

UNDERSTANDING SKILL SETS

This fact sheet explains the VET Funding Contract arrangements for *Skills First* skill sets.

The Victorian Government is responding to skills shortages and workforce demands by subsidising the delivery of accredited skill set training under the *Skill First* program. These short courses will support the rapid skilling of workers with quality, industry-endorsed training and accreditation that is vital to Victoria's recovery from the impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19), as well as offering students a pathway to full qualifications.

What are skill sets?

Under the VET Funding Contract (the Contract) a skill set is an accredited program that's on the Funded Skill Set List and may include:

- an accredited course with the title 'Course in...' (a Course In)
- a nationally recognised skill set from a Training Package
- an accredited single subject
- a group of accredited subjects approved by the Department of Education and Training (the Department).

Who can deliver skill sets?

The Department will determine who can deliver skill sets. Skill sets can only be delivered by *Skills First*-contracted training providers. This ensures that the VET system continues to support quality providers to deliver valuable student outcomes.

You must follow all the associated Contract requirements and allocation limits.

How will skill sets work together with full qualifications?

Skill sets will complement and not replace full qualifications.

Skill sets benefit students by giving them:

- training pathways to full qualifications
- specific skills and general capabilities
- more career opportunities within their workplace and between employers.

In the immediate term, skill sets are a means of re-skilling that can help Victorians respond to a rapidly changing post-COVID-19 economy and job market.

When will skill sets start?

The Department is taking a managed approach to introducing skill sets.

You can start enrolling students in skill sets that are on your Funded Scope for commencements from 1 January 2021.

What skill sets are available under *Skills First*?

All skill sets will be published in the new Funded Skill Set List, which will be made available on SVTS.

The Funded Skill Set List will be updated as new skill sets are added or removed, with notifications provided via SVTS.

Will other skill sets be made available in the future?

We expect that skill sets on the Funded Skill Set List will change to align with Victoria's jobs needs.

We will establish a process for training providers and industry to advise on removing or adding skill sets to the list. We will notify you of this via SVTS.

ALLOCATIONS

What's the allocations process?

For TAFEs

As part of our managed approach to skill sets, we will advise you about the process for skill set allocations when we publish the Funded Skill Set List.

For other training providers

Your *Skills First* Commencement Allocation in the individual details and conditions schedule of your Contract (Schedule 2) contains two parts – commencements for full qualifications and commencements for skill sets.

The commencement allocation for skill sets is further separated into two parts:

- one for Priority Workforce Course Ins
- one for all other skill sets (called Skill Sets – General in Schedule 2).

If you have any of the following Course Ins on your 2021 Funded Scope, they have been included in the separate allocation for Priority Workforce Course Ins:

- Course in Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Risk
- Course in Supporting People with Complex Support Needs and Complex Physical Needs
- Course in Providing Support to People with Psychosocial Disability
- Course in Performing Allied Health Tasks and Supporting People with Disability
- Course in Culturally Considerate Disability Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- Course in Supporting People with Disability to use Medications
- Course in Identifying, Reporting and Preventing Abuse and/or Grooming of People with Disabilities
- Course in Introductory Shearing

How do I manage the separate parts of my Commencement Allocation?

You can deliver up to the number of skill set commencements reflected in your Schedule 2. Your delivery of skill sets will not count towards your commencements for full qualifications, and vice versa.

You cannot transfer across any unused commencements from full qualifications to use for skill sets, or vice versa. To help you manage your separate allocation for Course Ins, there are separate Funding Source Identifiers for reporting Priority Workforce Course Ins and all other skill sets. You must only use your commencements for Priority Workforce Course Ins for those courses. You cannot use them for any other skill sets.

Use SVTS to track how many commencements you've used.

Do skill sets affect my number of commencements for full qualifications?

No. In determining your Commencement Allocation, we treated your commencements for full qualifications and skill sets separately. The new skill sets commencements are in addition to each training provider's allotted commencements for full qualifications.

Can I get additional skill sets added to my Funded Scope?

If you have a skill set on your scope of registration, then you may be able to apply for it to be added to your Funded Scope. You can contact us via SVTS using the enquiry category 'Skill Sets'. There is no guarantee we will add any additional skill set to your Funded Scope. The timing and process for additional allocations, if any, will be determined by the Department, consistent with our phased and managed approach.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Who is eligible for skill sets?

