

# SIGHTING AND RETAINING EVIDENCE OF ELIGIBILITY

This fact sheet explains what must be sighted and retained when you check a student's evidence of eligibility for the *Skills First* program. It also gives answers to frequently asked questions.

## BACKGROUND

Before you enrol a student in *Skills First* training, you must make sure they are eligible. This includes confirming they are an Australian or New Zealand citizen or a permanent resident, and confirming their age (if it is relevant to their eligibility).

Eligibility must be established in a robust way that the Department can verify at an audit or review, and this includes sighting and retaining copies of documents.

This fact sheet provides a summary of the Department's requirements for sighting and retaining evidence of eligibility. It must be read in conjunction with the VET Funding Contract and the *Guidelines About Eligibility*.

## ACCEPTED TYPES OF EVIDENCE

### Proof of citizenship or permanent residence

We accept the following documents as evidence of citizenship or permanent residence.

If the student is:	You can accept ONE of these:
an Australian citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Australian birth certificate (not birth extract)</li> <li>✓ Current Australian Passport</li> <li>✓ Australian citizenship certificate</li> <li>✓ Current green Medicare card</li> <li>✓ Australian certificate of registration by descent</li> </ul>

If the student is:	You can accept ONE of these:
a NZ citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Current New Zealand Passport</li> </ul>
a permanent resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Current green Medicare card</li> <li>✓ Formal confirmation of permanent residence granted by the Department of Home Affairs (or its successor) <b>AND</b> the student's foreign passport or ImmiCard</li> </ul>
an asylum seeker referred to training as part of the Asylum Seeker VET program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ a 'Referral to Government Subsidised Training - Asylum Seekers' form from the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre or the Australian Red Cross</li> </ul>
an asylum seeker enrolling at a TAFE, Dual Sector university or Learn Local Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Confirmation through the Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) system that the student has a valid visa type accepted for participation in the Asylum Seeker VET program</li> </ul>
In exceptional circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A proxy declaration signed by the training provider CEO or a government or community services provider, approved by the Department</li> </ul>

### What is 'formal confirmation of permanent residence'?

In most cases, permanent residents will have a green Medicare card and can use this as evidence of eligibility for *Skills First*.

If the student doesn't have a green Medicare card, you can accept evidence of their permanent residence by sighting:

- 'formal confirmation of permanent residence granted by the Department of Home Affairs' **AND**
- their foreign passport or ImmiCard.

This formal confirmation of permanent residence can be provided through the Commonwealth Government's Visa Entitlement Verification Online System (VEVO). There are two ways this can be done:

1. The student can log in to their own VEVO account and generate a summary of their visa information.
2. If you are registered with the Department of Home Affairs as an organisation that is allowed to do VEVO checks, and if the student gives you their permission and identifying information, you can do a VEVO check on their behalf.

If a student gives you a self-generated VEVO check as evidence of permanent residence, this may be in the form of an email or pdf document, you will need to:

- look for the logo of the Department of Home Affairs on the VEVO check
- look for information in the VEVO check that clearly shows the student has a permanent visa
- make sure the student's name on the VEVO check is the same as it is on their passport or ImmiCard.

### Proof of Age

If the student has one of the documents from the table above, but it doesn't include their age, you may need to ask them for an additional document.

You **only** need to do this if their age is relevant to determine their eligibility. For example, if the student is under 20 years of age (as at 1 January in the year their training starts) and you need evidence to show they don't need to meet the upskilling requirement.

We accept the following documents as proof of age:

- ✓ current drivers licence
- ✓ current learner permit
- ✓ Proof of Age card
- ✓ 'Keypass' card.

### What is a 'proxy declaration in exceptional circumstances'?

If a student doesn't have any of the accepted forms of evidence of citizenship/permanent residence or proof of age, they may be able to make a case to show they are in exceptional circumstances.

You must firstly make all reasonable efforts to help the student prove their eligibility in the conventional way. If the student is simply unwilling to bear the cost or inconvenience of obtaining documents, this won't be considered exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances might include where a student has grown up in a remote location and their birth was not registered, or where a student is experiencing disadvantage and is estranged from family or guardians and doesn't have access to identity documents.

If the student is in exceptional circumstances, we may accept a proxy declaration signed by the CEO of your training provider, or signed by a representative from a government department or community service provider.

You must first lodge an SVTS enquiry and ask us to approve the use of a proxy declaration. You need to include any supporting evidence and information to make the case for the student.

