

Victorian Skills First Program Eligibility and Fee Policy and Procedure

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1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that AIE can effectively calculate, manage, and inform fees, charges and refunds to all learners studying at Melbourne Campus for courses within its funded scope.

This policy affects all current and prospective learners enrolled or seeking enrolment under the Skills First Program. The scope of this policy includes the Head of School (HOS) and/or the Deputy Head of School (DHOS), who ensure the integrity, accuracy and currency of fees, charges and fee refund details. The HOS and DHOS are supported by the Administration Officers.

2 The Policy

This policy adheres to the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* and the Standard VET Funding Contract. AIE must:

- a. Accurately inform prospective learners about their fees and charges; accurate fees and charges are published on the website and relevant marketing collateral (print) to ensure that correct information is provided to learners prior to enrolment
- b. Ensure to calculate correct fees and charges to the funded learners under the Skills First VET funding contract
- c. Ensure that all fees and charges are applied to all learners without any discrimination
- d. Test any individuals' eligibility for training subsidy through the Skills First Program and any relevant concession or exemption/waiver of tuition fees in accordance with relevant guidelines
- e. Ensure timely reporting of the learner statistical data every month
- f. Retain all evidence related to the Skills First Program and make available to the Department of Education and Training (DET) or its auditors all the evidence for investigation purposes.

The DET has the right to notify AIE at any given time that they will be auditing all related documentation and policies according to Skills First Program.

3 Implementation

The CEO is responsible for the approval of this policy after it has been drafted or reviewed by the HOS/DHOS, Melbourne Campus.

The policy is to be implemented via an induction process to staff and distributed via the AIE intranet and other publications as required.

4 Procedure/s

4.1 Accurate Fee Information

Tuition fee schedules are published on the AIE website. Each eligible Individual is given a [Statement of Fees](#) with a quote for the total cost of their course of study with consideration given to their current circumstances (including any eligibility for concession). The content in the *Statement of Fees* includes items as prescribed in the *2021 Guidelines About Fees: Skills First Program*. After the learner is deemed eligible for the Skills First Program, they receive a *Statement of Fees* before course commencement.

4.2 Accurate Fees and Charges Calculations

Under the Skills First VET funding contract, AIE is listed as a provider of government funded courses for its training products on its scope of registration. Our courses are partially funded by DET.

AIE reviews the [Skills Victoria Training System \(SVTS\)](#) website monthly for any notifications published on fees and charges and may modify its fees and charges as per DET guidelines provided under the Skills First VET funding contract.

Enrolment for eligible learners under the Skills First Program may impact a learner's access to further government subsidised training. Prospective learners are advised of this prior to course commencement.

Concessions do not apply when enrolling in a Diploma or Advanced Diploma qualification. AIE applies concession fees to eligible learners who want to enrol in Certificate courses. Prior to commencement of training, if a learner wants to apply for a concession rate, they must supply one of the following, that is current and valid:

- a. A healthcare card issued by the Commonwealth
- b. A Veteran's Gold Card
- c. A Pensioner Concession Card.

Concessions may also apply to the dependent spouse or dependent child of a card holder. Concession rates apply only to Certificate level courses as stated earlier. A copy of the relevant concession card is recorded on the learner's file.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners only: The concession rate applies to all course levels from Certificate II to Advanced Diploma. Concessions for applicants that meet the government subsidised funding criteria means that the course fees payable are equal to 20 per cent of AIE's published standard enrolment fee. A copy of the enrolment form is kept on a learner's profile on AIE's [Student Management System \(SMS\)](#), where they declare that they belong to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.

4.2.1 Prior to Enrolling an Individual Under the Age of 17 Years

4.2.1.1 Not Yet Completed Year 10

If the prospective learner has not yet completed Year 10, AIE must sight and retain correspondence or a certificate signed by a Department of Education and Training Regional Director that exempts that individual from school attendance and either:

- a. Clearly identifies AIE and the training to be undertaken
- b. Clearly identifies the relevant employer where the learner is to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship.

4.2.1.2 Completed Year 10

If the prospective learner has completed Year 10, AIE must either:

- a. Sight and retain a copy of the signed and completed endorsement page from the *Exemption From School Application Form* (an external document)

- b. Sight and retain correspondence or a certificate signed by a Department of Education and Training Regional Director that exempts that individual from school attendance.

In addition to the above, AIE must ensure that the documents mentioned above either:

- c. Clearly identifies AIE and the training to be undertaken
- d. Clearly identifies the relevant employer where the learner is to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship.