A person is eligible for skill sets if they meet the normal *Skills First* eligibility criteria, but with two exceptions:

- ‘upskilling’ does not apply to skill sets (Clause 2.4(a) Schedule 1)
- ‘two at level in a lifetime’ does not apply to skill sets (Clause 2.5(d) Schedule 1).

Can a student do both a skill set and a *Skills First* full qualification at the same time?

Yes. However, the ‘two at a time’ limit (Clause 2.5(c) Schedule 1) still applies but now applies collectively across both skill sets and full qualifications. For example, a student cannot undertake two skill sets and one full qualification at the same time.

How many skill sets can a student do in a year?

The ‘two in a year’ limit (Clause 2.5(b) Schedule 1) still applies but skill sets and full qualifications are treated separately. This means a student can commence a maximum of two skill sets and two full qualification in a calendar year, but no more than two at the same time.

How will a skill set enrolment affect a student’s future *Skills First* eligibility?

A student’s commencement in a skill set counts towards their:

- ‘two at a time’ limit (Clause 2.5(c) Schedule 1)
- ‘two in a year’ limit (Clause 2.5(b) Schedule 1).

However, when determining a student’s eligibility for a full qualification under *Skills First* their participation in a skill set must not be counted when assessing the upskilling requirement (Clause 2.4(a) Schedule 1).

What evidence do I need to enrol someone in a skill set?

The normal *Skills First* requirements for sighting and retaining evidence of eligibility apply to skill sets.

We’ve added a new page to the education history section of the Evidence of Eligibility and Student Declaration Form to help you assess whether a person is eligible for a skill set and what evidence of eligibility you must sight and retain.

SKILL SETS AND COURSE INS

From 2021, existing Course Ins will be treated as skill sets and the new skill set eligibility settings will apply to them.

Have the eligibility requirements changed for Course Ins?

Yes. The *Skills First* eligibility requirements for Course Ins have changed to reflect the new skill sets policy.

This also means that the following Contract requirements no longer apply:

- the limit on commencing a maximum of two government-subsidised Course Ins in a student’s lifetime
- that a person holds no higher than a Certificate IV for the purpose of ‘upskilling’ to be eligible for a Course In.

Has my Commencement Allocation for Courses Ins been affected?

No. Your Commencement Allocation for Course Ins was determined after we assessed the Program Delivery Plans you submitted to us.

Is LNSUPPORT now considered a skill set?

No. While LNSUPPORT is a customised bundle of units, like a skill set, it will remain unchanged under the Contract and continue to lie outside your Commencements Allocation.

Will Course Ins on the Foundation Skills List be affected?

Yes. If you have any of the seven Course Ins on the Foundation Skills List they will now form part of your skill sets commencement in your Commencement Allocation.

However, a student is still not eligible to enrol in a Foundation Skills course if they hold a qualification at AQF 5 level (Diploma) or above.

FEES AND PAYMENT

What tuition fees can I charge?

As with any other *Skills First* training, you can determine the tuition fee for each skill set – unless the student is entitled to a concession or Fee Waiver.

What's the skill sets subsidy amount?

Skill sets will receive the hourly subsidy stated in the Funded Course List together with the applicable:

- *Skills First* maximum concession contribution rates
- *Skills First* maximum fee waiver contribution rates
- *Skills First* loadings.

REPORTING

How are skill sets reported?

You must report skill sets training activity via SVTS using the Funding Source Identifier – State Training Authority:

- PSP – for Priority Workforce Course Ins
- GSP – for all other skill sets.

Your commencements reported against these codes are classified as skill set commencements.

ENROLLING STUDENTS

How do I enrol students in a skill set?

You should enrol students in a skill set as you would any usual program and put the appropriate reporting data in SVTS.

Can a person enrol in more than one Skill set?

Yes, but no more than two skill sets at a time and to a maximum of two in a calendar year.

The 'two at a time' limit is all inclusive across skill sets and full qualifications. For example, a student cannot undertake two skill sets and one full qualification at the same time.

Should I do a Pre-Training Review?

Yes, the Pre-Training Review is a fundamental component of the Contract.

