



The new state of business

Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy

Version 1.2



**Education &
Communities**

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Introduction

This policy sets out the requirements for the application and management of student fees under the following Smart and Skilled programs:

- Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills
- Smart and Skilled Entitlement Full Qualifications
- Smart and Skilled Entitlement Apprenticeships and Traineeships
- Smart and Skilled Targeted Priorities Full Qualifications
- Smart and Skilled Targeted Priorities Prevocational and Part Qualifications.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Smart and Skilled Contract Terms and Conditions 2015
- Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines for Activity Period 1/1/2015 – 31/12/2015

Smart and Skilled Programs

The requirements for the application and management of student fees under the School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships Program are set out in the School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships Program Fee Administration Policy.

Smart and Skilled and student fees

Under Smart and Skilled, a student contributes towards the cost of training through the payment of a student fee. The payment to the Provider is made up of the student fee and the subsidy from the government. Student fees are:

- set for the whole qualification, not annual or semester fees as some training providers do now
- lower for students doing their first post-school qualification
- set for the student and the qualification and will be the same regardless of the Provider chosen.

Smart and Skilled Programs

The NSW Skills List indicates the qualifications funded under Smart and Skilled. There are five Smart and Skilled Programs covering qualifications on the NSW Skills List:

- Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills
- Smart and Skilled Entitlement Full Qualifications
- Smart and Skilled Entitlement Apprenticeships and Traineeships
- Smart and Skilled Targeted Priorities Full Qualifications
- Smart and Skilled Targeted Priorities Prevocational and Part Qualifications.

Student eligibility

To be eligible to be subsidised to undertake a Smart and Skilled program, an individual must:

1. firstly meet personal eligibility criteria for Smart and Skilled
2. then meet eligibility for the relevant program.

For example to be eligible to enrol in an Entitlement Full Qualification, a student must firstly meet the citizenship requirements, be 15 years or over, live or work in NSW and have left school. The student must then meet the eligibility criteria for that program – that they do not hold a previous Certificate IV or higher.

NSW apprentices and new entrant trainees are automatically eligible for a Smart and Skilled subsidy for the qualification that supports their apprenticeship or traineeship.

The Smart and Skilled eligibility criteria are described in Appendix 1.

Charging fees

There are five categories of student fees, based on the qualification and the characteristics of the student. The schedule of fees for each qualification on the NSW Skills List can be accessed at:

www.training.nsw.gov.au/smartandskilled/prices_fees.html.

The Provider must charge the student the relevant fee set by the NSW Government. The relevant fee will be determined when the Provider enters the student data into the Smart and Skilled Provider Calculator.

Fee categories

The five student fee categories are:

1. Standard Student—First Qualification
2. Standard Student—Subsequent Qualification
3. Apprenticeship (for qualifications offered as part of an apprenticeship pathway)
4. Concession
5. Exemption

Program eligibility and Standard Student fee rules are described at Appendix 2. The process for determining eligibility and calculating fee arrangements is at Appendix 3.

Standard Student fees

The Standard Student fee applies to students who are not doing an apprenticeship or who do not qualify for a concession or an exemption.

- The **Standard Student—First Qualification** fee applies to students who do not already hold a post-school qualification from any tertiary sector. Qualifications include vocational and higher education qualifications achieved in Australia or overseas at any time previously. Qualifications not deemed to be post-school qualifications are qualifications achieved:

- while at school as part of an individual's secondary education
- prior to turning 17.

The following qualifications have been determined not to be post-school qualifications:

- Certificate I qualifications
- Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills qualifications
- Any other foundation skills qualification that is aimed at developing foundation skills as identified in the "National Foundation Skills Strategy" (up to and including Certificate III), including:
 - English language, literacy and numeracy (such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, digital literacy and use of mathematical ideas)
 - Employability skills (such as collaboration, problem solving, self-management, learning and information and communication technology skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life)
- Certificate IV NSW Tertiary Preparation Certificate.

Students who hold these qualifications will pay the First Qualification fee.

The First Qualification fee also applies to fees for 15 – 17 year olds regardless of any previous qualification.

- **Traineeship fees** are the same as for the Standard Student—First Qualification fee. This means that the

fee for a NSW new-entrant trainee is always at the First Qualification rate, regardless of the number or level of previous post school qualifications they hold.

- The **Standard Student—Subsequent Qualification Fee** applies to students who already hold a previous post-school qualification from any tertiary sector. This category includes vocational and higher education qualifications achieved in Australia or overseas at any time previously.

The Standard Student—Subsequent Qualification fee is the higher of the two Standard Student fees because individuals undertaking a second or subsequent post-school qualification have already benefitted from training.

Where a student completes a Smart and Skilled qualification and enrolls in another Smart and Skilled qualification (except an apprenticeship or traineeship), the student will be charged the Standard Student—Subsequent Qualification fee for the subsequent qualification.

Apprenticeship fees

The fee for a qualification undertaken as part of an apprenticeship (i.e. the Smart and Skilled Entitlement Apprenticeships and Traineeships Program) is capped, so there will instances where the apprenticeship fee is lower than the fee for the same qualification undertaken by a student who is not an apprentice.

There is only one fee category for apprentices. An apprentice will be eligible for the apprenticeship fee regardless of the number or level of previous post-school qualifications they hold.

Concession fees

Concession fees are discounted fees for disadvantaged students. Concessions fees are a flat fee for the qualification level.

A student who receives a specified Commonwealth benefit or allowance is eligible for a concession fee for a qualification up to and including Certificate IV. A student who is receiving a specified benefit or allowance at the time of enrolment is eligible for a concession.

The concession fee is also available to a student who is a dependant of a person receiving a specified Commonwealth benefit or allowance. To be eligible for the concession the

person who the student is a dependant of must be receiving the benefit or allowance at the time of enrolment.

There are no concessions for students enrolling in Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas.

Fee exemptions

Students who qualify for a fee exemption are:

- Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people with a disability (that is people who meet the disability fee exemption criteria, including the dependent child, spouse or partner of a recipient of a Disability Support Pension). (See also Proof of eligibility for fee status)
- recipients of fee-free scholarships. (See also Proof of eligibility for fee status and Appendix 8 for scholarship eligibility rules).

