

Sighting and retaining evidence of eligibility

This fact sheet explains what you must sight and retain when you check a student's evidence of eligibility for the Skills First program. Read it alongside the VET funding contract and guidelines about eligibility.

Background

Before you enrol a student in Skills First training, you must confirm their eligibility by checking they're an Australian or New Zealand citizen or a permanent resident of Australia.

Students must be doing all their training and assessment in Victoria or a border region that's specified by postcode in the guidelines about eligibility.

You must establish eligibility in a robust way that we can verify at an audit or review. This includes sighting and retaining evidence of eligibility.

Types of evidence we accept

We accept these documents as proof of citizenship or permanent residence.

If the student is:	You can accept ANY of these:
an Australian citizen	✓ Australian birth certificate (not birth extract) ✓ current Australian passport ✓ Australian citizenship certificate ✓ current green Medicare card ✓ Australian certificate of registration by descent
a New Zealand citizen	✓ current New Zealand passport ✓ New Zealand birth certificate ✓ New Zealand citizenship certificate ✓ current green Medicare card
a permanent resident	✓ current green Medicare card ✓ confirmation of permanent residence granted by the Department of Home Affairs AND the student's foreign passport or ImmiCard

i If a student lives in a specified border region, you can rely on the postcode they provide on their enrolment form as their home address. You don't have to retain any additional evidence of their address.

Using a proxy declaration when a student can't provide an eligibility document

You must make all reasonable efforts to help a student prove their eligibility with one of these documents. If a student can't do this, they may be able to make a case to show they're in exceptional circumstances.

Follow these steps to help a student in this situation:

Step 1: Decide whether you think the student is in exceptional circumstances.

This doesn't include where a student is unwilling to bear the cost or inconvenience of obtaining documents. It may include where a student:

- grew up in a remote location and their birth was not registered
- Is experiencing disadvantage or estrangement from family or guardians and don't have access to identity documents.

Step 2: If the student is in exceptional circumstances, send us an SVTS enquiry asking us to approve a proxy declaration.

Include any supporting information to make the case for the student. For example, a declaration signed by your CEO, or a representative from a government department or community service provider.

Step 3: We'll reply with a decision. If we approve, keep a copy of the declaration and our approval.

Ways to sight and retain evidence

There are **6** ways to sight and retain evidence of eligibility so you can help students in different circumstances. **Attachment 1** shows example scenarios.

 SIGHT	 RETAIN
1. An original document, presented in person	A photocopy or electronic copy
2. An original 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. A green Medicare card displayed on a digital wallet through: • the Express Plus Medicare mobile app; or • MyGov mobile application	A written declaration that includes the authorised delegate's name and the date they sighted the card, the card number and the card holder's name
5. An email or pdf document the student has obtained from the VEVO system that confirms they hold a permanent visa AND An original or certified copy of the student's foreign passport or ImmiCard	Electronic or paper copies of both documents
6. Your own VEVO check on the student's behalf, that shows they hold a permanent visa and that the details on the VEVO check match the details on their foreign passport or ImmiCard	A VEVO transaction record that shows the student's details and permanent visa status

Using certified copies

A certified copy is made when a student presents their original document and a photocopy of it to a 'certifier' and they verify it to be a true copy. For information about who can be a certifier, see the guidelines about eligibility, or the [Department of Justice and Community Safety website](#).

Using the DVS

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

We encourage you to use the DVS as an efficient and secure way to check Skills First eligibility. You can use it to check a range of Australian government-issued documents, including passports, Medicare cards and birth certificates.

Engage a gateway service provider

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

Sight and retain evidence

When you use the DVS, you don't have to sight and retain a copy of the student's document. Instead, you sight confirmation from the gateway service provider that the details on the student's document match a current and valid record in the DVS database.

You must retain a transaction record that shows the student's details were verified to match a valid and current document in the DVS. You don't need to print this – you can retain it electronically. An electronic record can usually be kept within the gateway service provider's administrative platform. But if not, keep a secure electronic version that can't be easily altered.

If a document can't be verified

If a student's evidence can't be verified through the DVS, you need to give them the opportunity to provide it another way before making a final decision about their eligibility.

Using VEVO to confirm permanent residence

In most cases, permanent residents can use a green Medicare card as evidence of Skills First eligibility. If the student doesn't have a green Medicare card, you can confirm permanent residence through VEVO.

There are 3 ways to confirm permanent residence using VEVO:

1. Use a gateway service provider. You must ensure the transaction record contains the student's permanent residence status.
2. A student self-generated VEVO check. This may be in the form of an email or pdf document. You'll need to:
 - look for the logo of the Department of Home Affairs on the VEVO check
 - check 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.
3. You connect to VEVO and check on the student's behalf.

