

DJSIR Program Guidelines

Asylum Seeker Vocational Education and Training (ASVET) Program

This Guidebook has been prepared to help the asylum seekers and organisations who work with them to understand training options available under Skills First. It contains information on:

- [The ASVET Program](#)
- [ASVET eligibility](#)
- [Skills First](#)
- [Available subsidised training](#)
- [Organisations providing subsidised training](#)
- [Role of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre \(ASRC\)](#)
- [Enrolment in ASVET](#)
- [Visa Entitlement Verification Online \(VEVO\) System](#)
- [Information for training providers](#)
 - [Exemptions to Skills First eligibility under the ASVET Program](#)
 - [Reporting via the Skills Victoria Training System \(SVTS\)](#)

The ASVET Program

The ASVET Program provides eligible asylum seekers and refugees granted temporary residence with an exemption from the usual citizenship or residency eligibility criteria required for participation in a government-subsidised Skills First training course or Free TAFE course.

The purpose of the ASVET program is to provide broader pathways to education and training opportunities for people seeking asylum who currently reside in Victoria. This is to assist asylum seekers to gain the skills and qualifications needed to enter the labour market and secure viable and sustainable employment that leads to economic independence.

ASVET participants are also eligible for discounted course fees across all Skills First courses, and access to tuition fee-free training for select courses under the Free TAFE for Priority Courses initiative. This applies even if the student does not hold a concession card.

ASVET eligibility

Eligibility for the ASVET Program is available to **individuals** or **dependants of individuals** who meet the following criteria:


- hold any humanitarian, protection or refugee visa in Australia; OR
- have applied for a humanitarian, protection or refugee visa and hold a bridging visa for this purpose; OR
- have made an application under s. 417 or s.48b of the *Migration Act 1958 (Cth)* which is yet to be determined and hold a bridging visa.

Applicants must have study rights, and if relevant, work rights (if the course includes a work placement).

Skills First

Skills First is the Victorian Government's commitment to a high-quality training and TAFE system that leads learners to real jobs. Subject to meeting Skills First eligibility criteria, individuals can enrol in subsidised accredited vocational education and training (VET), in courses that meet the skills needs of Victoria, and maximise their prospects of valuable work. More information about Skills First can be found at:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/skills-first>



A key priority for Skills First is to support disadvantaged learners to engage with and succeed in their education and training.

Available subsidised training

A wide range of subsidised vocational education and training is available under Skills First. Refer to the Victorian Skills Gateway and the Free TAFE webpages for available courses:

- <https://www.skills.vic.gov.au/s/>
- <https://www.vic.gov.au/free-tafe>

The list of available courses is regularly reviewed, and courses added as required by industry needs and to support jobs growth. This allows the training market to keep up with the changing needs of the economy.

For further advice, contact the TAFE and Training Line:

- [TAFE and Training Line](#) on **13 18 23** or tafe.courseline@djsir.vic.gov.au

Organisations providing subsidised training

Training under the ASVET Program can only be delivered by Skills First contracted training providers. This includes Victorian TAFEs, Learn Local Organisations (who are also Registered Training Organisations), other Registered Training Providers and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Skills First training providers have been selected for their capacity to deliver quality government subsidised training. Find a training provider delivering your preferred course via the Victorian Skills Gateway, or search your local provider via:

- [Find my local TAFE](#)
- [Search Learn Local Organisations](#)

Role of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)

The Department provides additional funding to the ASRC to offer a range of supports to asylum seeker students and the Skills First providers that they engage with. These activities support an improved student experience and training pathways to further study and employment.

Enrolment in ASVET

Individuals who are eligible for the ASVET Program can either be referred via the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre or the Red Cross, or can self-refer to a Skills First provider.

1. Referral via the ASRC or the Red Cross Support for Trafficked People Program:

Both the ASRC and the Red Cross can prepare referral letters to support enrolment under the ASVET Program at a Skills First provider.

The Red Cross can support those who have experienced human trafficking, forced labour or forced marriage with a referral letter to a Skills First provider via their Support for Trafficked People Program. Details are available here:

<https://www.redcross.org.au/migration/support-for-trafficked-people/>

The Department provides additional funding to the ASRC to offer extended supports to asylum seeker students and the Skills First providers that they engage with for an improved student experience.