Frequency of exemption

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will be exempt from fees for any Smart and Skilled enrolments for which they are eligible.

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students must meet the Smart and Skilled personal and program eligibility criteria. (For example, an Aboriginal student who holds a previous Certificate IV will not be eligible for subsidised training under the Smart and Skilled Entitlement Full Qualification or Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundations Skills Programs).

At the time of enrolment, a student with a disability or their dependant, where eligible for the program, is entitled to one exemption per calendar year and a concession for all subsequent enrolments up to Certificate IV in a calendar year. Examples showing how this policy is applied are at Appendix 4.

A student with a disability must declare their previous enrolments in a Smart and Skilled qualification in a calendar year. This includes enrolments in that calendar year that have not commenced, enrolments that commenced in a previous calendar year that are continuing in the calendar year and previous calendar year enrolments that are completed in the calendar year. System checks on Smart and Skilled data will also be undertaken to validate this.

Recognition of prior learning

Where an eligible student is granted recognition of prior learning (RPL) for one or more units of competency, the qualification price will be adjusted and a new student fee determined.

The qualification price is based on both fixed and variable costs. The fixed cost of the qualification will be reduced by 50 per cent of the proportion of units of competency granted RPL. The variable cost will be reduced by 50 per cent of the total cost of the units of competency granted RPL.

Once the adjusted qualification price is calculated the new student fee will be determined at the same percentage of the price as the original student fee for that course (i.e. adjusted qualification price x fee percentage).

Where RPL for a unit (or units) of competency is assessed by the Provider and only partially granted and some training delivery is still required, there is no reduction in the student fee and should not be entered in the Provider Calculator or reported as RPL granted.

Credit transfer

Where an eligible student is granted a credit transfer (CT) for one or more units of competency, the qualification price will be adjusted and a new student fee determined.

The fixed cost of the qualification will be reduced by the proportion of units of competency given credit transfer. The variable cost will be reduced by the total cost of each unit of competency granted credit transfer.

Once the adjusted qualification price is calculated the new student fee will be determined at the same percentage of the price as the original student fee for that course (i.e. adjusted qualification price x fee percentage).

Calculating and adjusting fees for recognition of prior learning and credit transfer

Where RPL and/or CT are granted at enrolment, the Provider will need to use the Smart and Skilled Provider Calculator to determine the applicable student fee.

Where RPL and/or CT is granted after enrolment, or after a student commences a qualification, the Provider must report the outcome for the relevant unit(s) of competency in their next Smart and Skilled training activity data file

submitted to the Department. The Department will make adjustments to the subsidy payment and advise the Provider of the new student fee. The Provider must take all necessary steps to advise affected students of adjusted fee and to adjust the fee levied, including adjustments to subsequent fee payment schedules.

The Provider must sight appropriate evidence, such as a testamur or a Unique Student Identifier (USI) transcript to grant credit transfer.

Fee for concession students where recognition of prior learning and/or credit transfer has been awarded.

Where a student is eligible for a concession and has been awarded RPL and/or CT, if the adjusted Standard Student fee (First or Subsequent) is lower than the concession fee, the student will pay the relevant Standard Student fee.

Student fees for part qualifications

There are three areas of part qualifications that will be subsidised under the Smart and Skilled Targeted Priorities- Prevocational and Part Qualifications Program in 2015:

1. pre-vocational courses
2. pre-apprenticeship or pre-traineeship
3. priority groups and industries.

To be eligible to enrol in a subsidised part qualification, the student must meet the relevant Smart and Skilled eligibility criteria outlined in Appendix 1.

The Department will specify fee types and rates for each part qualification in the Approved Qualification Activity Schedule for the Targeted Priorities- Prevocational and Part Qualification. Eligible students undertaking part of a full qualification will normally pay the pro-rata Standard Student—First Qualification or a pro-rata Standard Student—Subsequent Qualification fee applicable to the particular full qualification.

Some students may be eligible to pay the concession fee for that part qualification or may be exempt from paying the fee.

Note: This Policy will be updated later this year with instructions on how eligibility for a prevocational or part qualification will be determined.

Fee for concession students for Prevocational and Part qualifications

Where a student is eligible for a concession, if the Standard Student fee (First or Subsequent) is lower than the concession fee, the student will pay the relevant Standard Student fee.

Fees for continuing students transitioning to 2015

Students who started training before 1 January 2015 and who are continuing their training in 2015 will have different fee arrangements. Further information about transition students is at Appendix 5.

The Smart and Skilled Provider Calculator cannot be used to determine the fee for transitioning students.

The Provider will need to calculate the fee for students eligible to continue subsidised training in 2015. The new fee will be calculated based on the proportion of the course the student has left to complete based on the total nominal hours as determined by the Provider. The formula to calculate the pro rata fee is described in Appendix 5.

Student fees for programs outside Smart and Skilled

Where training is part of fee for service arrangements made between an organisation and a training provider, student fees would be covered through these arrangements. These arrangements are outside Smart and Skilled.

Students who subsequently wish to apply for Smart and Skilled subsidised training will be subject to the same eligibility requirements as for all other Smart and Skilled students. (For example students with a Certificate IV are not eligible for training at Certificate II or III except for apprenticeships or traineeships).

Proof of eligibility for fee status

An individual must provide evidence to support their eligibility for Smart and Skilled. Details of acceptable evidence are described in Appendix 6.

Proof of eligibility for First or Subsequent Qualification fee

A student is required to declare any post-school qualifications to assess eligibility for a First or Subsequent Qualification Standard Student fee.

Smart and Skilled data and data from the Unique Student Identifier may also be used as evidence of a student's previous post-school qualifications, to assess the appropriate Standard Student fee.