You can tailor this process provided you obtain enough information to show that the skill set training is suitable and appropriate for the student's needs and they clearly understand all their other training options. A skill set is the best training option for a student when it is likely to lead to a job or is a pathway to a full qualification.

Your process and decision must be clearly documented.

Can I apply Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) to a skill set?

Yes. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be applied.

Do I need to issue a Training Plan?

Yes, however we've waived the requirement to issue a Training Plan for skill sets that are comprised of a single subject. However, you must still inform the student about the training and assessment requirements for the skill set so they can make an informed decision about their enrolment.

SKILL SETS UNDER JOBTRAINER

The JobTrainer Fund (JobTrainer) creates an extra 20,000 tuition free skill set places for eligible young people and job seekers.

Read the 'Understanding the New JobTrainer arrangements' fact sheet in the documents section of SVTS for more information about the Contract arrangements for JobTrainer.

Skill sets under JobTrainer have the same Contract requirements and policy settings as *Skills First* skill sets, except for the following important differences.

Student participation

A person can only participate in a skill set under JobTrainer if they are:

- 17 to 24 years old when the course starts; or
- a job seeker of any age (as defined in the Contract).

They must not have commenced a skill set under JobTrainer before.

Free for students

You must not charge students a tuition fee for a skill set under JobTrainer.

You must apply a fee waiver/exemption and will be paid under the normal *Skill First* reimbursement settings.

JobTrainer Funded Programs Report

The skill sets available under JobTrainer will be listed on the JobTrainer Funded Programs Report and not the Funded Skill set List.

JobTrainer allocations

If you have a skill set on your Funded Scope you will be given an allocated number of skill set commencements for which you can offer the JobTrainer benefits. This allocation is separate to your other allocations for full qualifications under JobTrainer, *Skills First* full qualifications and *Skills First* skill sets.

JobTrainer volume limits

A student can only commence one skill set under JobTrainer in their lifetime.

How JobTrainer skill sets interact with *Skills First* Skill sets

A student's participation in a skill set under JobTrainer counts towards the '2x2x2' volume limits (clause 2.5 Schedule 1) when assessing their eligibility for a *Skills First* skill set.

For example, under the 'two in a year' limit, a student can't undertake two *Skills First* skill sets and one JobTrainer skill set in the same year. And under the 'two at a time' limit, a student can't undertake one skill set under JobTrainer, a second skill set under *Skills First*, and a *Skills First* full qualification at the same time.

JobTrainer reporting

Funding Source Identifier

You must report the training activity for skill sets under JobTrainer via SVTS using the Funding Source Identifier – State Training Authority 'JSP'.

Your commencements reported against this code are classified as skill set commencements under JobTrainer.

Fee Exemption/Concession Type Identifier

All students enrolled in skill sets under JobTrainer are entitled to a fee waiver. So you must report the second character of the Fee Exemption/Concession Type Identifier as 'R'.

If the student is eligible for a normal *Skills First* concession you must report this in the first character of the Fee Exemption/Concession Type Identifier. This will ensure that any applicable 30% youth loading is added to your subsidy payment.

SKILL SETS AND OTHER INITIATIVES

Do skill sets count towards the 10% and 30% eligibility exemptions?

No. Skill sets training activity reported using Funding Source Identifiers – State Training Authority ‘PSP’ and ‘GSP’ is not included in the calculation of either the 30% eligibility exemption initiative for TAFEs and Learn Locals nor the 10% eligibility exemption initiative for private and independent training providers.

Will the National Infection Control Skill Sets be affected?

No. This initiative will continue in the same way and with its own allocations and specific conditions under the Contract. For more information you can read the ‘National Infection Control Skill sets’ fact sheet in the documents section of SVTS.

Will the Construction Industry Skill Sets be affected?

No. This initiative will continue in the same way and with its own specific allocations and conditions under the Contract.

Will the specific eligibility exemptions for the ‘Course in identifying and responding to family violence risk’ still apply?

Yes. The separate eligibility exemptions will continue to apply to ‘22510VIC – Course in identifying and responding to family violence risk’ in Part C of Schedule 1.

The Government’s 10-year Industry Plan for family violence prevention and response remains a strong priority and will not be affected by the introduction of skill sets.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you’d like any further information, please contact us via SVTS using the enquiry category ‘Skill Sets’.