4.2.1.3 Additional Requirements

If the learner is under 18 years of age, an email of assurance is required from the learner's parents to support the decision of the learner studying at AIE. The Head of School also meet with the parents.

As part of the enrolment process, all learner's original documentation is collected and sighted by an approved AIE delegate and all copies are retained in the learner's file. The Skills First Program Eligibility form along with Skills First Program disclaimer is provided to learners, and after due consideration, discussion with learner and checking all relevant information, the learner is offered a subsidised place once eligibility has been confirmed.

4.3 Skills First Program Funding Eligibility Check Procedure

To be eligible for a government subsidised training place, a learner must be an Australian citizen, OR a New Zealand citizen OR a permanent resident AND must be undertaking a higher-level qualification than what the learner currently holds. Learners who are eligible for a government subsidy under the Skills First Program are eligible to enrol and commence a maximum of 2 government subsidised courses in any year. Further eligibility criteria and limits apply. Administration staff assess their eligibility as follows:

- a. A prospective learner must apply for Skills First Program prior to commencing the course
- b. The learner's eligibility for the Skills First Program is determined based on guidelines provided by DET; AIE has customised the *Skills First Program Form* designed and supplied by DET and kept updated as per SVTS guidelines
- c. All the learner's supporting documentation is gathered along with the enrolment forms and then sighted and recorded by the administration team in the learner's file
- d. Official documents are sighted by authorised AIE representatives; once the eligibility of a learner for any course is determined, the documents are scanned along with relevant learner IDs and then uploaded to a learner's file on the SMS
- e. In case learners are under a particular training initiative, AIE is required to obtain referral forms, such as:
 - I. **Asylum Seeker VET Program** – Refer to Government Subsidised Training Asylum Seekers' form
 - II. **Latrobe Valley Initiative** – A Referral letter or other written advice from the Latrobe Valley Authority or Morwell Skills and Jobs Centre
 - III. **Back to Work Scheme** – A confirmation email issued by the State Revenue Office to the individual's employer that confirms the individual's status as a *Back to Work* participant.

4.3.1 Eligibility Exclusions

A prospective learner is not eligible for government subsidised training if they are enrolled in a secondary high school or a secondary college (including government, non-government, independent/public, or Catholic) or is home schooled or enrolled in a Commonwealth Government Skills for Education and Employment Program.

4.4 SMS Recording and Reporting

Once the learner's eligibility is determined, their data is maintained and recorded via the SMS. The following procedures are undertaken by Administration to record and to create reports:

- a. All documentation is maintained in the respective learner's file on the SMS according to the *Victorian VET Student Statistical Collection Guidelines*.
- b. Learners funding source is recorded as per the codes in the *Victorian VET Student Statistical Collection Guidelines* and all other fields are updated correctly to reflect the eligibility of learners in the SMS; 'Nat files' are generated through the SMS and are cross-checked to ensure that all data is accurately reported to DET through the SVTS
- c. Funded learner withdrawals also must be reported within a month from the point of a learner withdrawing from their course; for a funded learner who withdraws from their course, there will be no refund of the government contribution made towards their tuition fee
- d. Mini audits on a regular basis by AIE executives are part of continuous improvement cycles to ensure Skills First Program learner data reported to DET is accurate.

5 Definitions

Statement of Fees

A detailed quote for each prospective learner, which sets out fee and other information required by the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* and the *Guidelines About Fees*. [^](#)

Student Management System (SMS)

Software system that manages the administrative and data reporting functionality of RTO operations. [^](#)

SVTS

Skills Victoria Training System. [^](#)

6 Related Documents

The following documents are related to this policy:

- a. Skills First Program Form
- b. Statement of Fees
- c. Tuition Fees.

The following legislation and standards are related to this policy:

- d. 2021 Guidelines About Eligibility: Skills First Program (v3.0)
- e. 2021 Guidelines About Fees: Skills First Program (v3.0)
- f. 2021 Standard VET Funding Contract: Skills First Program (v3.0)
- g. Skills First Quality Charter
- h. Victorian VET Student Statistical Collection Guidelines (2022 v1.0).

7 Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive Officer, National Compliance Officer the HOS/DHOS, Melbourne Campus.