Proof of eligibility for a concession fee

A list of the specified Commonwealth benefits and allowances is at Appendix 7. The recipient of a specified Commonwealth benefit or allowance must provide the following proof of eligibility for a concession:

- a letter from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) confirming receipt of the benefit. The letter should clearly show the Centrelink Reference Number (CRN); or
- a current concession card that shows the CRN; or
- a current Centrelink income statement that clearly shows the benefit or allowance category and the CRN; or
- any other evidence that clearly shows the CRN and the benefit or allowance category; or

- documentary evidence from the Department of Veterans' Affairs stating their pension/benefits status; or
- for people applying for Austudy or Youth Allowance, an approval letter from Centrelink that shows the CRN and indicates that commencement date of their benefit is within two weeks of their enrolment or two weeks within the date of the first class attendance or participation in training.

An individual who is seeking a concession as a dependent child, spouse or partner of someone who is receiving a specified Commonwealth benefit or allowance must provide documentary evidence that Centrelink recognises the individual as the dependant. The evidence should clearly show the CRN of the benefit or welfare recipient.

Proof of eligibility for a fee exemption

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students prove their status and eligibility for a fee exemption through descent, self-identification and community identification. Students will need to declare their status and be able to provide documentary evidence of community identification, if required.

Students with a disability

A student who seeks a fee exemption on the basis of disability will need to provide:

- a letter from Centrelink confirming receipt of the Disability Support Pension. The letter should clearly show the Centrelink Reference Number (CRN); or
- a current Disability Pensioner Concession Card that shows the CRN; or

- a current Centrelink income statement for the Disability Support Pension, which clearly shows that income is for the disability pension and also shows the CRN; or
- any other evidence that clearly shows the CRN and confirms receipt of the Disability Support Pension; or
- documentary evidence of support needs due to the student's disability. This evidence must be a letter or statement from:
 - a medical practitioner; or
 - an appropriate government agency such as Veteran's Affairs or a TAFE NSW teacher consultant (for students with a disability), a school counsellor or special education coordinator, Centrelink, a Disability Service Provider, or a Job Capacity Assessor; or
 - a specialist allied health professional (including a rehabilitation counsellor, psychologist, speech pathologist, or occupational therapist).

An individual who is seeking an exemption as a dependent child, spouse or partner of someone who is receiving a Commonwealth Disability pension must provide documentary evidence that Centrelink recognises the individual as a dependant. The evidence should clearly show the CRN of the Disability Pension Recipient.

Proof of eligibility for persons exempt from the Certificate IV or higher qualification rule under the entitlement

If a student has a Certificate IV or higher qualification, the student will not be eligible for subsidised training under the entitlement (Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills and Smart and Skilled Entitlement Full Qualifications).

An exception to this rule is for a student with an acquired disability. A person seeking an exemption from this rule will need to provide evidence from a medical practitioner that their disability was acquired after achieving their post-school Certificate IV or higher qualification. The person will also need to provide documentary evidence that the new qualification for which they are enrolling is necessary as part of a rehabilitation program. Such evidence can include a letter or a statement from:

- a medical practitioner; or
- an appropriate government agency or TAFE NSW teacher consultant for students with a disability, a

school counsellor or special education coordinator, Centrelink, a Disability Service Provider, or a Job Capacity Assessor; or

- a specialist allied health professional (including a rehabilitation counsellor, psychologist, speech pathologist, or occupational therapist).

Fee-free scholarships

A social housing resident or person on the NSW Housing Register (waiting list) who seeks a fee-free scholarship will need to confirm, by student declaration/signature, that the information provided about their social housing status is correct.

It is up to training providers to ensure students understand what is meant by the term "social housing". A definition of social housing, for the purposes of the fee-free scholarship scheme, is provided in Appendix 8.

Validation of student eligibility and fee

The Provider must use the Provider Calculator to confirm an individual's personal and program eligibility for a qualification.

The Provider must charge the student the relevant fee set by the NSW Government which will be validated by the Provider Calculator.

The Provider cannot charge students a fee other than what is calculated by the NSW Government through the Provider Calculator. This means the Provider cannot discount the fee, charge a higher fee or exempt students from paying the fee determined by the Provider Calculator.

Circumstances may arise where the fee quoted by the NSW Government must be adjusted (such as where the student obtains a credit transfer or recognition of prior learning after enrolment or after commencement). See sections on Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning for more information.

A Student Fee Estimator will also be available on the Course Finder search on the Smart and Skilled website that individuals can use to check their eligibility and estimate their fee for NSW Skills List qualifications. This will be an estimate only, and the final student fee will be calculated through the Provider Calculator.

Evidence to support eligibility for fee exemption or concession

The Provider must sight or maintain certain evidence that supports eligibility and the fee charged for students who enrol and commence training.

A summary of evidence required for proof of personal, program and fee eligibility is at Appendix 6.

Additional costs to students

Incidental expenses

The price of a qualification, which is made up of the government subsidy and student fee, will cover the total costs incurred by the Provider to deliver the training, including assessment. However, there may be some instances of a personal cost to a student over and above the student fee. These costs include:

- essential equipment and other items that the student has the choice of acquiring from the Provider, or from a supplier other than the Provider, that become the physical property of the student, are retained by the student on completion of training, and are not consumed during the training

Example: chef knives, makeup kit, tool kit.

- an optional charge for an item that is not essential for the student to complete the training

Example: A Provider makes available standard flowers to a student for a floristry qualification to create a flower arrangement, but the student would like to use more expensive exotic flowers. The student would be required to purchase the more expensive flowers from the Provider or another supplier.

- an optional charge for an alternative form of access to an item or service that is an essential component of the training, but is otherwise made readily available at no additional fee by the Provider

Example: The textbook for a qualification is an online resource but a student would like a hardcopy. In this instance, the student can purchase the textbook. The textbook would become the student's personal property.

- field trips and food, transport and accommodation costs associated with the provision of field trips that form part of the training
- any textbook the student requires to undertake their qualification that is retained by the student after completion of the qualification.

For each qualification, the Provider must publish on its website any additional costs that a student will or may incur and ensure that students are aware of these costs prior to enrolment.

The Provider must provide the student or employer (where relevant) with receipts for any monies collected by the Provider for incidental expenses. The Provider must retain copies of receipts issued.

