempt from the upskilling requirement).
 - o *If Stefan was under 20 years, he could commence any Certificate III level qualification—not just an Apprenticeship—because people under 20 are exempt from the 'upskilling' requirement.*

Skills First – what can a student enrol in?

Assuming a student meets the **citizenship/residency criteria**, there is **one requirement** and **three limitations** which apply in addition to that requirement.

Requirement	Taking into account	But not taking into account	Why?	Not applicable to
<p>'Upskilling'¹</p> <p>The student must seek a qualification at a higher level than...</p>	<p>the qualification(s) the student has already <u>completed</u></p> <p><i>(including qualifications that were not government subsidised)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> completed VCE/VCAL, International Baccalaureate and senior secondary certificates from other Australian jurisdictions; completed Foundation Skills courses; VET certificates completed as part of a senior secondary qualification; courses with the title '<i>Course in...</i>'; and overseas qualifications that are not formally deemed equivalent. 	<p>To encourage individuals to obtain progressively higher skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people under 20 years of age; people seeking to enrol in Foundation Skills courses, unless they hold a Diploma or above or are in the Commonwealth 'Skills for Education and Employment' program; people seeking to enrol in an Apprenticeship; and people seeking to enrol in VCE/VCAL.

¹ Refer to the VET Funding Contract, Schedule 1, Clause 2.2

TRAINING AND SKILLS

Limitation	How many?	Of what?	Over what period?	At what level?	Not taking into account	Why?
'2 in a year' The student may make a maximum of...	2	Commencements <i>(government subsidised)</i>	in a calendar year.	The limitation applies regardless of the level of the commencements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals transitioning from a superseded qualification to the current version of the same qualification Individuals recommencing training in the same qualification (at either the same or a different provider) Qualifications listed on the <i>Approved Pre-Apprenticeship and Pathway Qualifications List</i> for individuals seeking to enrol in an Apprenticeship. 	To maximise course completions and encourage students to make informed decisions about their training and employment opportunities.
'2 at a time' The student may be undertaking a maximum of...	2	Courses <i>(government subsidised)</i>	at any one time.	The limitation applies regardless of the level of the commencements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals transitioning from a superseded qualification to the current version of the same qualification (at either the same or a different provider) Individuals recommencing training in the same qualification Qualifications listed on the <i>Approved Pre-Apprenticeship and Pathway Qualifications list</i> for individuals seeking to enrol in an Apprenticeship 	To maximise course completions and encourage students to make informed decisions about their training and employment opportunities.
'2 at level' The student may make a maximum of...	2	Commencements <i>(government subsidised)</i>	across the lifetime of the student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at each level of the AQF; in the '<i>Courses in'</i> category (which are not mapped to the AQF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCE/VCAL; International Baccalaureate; and Senior Secondary non-Victorian Foundation Skills courses; VET certificates completed as part of a senior secondary qualification Individuals transitioning from a superseded qualification to the current version of the same qualification Individuals recommencing training in the same qualification (at either the same or a different provider) 	To encourage individuals to obtain progressively higher skills.

TRAINING AND SKILLS

Skills First – what eligibility criteria must a student meet under particular initiatives?

Where there is a 'No' against an eligibility criterion, students in that initiative/program do not need to meet the criterion.

Initiative	Citizenship/residency	Upskilling	'2 in a year'	'2 at a time'	'2 at level'
Retrenched employees	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Automotive Supply Chain Training Initiative	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Asylum Seeker VET Program	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Back to Work Scheme	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
TAFE/Learn Local upskilling exemption ²	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
LaTrobe Valley workers initiative ³	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

² Noting that the number of students exempted cannot exceed 15% of the Provider's total number of commencements during 2017 (per VET Funding Contract, Sch.1, Clause 18.2)

³ Refer to Contract Notifications CN 2017-06 and CN 2017-07