A person seeking asylum can:

- self-present to the ASRC in person by phone or through email
- be referred internally by an ASRC program
- be referred by another organisation.

The referral process for the ASRC is outlined below:

1. ASRC books the prospective student an initial appointment with an ASRC education advisor.
2. Education advisors support prospective students to make informed choices by:
 - a) exploring qualifications, skills and experience
 - b) investigating VET course aspirations
 - c) aligning VET course options and employment opportunities
 - d) identifying an appropriate VET course and an appropriate provider.
3. If course choice is clear, then a referral letter is issued to the chosen provider.
4. If course choice is unclear, then further appointments are made with an education advisor.

5. Once a VET course is chosen, the ASRC provides a referral letter to the training provider confirming the student's eligibility for the ASVET program and their interest in VET.
6. The person seeking asylum enrolls in VET and the ASRC Education Program continues engagement with the student and the training provider.

In addition to providing referral letters into Skills First, the ASRC provides a range of support services for ASVET participants and training providers:

- a help desk service aimed at providing guidance about verifying visas and other information for the purposes of validly enrolling students, as well as information on educational opportunities and pathways to employment for students.
- a dedicated internet site of resources that provides readily available and up to date information to inform their decisions about supporting asylum seeker students on campus.
- professional development workshops for training provider staff.
- a community-of-best-practice network for training providers to share examples of leading practice in the education and training support of asylum seeker and refugee students.

Find out more information:

- <https://asrc.org.au/vetasylumseekers/>
- Contact the ASRC on **(03) 8537 9500** or education@asrc.org.au

2. Self-enrolment process

Applicants can also self-enrol in the ASVET Program. Self-enrolling applicants are required to register with the Department of Home Affairs' VEVO system to complete the process themselves.

The self-referral process is as follows:

1. The applicant checks their visa via the VEVO system to confirm they are eligible for the ASVET program.
2. The applicant contacts their preferred Skills First training provider to discuss eligibility and course selection.

3. The training provider completes a Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) check and retains this as evidence.
4. The training provider confirms the applicant's eligibility, course enrolment and any course material fees and concessions.
5. The training provider offers the applicant enrolment in training.
6. The applicant accepts the offer, enrolls and commences their course.

Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) System

Through the Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs website (homeaffairs.gov.au), the VEVO system allows visa holders, education providers and other organisations to check visa details and conditions.

VEVO tells you details relating to your current in-effect visa, including:

1. which visa (e.g., visa type and subclass).
2. the 'expiry date'.
3. the 'must not arrive' after date.
4. the 'period of stay' (how long you can stay).
5. the visa conditions (what you can and can't do).

VEVO is not able to provide any details relating to visas that are not 'in-effect'. For example, if you hold a Bridging visa but your substantive visa has not yet expired.

Information for training providers

Exemptions to Skills First eligibility under the ASVET Program

Pursuant to the ASVET Program Guidelines, a training provider may exempt a student from the citizenship/permanent residence requirements for Skills First if they:

- a) either:
 - i. are referred to training via the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre or the Australian Red Cross Victims of Human Trafficking Program and they present a referral letter;
 - ii. hold, or are a dependant of an individual who holds, a valid humanitarian, protection or refugee visa;
 - iii. hold a bridging visa and have lodged an application for a humanitarian, protection or refugee visa; or

- iv. hold a bridging visa and have lodged an application under section 417 or section 48B of the Migration Act 1958 (Cth) which is yet to be determined; and
- b) have study and if relevant, work rights.

The training provider must sight and retain evident of the student's entitlement to receive an exemption in accordance with the Skills First Guidelines Abouts Eligibility:

https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-12/20241211_Eligibility_v1.0_0.pdf

The training provider MUST grant a Fee Concession to a Skills First student enrolled under the ASVET Program.

Reporting via the Skills Victoria Training System (SVTS)

Refer to the Victorian Statistical Guidelines Appendix 4: Specific reporting requirements at:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/training-data-collection>