Charges for issuing embedded qualifications

In some cases a qualification may include all the units of competency required to complete a lower level qualification, an 'embedded' qualification. The student may wish to be issued with a testamur for the lower level qualification in addition to the higher one they enrolled in. In this case the student has paid the fee for the higher level qualification. The Provider may charge an administrative fee to produce the additional testamur but the student will not be required to pay additional student fees for the lower level qualification.

Paying fees

Levying of student fees

The Provider can determine the payment arrangements for student fees, but the Provider must publish information and inform students of these arrangements before the student enrolls.

The Provider must collect all fees to be paid by the student by the time they complete their subsidised training.

The Provider must retain student fees that it collects.

Where a student has applied for a VET FEE-HELP loan the amount will be paid directly to the Provider by the Commonwealth Government.

Arrangements for payment of fees for apprentices and trainees

Some Modern Awards include provisions that require the employer to pay the fee on behalf of their apprentice or trainee. Where this is the case the employer will pay the student fee.

Sub-contracting

Where the Provider enters into a subcontracting arrangement, the subcontractor is not to charge the student a fee or any additional costs. All fees and any additional costs must be levied by the Provider in accordance with this Policy.

Discontinuing students

Withdrawal without penalty

The Provider must advise the student, prior to any fees being paid, of the 'withdrawal with no penalty' cut-off date, i.e. the date by which the student can withdraw and be refunded any fees paid at enrolment. This date is determined by the Provider.

Withdrawal after the cut-off date without penalty

Where a student withdraws from training, the Provider must:

- give the exiting student a statement of fees that includes all fees applied and any fees refunded, if applicable
- comply with Paragraph 9 of the Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines.

Fees for student-repeat attempts to complete units of competency

The Provider will not be paid additional subsidy for repeat attempts by a student to complete a unit of competency. The Provider must have a policy on the number of times a student can attempt to complete a unit of competency for their student fee. The Provider must make students aware of the policy prior to or at enrolment.

Fee refunds

The Provider must have a refund policy.

The policy must include but is not limited to:

- the 'withdrawal with no penalty' cut-off date (as determined by the Provider)
- a process for refunding a student who withdraws from training not of their own accord. For example, where the Provider closes or where the Provider is no longer approved to deliver Smart and Skilled training
- a process for partial refund of fees (when necessary) where recognition of prior learning and/or credit transfer has been granted
- information on whether the student will get a refund if they withdraw from a qualification but have completed

all the requirements for a lower level qualification, which attracted a lower student fee.

For VET FEE-HELP approved qualifications, the Provider must comply with the Commonwealth's VET FEE-HELP Refund policy.

The Provider must publish and make students aware of the fee refund policy before enrolment.

Co-enrolments

The Provider must charge a fee for each Smart and Skilled qualification that a student enrolls in. For example, if a student enrolls in both a traineeship qualification and a foundation skills qualification, the student must pay the student fee applicable for both qualifications.

Recovery of outstanding student fees

The Provider must have a process for the recovery of outstanding fees from a student. The Provider must publish and make the student aware of this Policy.

Changes to Student Fees

The student will pay the fee for the qualification that applies in the year when they commence training. The student will not be affected by any subsequent changes to Smart and Skilled fees.

Transferring students

A student undertaking a Smart and Skilled qualification may withdraw from a qualification with a Smart and Skilled Provider and transfer to another Smart and Skilled Provider to complete their qualification because:

- they chose to of their own accord
- their initial Provider closes
- their initial Provider's Smart and Skilled Contract has been terminated.

Students who transfer of their own accord

Where a student transfers of their own accord from their initial Smart and Skilled Provider to another Smart and Skilled Provider to complete their training, standard credit transfer rules will apply when calculating the student fee. To do this, the student's subsequent Provider must obtain a statement of attainment from the student (issued by the

initial Provider) to determine what credit should be granted. The subsequent Provider must use the Smart and Skilled Provider Calculator to determine the student fee.

In this situation, the student may end up contributing more towards the cost of their training.

Students who transfer due to Provider closure or contract termination

The following rules apply to a student who transfers due to a Provider's closure or the termination of a Provider's Smart and Skilled Contract:

- The fees charged in total by the two Smart and Skilled Providers cannot exceed the student fee quoted by the initial Provider.
- Where the combined fee exceeds the original fee quoted, the subsequent Provider must contact the Department to confirm fee to be charged, before enrolling the student and charging any fees. Any fee gap will be paid to the Provider by the Department.

Therefore where a student transfers from their initial Smart and Skilled Provider to another Smart and Skilled Provider to complete their training, and the transfer is not of the student's own accord, the subsequent Provider must obtain from the student:

- a statement of attainment issued by the previous Smart and Skilled Provider
- an up-to-date training plan (issued by the initial Smart and Skilled Provider) that lists all units of competency achieved, commenced but not completed, and/or not started
- a statement of fees issued by the previous Smart and Skilled Provider.

The subsequent Provider can then enter the details into the Smart and Skilled Provider Calculator to determine the student's fee.

Obtaining the above documentation may not be possible where the initial provider closes. In these instances, the Provider should seek assistance from the Department to determine the student's fee.

Students transitioning from superseded qualifications

Where a student is enrolled in a qualification that is superseded and the student is required to transition to the

new qualification to continue training and complete, and the price of the new qualification is different to that of the superseded qualification:

- the provider will continue to be paid the applicable subsidy for the superseded qualification
- the student fee will remain the same.

Fee protection mechanisms

The Provider must comply with Clause 7.3 of the Australian Skills Quality Authority's (ASQA) *Users' Guide: Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* relating to a provider's responsibility to protect prepaid fees by learners.

Clause 7.3 states that where the RTO requires, either directly or through a third party, a prospective or current learner to prepay fees in excess of a total of \$1500 (being the threshold prepaid fee amount), the RTO must meet the requirements set out in the Requirements for Fee Protection in Schedule 6 of the Users' Guide.