8 Revision History

Version No.	Version Description	Contributor(s)	Approval Authority	Date Revised/ Approved
1.0	First version of document.	Linda Burrows (National Compliance Officer)	BOD	25 August 2020
1.1	Minor amendments to eligibility and fee details; checked and approved by Compliance team; full edit by ICC.	Laurie Costabile (Head of School, Melbourne) Linda Burrows (National Compliance Officer) Charlotte Pichelmann (National Compliance Administration Support) Nick Markesinis (Intranet Content Coordinator)		25 June 2021 – 11 November 2021

Appendix A: Skills First Program Eligibility Flow Chart

1. Learner completes the *Skills First Program Form*.
2. Administration checks if all relevant sections are fully completed by learner.
3. Administration sights and scans the relevant documents for upload to the learner's profile in the SMS.
4. Skills First officer to complete the relevant section, sign and date the form only when documents have been sighted and evidence is recorded. Please refer to notes in **Item 1** and **Item 1A** below.
5. Learners eligible to receive a concession, fee waiver or exemption from paying fees are determined by Administration staff. **NOTE:** Concession is only applicable to Certificate courses.



Create *Statement of Fees* for Skills First funding eligible learner:

- All eligible learners must receive a *Statement of Fees* before course commencement.
- Statement of Fees must include the minimum requirements set out by the Department of Education and Training (DET) and their relevant guidelines.



Minimum requirements for the *Statement of Fees*:

1. Course title
2. Course code
3. Currency of the course
4. Estimated duration of the course
5. Commencement date
6. Proposed completion date
7. Training location
8. Mode of delivery
9. Fee type applicable to the learner
10. Total course cost
11. Victorian Government contribution
12. Hourly tuition fee
13. Total cost to learner.

NOTE: For requirements 9 to 13, please refer to notes in **Item 2** for more information.



Ensure that the Hourly Tuition Fee reported to SVTS is consistent with the Hourly Tuition Fee recorded on the *Statement of Fees* and the invoice.

Also report the learners' eligibility for fee concessions, fee waivers, and/or fee exemptions granted to SVTS.

Appendix B: Process Items

Item 1: Notes	
<p>Check:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The evidence of Citizenship/Residency Where the learner's age is relevant to their eligibility (to avoid upskilling requirements) and the citizenship/residency evidence does not include a date of birth, sight and retain the required evidence Where the learner will be under the age of 17 years at the time of the commencement of training, sight and retain the required evidence to support eligibility for funding Administration staff are to complete all the fields of the Training Provider Declaration component (Section C) of the <i>Eligibility Declaration Form</i> and check below before signing the form All questions in the <i>Eligibility Declaration Form</i> have been completed The learner has completed all fields in the Learner Declaration part of the <i>Eligibility Declaration Form</i> There is documentation to support any eligibility exemptions granted. 	
Item 1A: Documentation	
If the learner is:	You can accept ONE of these:
An Australian citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian birth certificate (not birth extract) Current Australian Passport Australian citizenship certificate Current green Medicare card Australian citizenship by descent extract
A New Zealand citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current New Zealand Passport New Zealand Birth certificate
A permanent resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current green Medicare card Formal confirmation of permanent residence granted by the Department of Home Affairs (or its successor) AND the learner's foreign passport OR ImmiCard
An asylum seeker referred to training as part of the Asylum Seeker VET program	A <i>Referral to Government Subsidised Training – Asylum Seekers Form</i> from the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre OR the Australian Red Cross.
An asylum seeker enrolling at a TAFE, Dual Sector university or Learn Local training provider	Confirmation through the Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) system that the learner has a valid visa type accepted for participation in the Asylum Seeker VET program.
In exceptional circumstances	A proxy declaration signed by the training provider CEO OR a government or community services provider, approved by the Department
Proof of Age	If the learner has one of the documents from above, but it doesn't include their age, AIE needs an additional document, though only if their age is relevant to determine their eligibility; for example, if the learner is under 20 years of age (as of 1 January in the year their training starts) and we need evidence to show they don't need to meet the upskilling requirement.