Using eligibility evidence again for future enrolments

If you keep a copy of the student's eligibility evidence on file, you can use it again the next time they enrol with you.

- If you use a means other than the DVS to verify the evidence, the document must still be current and valid.
- If you use the DVS to verify the evidence and you don't retain an expiry date, you can continue to use it **only** for enrolments that occur in the same calendar year as the DVS check.

You must continue to keep a copy of the evidence for audit or review purposes.

You must also make all other assessments of the students' eligibility for the new enrolment.

Student privacy concerns

It is important you keep a student's personal information private and secure. If a student has concerns about the security of their personal information, you should try to reassure them by explaining your privacy measures.

If a student continues to object to you retaining their personal information for privacy reasons, you can sight their evidence without retaining it. Instead of keeping a copy of their document, you must prepare a written declaration that you have sighted it. It must include the:

- name of the authorised delegate who sighted the evidence
- date it was sighted
- type of document that was checked
- student's name.

This must only be done if a student has specifically raised a privacy concern with you and remains concerned after you have made all reasonable attempts to reassure them of your privacy measures.

Eligibility exemptions

You can only exempt a student from eligibility criteria if there is a program or initiative in the contract and guidelines about eligibility that allows it.

Asylum Seeker VET Program

Students can get an exemption from the citizenship/permanent residence requirement if they meet the criteria to participate in the Asylum Seeker VET Program. This program is open to individuals (and their dependants) who either:

- hold any humanitarian, protection, or refugee visa in Australia
- have applied for a humanitarian, protection or refugee visa and hold a bridging visa for this purpose
- 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.

Individuals must have study rights, and work rights are required for programs that include work placement.

There are 3 ways you can check eligibility to participate:

1. If you're registered to use the VEVO system, you can ask the student for permission to check the type of visa they hold and the status of their study and work rights.
2. You can accept a VEVO record that a student has generated themselves. You'll need to check that the details on the record match the name, date of birth and document number of their foreign passport or Immicard.
3. You can accept a letter of referral from the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre or the Australian Red Cross.

You can't use a gateway service provider to check eligibility to participate.

When a student has a bridging visa, you'll need to sight additional evidence that they're applying for a humanitarian, protection, or refugee visa or making an application under s.417 or s.48b of the *Migration Act 1958 (Cth)*.

We don't maintain a list of visa types, so you'll need to refer to the [Department of Home Affairs website](#) to check visa types.



Further information

- Submit an enquiry via [SVTS](#)
- [Fact sheet: Skills First eligibility](#)
- [Fact sheet: using electronic signatures](#)
- [Fact sheet: recordkeeping requirements](#)

Attachment 1 - example scenarios

These scenarios show examples of how to sight and retain evidence of a student's eligibility.

Example 1 – Thuy is a permanent resident of Australia

Thuy holds a permanent resident visa and has a green Medicare card. She shows it to you on her phone through the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

Sight Thuy's Medicare card on her physical phone through the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

Retain a written declaration that you have sighted the digital green Medicare card.

Example 2 – Bailey is an Australian citizen with privacy concerns

Bailey has an Australian passport. Bailey shows you their passport in person but doesn't want you to keep a copy of it.

Try to calm their concerns by informing them of your privacy measures.

If Bailey is still concerned after your explanations, you may **retain** a written declaration that you have sighted their passport.

Example 3 – Yasmine is an Australian citizen, and you use DVS

Yasmine has an Australian certificate of registration by descent. As part of your online enrolment process, she enters her document details into the gateway service provider's platform that connects to the DVS.

Sight confirmation from the gateway service provider that the details on Yasmine's certificate match a current and valid record in the DVS.

Retain a copy of the transaction record that shows Yasmine's details, and that they were verified to match her Australian certificate of registration by descent in the DVS.

Example 4 – Ahmad holds a bridging visa

Ahmad has a bridging visa with study rights. He is waiting for a result for his application for a refugee visa.

He is eligible for the Asylum Seeker VET Program.

He gives you permission to access VEVO on his behalf. He has an ImmiCard.

Sight that his details match a record in the VEVO system, and that he has a valid bridging visa with study rights.

Check that Ahmad's ImmiCard details match the VEVO record.

As he holds a bridging visa, you must **further sight** a document from the Department of Home Affairs that acknowledges Ahmad has applied for a refugee visa.

Retain:

- a copy of the VEVO transaction record.
- a copy of Ahmad's ImmiCard.

You don't have to keep a copy of the document Ahmad shows you from the Department of Home Affairs – but keep a written declaration that you have sighted it.