The requirements set out in Schedule 6 are summarised below:

- Government entities and Australian Universities must implement a policy addressing learner fee protection arrangements.
- All other RTOs must implement one or more of the following arrangements:
 - The RTO holds an unconditional financial guarantee from a bank operating in Australia; or
 - The RTO is a member of an approved Tuition Assurance Scheme approved by its VET Regulator; or
 - The RTO has any other fee protection measure approved by the VET Regulator.

RTOs may collect up to \$1,500 in prepaid fees from a learner without needing to take any action to protect these fees.

The Users' Guide can be found here:

www.asqa.gov.au/verve/resources/Users_Guide_to_the_Standards_for_Registered_Training_Organisations_RTOs_2015.pdf

Where any changes are made to ASQA's requirements for the protection of student fees, these override fee protection obligations set out in the Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy.

VET FEE-HELP

Where a student obtains a VET FEE-HELP loan through the Provider, the Provider must comply with all Commonwealth requirements for VET FEE-HELP.

Information for students on VET FEE-HELP is available from the Australian Government's Study Assist website at studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-paying-my-fees/vet-fee-help/pages/vet-fee-help.

Provider information on VET FEE-HELP is available from education.gov.au/help-and-other-information.

Student access to fee policies

Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy

The Provider must give each student access to this Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy before or at the time of enrolment.

Provider's policies

As listed throughout this document the Provider must also make students aware of its policies or processes on:

- evidence required for student eligibility for Smart and Skilled, Smart and Skilled programs and fee exemptions and concessions where relevant
- withdrawal without penalty
- repeat attempts to complete a unit of competency
- fee refunds
- recovery of outstanding fees
- levying of student fees.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Smart and Skilled eligibility criteria

Personal eligibility for Smart and Skilled programs

To be eligible for training for any Smart and Skilled program, an individual must:

- be an Australian citizen, a permanent Australian resident, a humanitarian visa holder or a New Zealand citizen, and
- be aged 15 years or older, and
- live or work in New South Wales, and
- no longer be at school*.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who do not live or work in New South Wales but live in specific defined interstate NSW border areas are eligible for government-subsidised training under Smart and Skilled. A list of these defined interstate NSW border areas is at Appendix 9.

Program eligibility

Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills and Smart and Skilled Entitlement Full Qualifications Programs

An individual that holds a post-school qualification achieved after turning 17, at Certificate IV or above, including a higher education qualification or any post-secondary qualification achieved overseas at any time previously, is not eligible to undertake training under the Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills and Smart and Skilled Entitlement Full Qualifications Programs.

The individual is eligible to undertake a qualification under the Smart and Skilled Targeted Priorities Full Qualifications or Targeted Priorities Prevocational and Part Qualifications Programs.

Exemption from the post school qualification at Certificate IV or above requirement

An individual who has acquired an injury or disability and has been assessed as needing to retrain in a new career at entry level is exempt from the above rule. In this case, the student will need to provide evidence that the qualification is necessary as part of a program of rehabilitation and that the disability was sustained after gaining a previous post-school Certificate IV or higher qualification.

Note: There is no limit to the number of previous post-school qualifications a student can hold; however, eligibility will be assessed against the highest-level post-school qualification achieved by an individual outside of school after turning 17.

Smart and Skilled Entitlement Apprenticeships and Traineeships Program

New South Wales apprentices and New South Wales new-entrant trainees undertaking specific traineeships are eligible to a government subsidy under this program for the qualification that supports their apprenticeship or traineeship.

Exemptions

The Department of Education and Communities may on a case by case basis allow a Provider to enrol an individual who does not meet the personal or program criteria.

Note: NSW Existing-worker trainees are not eligible to a government subsidy under any Smart and Skilled Program for the qualification that supports their traineeship.

* Individuals must have left school (whether by school education or home-schooling) in adherence with the NSW School Leaving Age Policy and the NSW Education ACT 1990 (www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/ea1990104/s21b.html) to be eligible for Smart and Skilled.

Individuals who are still in school and completing an apprenticeship or traineeship outside of their school studies are ineligible for Smart and Skilled.

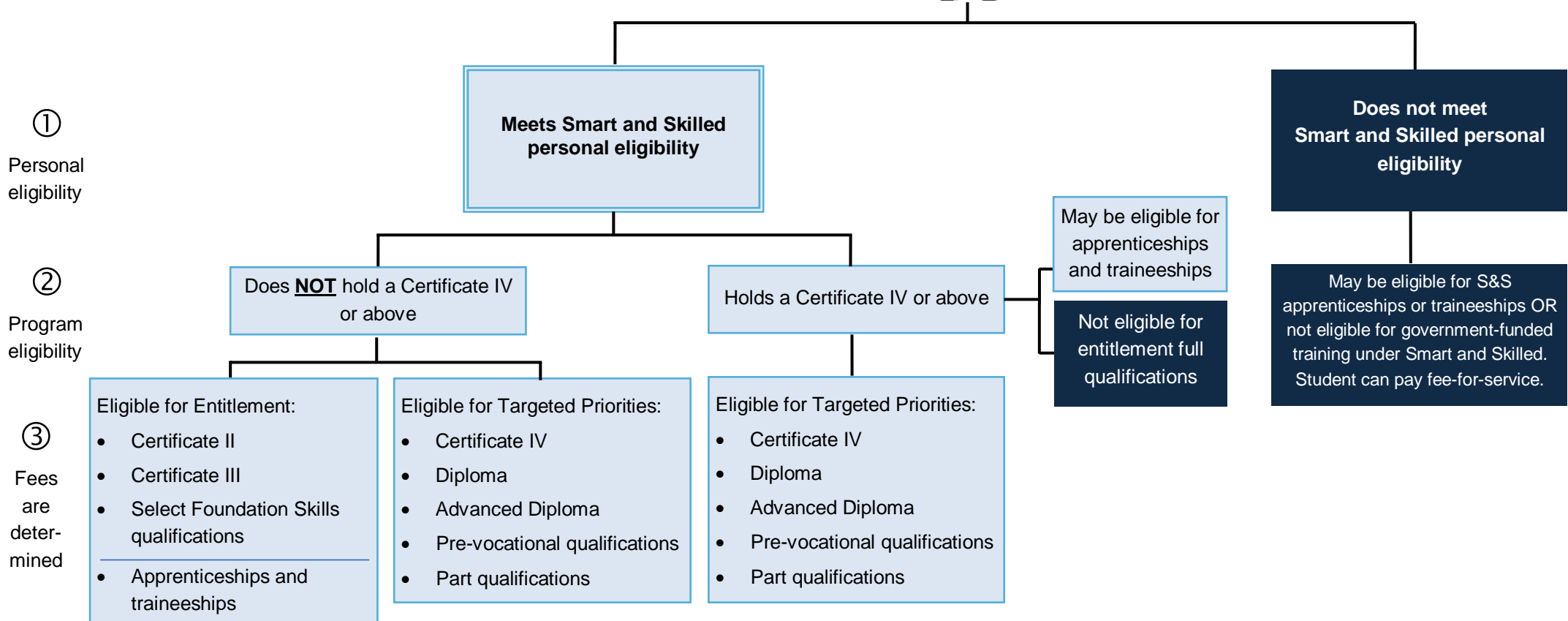
Appendix 2: Program eligibility and Standard Student fee rules