	<p>The documents the Department accepts as proof of age are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Current driver's license Current learner permit Proof of Age card 'Keypass' card. <p>NOTE: A foreign passport cannot be accepted to verify date of birth.</p>
<p>Concession card</p>	<p>Concession fee is only applicable to certificate courses. Ensure that a concession card is valid and current at the commencement of training (the date the concession card is valid from must be earlier than the course commencement date).</p> <p>The concession card displayed on a Digital Wallet through a Centrelink Express Plus mobile application on the cardholder's mobile device.</p> <p>These cards may not be sighted via a screen shot of the card that is emailed or otherwise produced. A written declaration must be attached to the learner's file stating that the digital concession card has been sighted. The declaration must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The name of the authorised delegate who sighted the digital concession card The date the digital concession card was sighted The document number of the concession card The name of concession holder.
<p>Sight and retain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The original document, presented in person (Retain: A photocopy or electronic copy) An original certified copy of the document, presented in person or sent by post (Retain: A photocopy or electronic copy) Confirmation the learner's details are verified to match a current and valid document in the Document Verification Service (DVS) (Retain: A transaction record showing the document was verified in the DVS) 	
<p>Learner should not be enrolled in any kind of school or Commonwealth skills for education and employment program</p>	<p>If they are in school or any kind of schooling at home, etc., they are not eligible for Skills first funding.</p>
<p>Learner under the age of 17 at the time of commencement of training</p>	<p>If the learner has not completed Year 10, AIE must sight and retain correspondence OR a certificate signed by a DET Regional Director that exempts that individual from school attendance and clearly identifies the Training Provider and the training to be undertaken.</p> <p>If learner has completed Year 10, AIE must sight and retain a completed <i>Transition From School Form</i>, OR correspondence OR a certificate signed by the school principal OR a DET Regional Director that exempts that individual from school attendance and clearly identifies the Training Provider and the training to be undertaken.</p> <p>Admin must notify the relevant Regional Office and the learner's previous school if they stop attending training.</p>

Item 2: Total Cost to Learner

In the **Appendix A**, the first 8 fields are from the learner profile, because AIE does data entry there. Fields 9 to 13 are detailed below.

Fee type applicable to the learner	<p>It could be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fee for service if learner is not deemed eligible for Skills First funding Government funded if learner is eligible for Skills First funding Government funded with concession if the learner is eligible for Skills First funding and this one is applicable only to certificate courses.
Total course cost	Tuition fee schedule is published each year, so check course cost.
Victorian Government Contribution	Total hours of the course multiplied by the base rate of that course. Base rate can be found on funded list published by DET in SVTS each year. For example, Diploma of Screen and Media (Game Art) in 2020, total hours = 940 hours, the Base rate for this course is \$6 per hour, 940 hours × \$6 = \$5,640
Hourly Tuition Fee	<p>Total Fee divided by the total number of course hours. For example, Diploma of Screen and Media (Game Art) in 2020, \$20,300 ÷ 940 hours = \$21.59 per hour</p> <p>The same hourly fee is to be reported to the SVTS which you calculated by using the above formula and is given to the learner in their <i>Statement of Fees</i>.</p> <p>For the data element 'Client Tuition Fees' which is the total tuition fee should be divided by the number of hours and reported as an hourly rate in cents.</p>
Total Cost to Learner	<p>Total fee minus Skills first funding contribution. For example, Diploma of Screen and Media (Game Art) in 2020, \$20,300 – \$5,640 = \$14,660, which is the total cost to the learner.</p> <p>Concession calculations: AIE must charge a concession learner no more than 20% of the published standard tuition fee. For example, if the standard tuition fee for a course is \$600, AIE will charge \$120 (being 20% of the standard published fee).</p> <p>Hourly rate = fee divided by scheduled hours: \$120 ÷ 424 = \$0.28 (this hourly rate will be reported in client tuition fee field in Nat 120).</p> <p>DET formula: The number of Scheduled Hours MULTIPLIED BY (the lesser of):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four times the actual hourly tuition fee paid by the learner (as reported via the Client Tuition Fee field of the Student Statistical Report),.OR The 'Maximum Fee Concession Contribution per hour' for the Program, Enrolment Type and relevant concession type as identified in the Funded Courses Report. <p>0.28 × 4 = \$1.12 (if this \$1.12 is less than the maximum concession contribution as in the funded course report, it will be paid per hour, but if it is greater than the maximum concession contribution then it will be paid as per that maximum contribution rate.</p>

Segregation of Duties

- Fee for all courses are finalised by the CEO and Accounts Team.
- Skills First enrolments are finalised by Melbourne Campus Administration staff, including data entry, fee handling, collection of required documentation, etc.
- *Statement of Fees* for Skills First funded learners (including any concessions, exemptions or waivers) is created by Melbourne Campus Administration as per the funded contract latest guidelines.
- Training Plan triggered by Melbourne Campus Administration.
- Monthly SVTS reporting is completed by Melbourne Campus Administration.
- Skills First funding received by Accounts Team. Melbourne Administration send the payment breakdown to Accounts and it is entered into each learner invoice for whom the funds belong to.
- Melbourne Administration check on a regular basis any published information on SVTS webpage and share the information with all relevant parties via email and save the published memos or documents on Teams so that the latest guidelines can be used before next intake.