If we approve the use of a proxy declaration, you must keep a copy of it and the Department's approval.

## WAYS TO SIGHT AND RETAIN EVIDENCE

There are **four** ways to sight and retain evidence of eligibility.

SIGHT	RETAIN
1. The original document, presented in person	A photocopy or electronic copy
2. An <b>original</b> certified copy of the document, presented in person or sent by post	A photocopy or electronic copy
3. Confirmation the student's details are verified to match a current and valid document in the Document Verification Service (DVS)	A transaction record showing the document was verified in the DVS
4. Sighting the student's digital green Medicare card as displayed on a Digital Wallet through the Express Plus Medicare mobile app	A written declaration

### What is the DVS?

The Document Verification Service (DVS) is the Commonwealth Government's national online system that allows organisations to compare an individual's identifying information with a government record.

The DVS can be used to check a range of Australian government-issued documents, including citizenship documents, birth certificates and drivers' licences.

### Using the DVS to check *Skills First* eligibility

We encourage the use of the DVS as an efficient and secure way to check eligibility for *Skills First*-subsidised training.

To use the DVS, you must engage a Gateway Service Provider. This is an organisation authorised by the Commonwealth Government to match information requests to and from the DVS.

The Gateway Service Provider will give you an administrative platform to manage the process of connecting students to the DVS. This can include integrating use of the DVS into an online enrolment form.

When you use the DVS, you don't have to sight and retain a copy of the student's document. You will need to sight confirmation from the Gateway Service Provider that the student's details as displayed on their document match a current and valid record in the DVS database

You must retain a transaction record generated by the administrative platform provided by the Gateway Service Provider that shows the student's details, and that they were verified to match a valid and current document in the DVS. You don't need to print this information – you can retain it electronically. An electronic record can usually be kept within the administrative platform, but if not, then you should keep a secure electronic version that can't be easily altered.

For more information about how to become a DVS user, refer to the [Commonwealth Government's website](#).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**If I've checked a student's proof of citizenship, do I have to check it again the next time they want to enrol with us?**

No. If you keep a copy of the student's evidence, you can use it again the next time they enrol with you, as long as the information is still current and valid. You must continue to keep a copy of the information for audit or review purposes and you must make all other assessments of the student's eligibility for the new enrolment.

**What is a certified copy of a document?**

A certified copy is made when a student presents their original document and a photocopy of it to a 'certifier'. The certifier will:

- examine the original to ensure it is not a copy or forgery
- examine the copy to ensure it is identical to the original.

The certifier will then write or stamp the copy with the words: 'Certified to be a true copy of the original seen by me.' They will sign and date the copy, and write or stamp their name, personal or professional address and qualification.

For information about who can be a certifier, see Attachment 5 of the *Guidelines About Eligibility*, or the [Department of Justice and Community Safety website](#).

**Can I accept an electronic version of certified copy?**

No, you must sight the original certified copy. The student can either show it to you in person or post it to you.

**If the student's evidence of citizenship is verified through the DVS, do I also have to sight and retain a copy of the document?**

No, you don't need to sight the document at all if you use the DVS.

You can keep an electronic audit trail confirming the document was verified, using the

administrative platform provided by your Gateway Service Provider.

**If the student's evidence of citizenship can't be verified through the DVS, does that mean they aren't eligible for *Skills First* training?**

No. The student might have made a mistake entering their details, so you need to give them the opportunity to provide evidence of eligibility in another way before making a final decision about their eligibility. For example, by presenting their document in person.

**Can I accept a foreign passport as proof of age? The student has a Green Medicare Card, but they don't have another document with their age on it.**

No. A foreign passport alone is not accepted as proof of age.

If the student is a permanent resident, you can use a VEVO check and foreign passport as proof of both permanent residence and age in one step. This would be instead of using their green Medicare card and an additional second document that shows proof of age.

Alternatively, the student can get a Proof of Age card, which is inexpensive and easy to obtain.

**The student has a letter from a government department saying their application for a citizenship document or green Medicare card is approved, but they don't have the document or card yet. Can I accept this letter as evidence of eligibility?**

No, a letter is not accepted as evidence of eligibility. However, if the letter has the document number, this could be verified using the DVS.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Submit an enquiry via [SVTS](#)

Fact sheet: *Skills First* Eligibility

Fact sheet: Using electronic signatures

Fact sheet: Recordkeeping requirements