		Smart and Skilled Programs					
		Entitlement				Targeted Priorities	
		Foundation Skills	Full Qualifications	Apprenticeships	New Entrant Traineeships	Full Qualifications	Pre-Voc and Part qualifications
Eligibility	No previous qualification	✓	✓				✓
	Previous qualification Certificate III or below	✓	✓	NA	NA	NA	✓
	Previous qualification Certificate IV or above	Ineligible	Ineligible				✓
Fee payable	Standard Student—First Qualification fee	✓	✓	NA	✓	✓	✓
	Standard Student—Subsequent Qualification fee	NA	✓	NA	NA	✓	✓
	Apprenticeship Fee	NA	NA	✓	NA	NA	NA

Comments

- Previous apprenticeship and/or traineeship qualifications will count as post-school qualifications when determining eligibility and/or Standard Student fee type for training under the Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills, Smart and Skilled Entitlement Full Qualifications, Smart and Skilled Targeted Priorities Full Qualifications and Smart and Skilled Targeted Priorities Pre vocational and Part Qualifications Programs.

Appendix 3: Calculating student eligibility and fee arrangements for Smart and Skilled programs



Steps to eligibility:

- ① All students must meet Smart and Skilled personal eligibility (excluding Smart and Skilled Apprenticeships and Traineeships) then
- ② Students must meet Program eligibility then
- ③ Fees and eligibility for exemptions and concessions are applied
 - There are exemptions for eligible students for all qualification levels
 - There are concessions for eligible students for certificates up to and including Certificate IV then
- ④ Eligibility for fee-free scholarships is determined

Appendix 4: Student examples – fee exemptions and concessions for eligible students who meet disability requirements

Example 1

Tony is eligible to undertake a Smart and Skilled entitlement qualification. He is on a disability pension and therefore meets the disability requirements in the Smart and Skilled fee administration policy.

Tony, in:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• commences a Foundation Skills qualification and is exempt from paying a fee because he meets the disability requirements• completes the Foundation Skills qualification and enrolls in a Certificate II qualification. He has already been exempt from paying a fee for the Foundation Skills qualification, so he pays the concession fee for the Certificate II qualification |
| 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• continues the Certificate II qualification |
| 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• completes the Certificate II qualification in April• enrolls in a Certificate III qualification and is exempt from paying a fee because he is not enrolled in another qualification at this point where he is fee exempt• discontinues in the Certificate III qualification• enrolls in another Certificate III qualification and pays a concession fee because he has already been fee exempt for a qualification in 2017. |

Example 2

Jessica is eligible to undertake a Smart and Skilled entitlement qualification. She is the dependent child of a person on a disability pension and therefore meets the disability requirements in the Smart and Skilled fee administration policy.

Jessica, in:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• commences a Certificate II qualification in September and is exempt from paying a fee because she meets the disability requirements |
| 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• completes the Certificate II qualification in August• commences a Certificate III qualification in September and pays a concession fee because she has already been fee exempt for a qualification in 2016. |

Example 3

Josef is eligible to undertake a Smart and Skilled entitlement qualification. He has provided a letter from a specialist allied health professional (including a rehabilitation counsellor, psychologist, speech pathologist, or occupational therapist) and therefore meets the disability requirements in the Smart and Skilled fee administration policy.

Josef, in:

2015

- commences a Certificate II qualification in September and is exempt from paying a fee because he meets the disability requirements

2016

- continues the Certificate II qualification
- commences a Foundation Skills qualification in February and pays a concession fee because he has already been fee exempt for a qualification in 2016.

Josef has a son, Tomas who wishes to enrol in a Smart and Skilled qualification. Tomas is not eligible for a fee exemption or concession on the basis of his father's disability.

Example 4

Lucia is eligible to undertake a Smart and Skilled entitlement qualification. She is on a disability pension and therefore meets the disability requirements in the Smart and Skilled fee administration policy. She wants to enrol in a vocational qualification but needs additional literacy and numeracy support to complete this qualification.

Lucia, in:

2015

- enrolls simultaneously in a Certificate III qualification and a part qualification in literacy and numeracy.
- has an exemption for the Certificate III qualification and pays a concession fee for the part qualification in Foundation Skills as this is the second qualification she is enrolling in during the calendar year.

Example 5

Ron has a Certificate IV in Fitness he attained in 2008. He is not eligible for subsidised training at Certificate II or III. However after an accident in 2012 he is no longer able to work in a physically demanding job and wishes to retrain in a Certificate III in Business.

Ron, in:

2015

- enrolls in a Certificate III and has an exemption from fees for this qualification. Ron has the necessary documents showing that the qualification is necessary as part of a program of rehabilitation and that his disability was sustained after gaining his previous post-school Certificate IV.

Appendix 5: Fee arrangements for continuing students transitioning to Smart and Skilled in 2015

Continuing students transitioning to Smart and Skilled are those students who started government-subsidised training before 1 January 2015. There are three types of transition students where transition fee arrangements will apply:

1. Students who started a government-subsidised qualification before 2014.
2. Students who started a government-subsidised qualification that was on the 2014 NSW Skills List, and commenced from 1 January 2014.
3. Students who started a government-subsidised qualification that was not on the 2014 NSW Skills List, and commenced from 1 January 2014.

Student types and fee arrangements:

The fee arrangements that will apply from 1 January 2015 for the three types of students are outlined below.

1. **Students who started a government-subsidised qualification before 2014:** 2014 fees apply until 31 December 2014 and pro rata Smart and Skilled fees apply from 1 January 2015.
2. Students who started a government-subsidised qualification that was on the 2014 NSW Skills List, and who commenced from 1 January 2014: 2014 fees apply until 31 December 2014 and pro rata Smart and Skilled fees apply from 1 January 2015.
3. Students who commenced a government-subsidised qualification that was not on the 2014 NSW Skills List, and who commenced from 1 January 2014: 2014 fees apply until 31 December 2014. From 2015, government subsidy ceases and commercial fees apply.

Calculation of pro rata Smart and Skilled fees (student types 1 and 2)

Providers will need to calculate the 2015 pro rata fee for students eligible to continue training in 2015. The new fee will be calculated based on the proportion of the course the student has left to complete based on the total nominal hours of the course as determined by the Provider. The formula is:

Total hours remaining that a student needs to complete the qualification divided by Total nominal hours for the qualification	X	2015 Standard* fee
		<u>or</u> 2015 apprenticeship fee
		<u>or</u> 2015 traineeship fee
		<u>or</u> 2015 concession fee
		<u>or</u> 2015 Exemption (no fee)

* Standard Student fee for first post-school qualification.

Comments

The continuing student's fee status at the original time of enrolment will be used to determine which pro-rata fee they are charged.

Students who started a government-subsidised qualification on the 2014 NSW Skills List where only the apprenticeship pathway was approved on the 2015 NSW Skills List

There is a subset of the Type 2 category of students. This refers to those students who commenced a qualification on the 2014 Skills List but only the apprenticeship pathway was approved for a government-subsidy on the 2015 Skills List. Qualifications that fall into this category are provided in the table below.

Qualification code	Qualification name	2015 standard fee	2015 concession fee
AUR30412	Certificate III in Agricultural Mechanical Technology	\$2,390	\$240
AUR32112	Certificate III in Automotive Body Repair Technology	\$2,390	\$240
AUR31612	Certificate III in Automotive Drivetrain Technology	\$2,390	\$240
AUR30312	Certificate III in Automotive Electrical Technology	\$2,390	\$240
AUR31312	Certificate III in Automotive Engine Reconditioning	\$2,390	\$240
AUR32412	Certificate III in Automotive Refinishing Technology	\$2,390	\$240
AUR32512	Certificate III in Automotive Underbody Technology	\$2,390	\$240
CPC30211	Certificate III in Carpentry	\$2,960	\$240
AUR31812	Certificate III in Heavy Commercial Trailer Technology	\$2,390	\$240
AUR31112	Certificate III in Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology	\$2,390	\$240
AUR30612	Certificate III in Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology	\$2,390	\$240
AUR30512	Certificate III in Marine Mechanical Technology	\$2,390	\$240
AUR31212	Certificate III in Mobile Plant Technology	\$2,390	\$240
AUR30812	Certificate III in Motorcycle Mechanical Technology	\$2,390	\$240
CPC31011	Certificate III in Solid Plastering	\$2,960	\$240
CPC31211	Certificate III in Wall and Ceiling Lining	\$2,960	\$240

Providers needing to calculate the 2015 pro rata fee for students falling into this category will use the following formula:

Total hours remaining that a student needs to complete the qualification <i>divided by</i> Total nominal hours for the qualification	X	2015 Standard* fee
		<u>or</u> 2015 concession fee
		<u>or</u> 2015 Exemption (no fee)

* Standard Student fee for first post-school qualification.

Comments

- The continuing student's fee status at the original time of enrolment will be used to determine which pro-rata fee they are charged.

Existing Diploma/Advanced Diploma concession students

As concessions will not be available for Diploma and Advanced Diploma students from 2015, transition arrangements will be needed for concession students who commenced qualifications at this level before 1 July 2014.

For students who commenced before 1 July 2014, Providers will use a concession fee amount of \$400 to calculate the remaining concession fee to be paid:

Total hours remaining that a student needs to complete the qualification <i>divided by</i> Total nominal hours for the qualification	X	\$400
---	---	-------

If a student commenced training at the Diploma or Advanced Diploma level from 1 July 2014, they will not be eligible for a concession in calculating their transition fee in 2015.

Appendix 6: Proof of eligibility - Acceptable evidence

Requirement	Evidence	Evidence sighted or copy of evidence collected
Proof of Identity/Personal and Program Eligibility:		
1. Proof of identity	USI. The Provider must ensure validity of the USI. The Department will also check its validity with the Office of the USI Registrar.	Valid USI
2. Citizenship	<p>Student declaration/signature.</p> <p>N.B. The following evidence may be required upon request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian or New Zealand birth certificate; or • Australian or New Zealand Passport; or • Green Medicare card; or • Naturalisation Certificate. 	<p>No</p> <p>Upon request</p>
3. Australian permanent resident, humanitarian visa holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Certificate of Evidence of Resident Status (CERS), which confirms status as an Australian permanent resident; or • Humanitarian visa 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
4. Date of birth	student declaration/signature and valid USI check undertaken by the Department	No
5. Registration as NSW apprentice or new entrant trainee	Training Contract identifier (TCID) – Department system check against Training Contract details stored in State Training Services (STS) database	Yes
6. Previous highest level qualification	student declaration/signature plus USI check of previous history. (STS system check against Smart and Skilled records in STS database and STS check against USI transcript).	No
7. Year 10 completion or equivalent (if under 17)	student declaration/signature	No
8. Postcode for ATSI on borders	student declaration/signature	No

Requirement	Evidence	Evidence sighted or copy of evidence collected
Concessions/exemptions:		
9. Exemption: Aboriginality	<p>student declaration/signature</p> <p>This declaration also covers proof of Australian citizenship.</p>	No
10. Exemption/Concession: Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centrelink evidence: proof of Disability Support Pension; or • documentary evidence of training support needs due to their disability: A letter or statement from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a medical practitioner; or ○ an appropriate government agency (for See Proof of eligibility for fee status section in this Policy for more information); or ○ relevant specialist allied health professional; or • Centrelink evidence – dependent child of a recipient of a Disability Support Pension 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
11. Determine whether disability student is entitled to exemption or concession in the year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student declaration/signature; and • STS database check for other Smart and Skilled enrolments, commencements and completions in the year 	No
12. Concession: Welfare Recipient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centrelink evidence – Proof of benefit; or • Centrelink evidence – dependent child of a specified welfare recipient 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
13. Fee-free scholarship recipient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student declaration/signature to confirm the student's social housing status 	No

Requirement	Evidence	Evidence sighted or copy of evidence collected
Loading to Provider:		
14. Needs Loading: Aboriginality	Students that meet eligibility/evidence requirements for fee exemption based on Aboriginality will automatically attract a loading. (See also point 9 above)	NA
15. Needs Loading: Disability	<p>Students that provide evidence of the following for eligibility for fee exemption/concession based on Disability will automatically attract a loading :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centrelink evidence: proof of Disability Support Pension; or • documentary evidence of training support needs due to their disability: A letter or statement from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a medical practitioner; or ○ an appropriate government agency; or ○ relevant specialist allied health professional <p>(See <i>Proof of eligibility for fee status</i> section in this Policy for more information)</p> <p><i>Note: Dependants of a recipient of a Disability Support Pension do not attract a loading.</i></p>	NA
16. Needs: Long term unemployed – over 12 months	letter from Employment Service Provider	Yes
17. Location Loading: Residential address – regional or remote	student declaration/signature	No

Comments:

- Eligibility for a fee exemption or concession is assessed at enrolment and cannot be adjusted after enrolment.
- Where evidence is sighted but not kept, a record that confirms sighting of the evidence, dated and signed by a person authorised by the Provider, must be maintained.
- Where the evidence, provided by the student, is a copy of the original, the copy must be certified by a person who is on the list of approved witnesses who can verify documents. A list of which is available at the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department website at: www.ag.gov.au/Publications/Pages/Statutorydeclarationsignatorylist.aspx.

Appendix 7: Specified Commonwealth benefits and allowances for concession fees

Commonwealth benefits and allowances

Commonwealth benefits and allowances	
• Age Pension	• Austudy
• Carer Payment (see comment below)	• Disability Support Pension
• Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment	• Farm Household Allowance
• Family Tax Benefit Part A (maximum rate)	• Parenting Payment (Single)
• Newstart Allowance	• Special Benefit
• Sickness Allowance	• Veterans' Children Education Scheme
• Veterans' Affairs Pensions	• Widow B Pension
• Widow Allowance	• Youth Allowance
• Wife Pension	

Comments:

- A NSW Apprentice on a Newstart Allowance is not eligible for a concession fee.
- A NSW New Entrant Trainee on a Newstart Allowance is not eligible for a concession fee.
- The Carer Payment is a specific benefit paid by the Commonwealth, this category does not include the Carer Allowance or Carer Adjustment Payment.

Appendix 8: Eligibility for fee-free scholarships

Students commencing training from 1 July 2015 may be eligible for a Smart and Skilled fee-free scholarship.

To be eligible for a fee-free scholarship, individuals must first meet the Smart and Skilled personal and program eligibility rules.

In addition, individuals must be:

- Aged between 15 and 30 (inclusive) at the start date for training
- Eligible for a concession fee (ie either a Commonwealth welfare recipient or a student with a disability undertaking a second qualification in a calendar year)

Individuals are eligible for one scholarship per financial year (commencing 1 July 2015) and a maximum of two scholarships over four financial years (ending 30 June 2019).

There is a limit of 50,000 fee-free scholarships per financial year. This limit does not apply to people living in social housing in NSW or on the NSW Housing Register (waiting list).

For the purposes of the fee-free scholarship scheme, “social housing” is defined as:

- public housing (owned and managed by the Government)
- community housing (owned and/or managed by community housing providers)
- Aboriginal housing (owned and/or managed by the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) and Aboriginal Community Housing Providers)
- crisis accommodation/supported accommodation (Specialist Homelessness Services)
- private rental assistance managed by Housing NSW (for example: rental bond loans, tenancy guarantees, tenancy facilitation and private rental brokerage)

Fee-free scholarships are a category of “Fee Exemption”; meaning that fee-free scholarship recipients are exempt from paying student fees. Training providers will be compensated for the student fee revenue foregone as a result of the student being fee exempt rather than paying the concession fee. The payment to training providers will proceed in accordance with the Smart and Skilled Contract Terms and Conditions (clause 18 Subsidy and Loadings).

Appendix 9: Eligibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in defined interstate NSW border areas

Location	Postcode
One of the towns in the postcode area:	
ACT:	
	2600 - 2612
	2614 - 2617
	2900 - 2906
	2911 - 2914
QLD:	
Elanora	4221
Currumbin	4223
Coolangatta	4225
Tallebudgera	4228
Texas	4385
Goondiwindi	4390
Hebel	4486
Bollon	4488
Bungunya	4494
Talwood	4496
Thallon	4497
Kioma	4498
VIC:	
Nangiloc	3494
Red Cliffs	3496
Irymple	3498
Mildura	3500
Hattah	3501
Cabarita	3505
Echuca	3564
Koondrook	3580
Shepparton	3630
Yalca	3637
Kotupna	3638
Barmah	3639
Katunga	3640
Ulupna	3641
Cobram	3644
Chiltern	3683
Rutherglen	3685
Barnawartha	3688
Wodonga	3690
Bonegilla	3691
Bandiana	3694

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