

Smart and Skilled

Smart and Skilled is a reform of the NSW Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. The aim is to provide eligible learners with access to Government subsidised training. The Smart and Skilled reform will help learners gain skills to find a job and advance their careers. Smart and Skilled provides eligible students with:

- An entitlement to Government subsidised training up to and including Certificate III
- Government funding for higher-level courses (Certificate IV and above) in targeted priority areas

Are you Eligible?

Learners may be eligible if they meet the following criteria:

- Live or work in NSW (determined by postcode of the usual place of residence or place of work)
- Are an Australian Citizen, permanent resident, humanitarian visa holder or New Zealand citizen
- Aged 15 years or older
- Have left school

From 1 January 2017 Smart and Skilled eligibility is extended to registered home-schooled learners ([Fact Sheet](#)).

Smart and Skilled Student Fee

VERTO will charge the learner the relevant fee that is set by the NSW Government. The student fee is determined when VERTO obtains a Smart and Skilled Eligibility Enquiry Report via the Smart and Skilled provider calculator.

Smart and Skilled Student Fee Exemption, Concession and Fee-Free Scholarships

Learners who are eligible for Government subsidised training may qualify.

Fee Exemption

Refer to the relevant fact sheet for eligibility and mandatory evidence requirements:

- Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ([Fact Sheet](#)); or
- Person with disability or the dependant of a person in receipt of a disability support pension ([Fact Sheet](#)); or
- Refugee or asylum seeker ([Fact Sheet](#)).

Fee Concession

Learners who are in receipt of an eligible Commonwealth Government benefit or allowance may be eligible for a fee concession. Fee concession may also apply to the dependant of a person in receipt of an eligible Commonwealth Government benefit of allowance. Eligibility and mandatory evidence requirements here: [Fact Sheet](#)

Fee-Free Scholarships

Learners may be eligible if they meet the following criteria:

- Aged between 15-30 years at commencement and in receipt of an eligible Commonwealth Government benefit or allowance; or
- Aged between 15-17 years and currently in out-of-home care or aged between 18-30 years and previously been in out-of-home care

A fee-free scholarship limit applies per financial year, however, priority is given to learners who meet the social housing or out-of-home care criteria. Eligibility and mandatory evidence requirements found here: [Fact Sheet](#)

Fee-Free Scholarships (Other Circumstances)

Undertaking training can help rebuild someone's life and get them back into the workforce. People (and/or their dependant/s) who are experiencing or have experienced domestic and family violence may be eligible for free training that is funded by the NSW Government. Additional information found here [Fact Sheet](#).

Alternatively, information is available in the Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy 201: [FAP2018](#)

Student Information

VERTO will ensure the learner considering enrolment in subsidized training has sufficient information prior to enrolment, in particular, regarding access to information, policies and procedures, rights and responsibilities and the complaints process. The learner will be provided with the following:

- Fee Information
- Information regarding Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer (CT)
- Consumer protection information
- Any subcontracting arrangements that may exist
- What the enrolled learner should do if they want to defer or discontinue training
- How to access support and assistance during the training, and contact details for various support services

Unique Student Identifier (USI)

Learners enrolling in nationally recognised vocational education and training from 1 January 2015 will need a Unique Student Identifier (USI). The USI is a ten digit alpha-numeric reference code that will link learners to their training records and transcripts. The USI may be used to verify identity and report Training Activity Data to the Department (with the consent of the learner in accordance with notification of enrolment process outlined below).

Learners may grant permission to VERTO to view and update their USI account or access their transcript. For Smart and Skilled training, learners must give permission to VERTO and the Department of Industry to access their record (refer to [USI Permission Fact Sheet](#)). VERTO can assist prospective learners in applying for a USI from the Student Identifiers Registrar www.usi.gov.au or, with the consent of the learner, VERTO can apply for a USI on the learner's behalf. Additional information located here: [Video](#)

Notification of Enrolment

VERTO will adhere to the following steps in the Smart and Skilled notification of enrolment process for prospective learners.

- Obtain the consent of the learner for the Department's use of the prospective learner's information
- Validate learner eligibility for subsidised training via the Department provider calculator
- Provide the prospective learner with details of the Smart and Skilled student fee
- Capture the prospective learner's USI
- Obtain a declaration from the prospective learner regarding the correctness of the provided information and confirmation of receipt of certain information from the provider
- Provide the learner with a copy of the notification of enrolment (commitment ID)

Withdrawal of Learners

Once an enrolment is processed, refunds or transfers can only be arranged in the following circumstances:

- Where a course is cancelled or changed by VERTO
- A refund request from a learner is received at least seven (7) days prior to the commencement of a course
- A transfer request is received at least seven (7) days prior to the commencement of a course

A pro-rated cancellation fee totalling the charge of one Unit of Competency is charged when:

- Learners cancel or withdraw less than seven (7) days before the commencement of a training course.
- Learners fail to attend a training course.

Withdrawals Process

1. Deferred Training

If a learner indicates they wish to defer subsidised training, VERTO will make every effort to assist in the continuance of training.

VERTO can only permit a deferral of no more than 12 months from the date of notice. If the learner wishes to defer, in the first instance, the learner should discuss the process with the applicable trainer.

2. Discontinued Training

In the event the learner wishes to discontinue training, VERTO will seek reasoning and ensure that reasonable efforts are made to address any concerns.

VERTO may refer the learner to another appropriate staff member to discuss any support requirements or to the customers protection officer if the learner has a complaint or grievance. If a learner wishes to discontinue their training, VERTO will adhere to the following:

- Attempt to obtain formal notification from the learner of the date the training will end
- Comply with the Financial Management Policy and refund any outstanding fees (if applicable)
- Issue a statement of attainment within 21 days of notification of cancellation, if applicable
- Provide the learner with an updated training plan
- Return results of any outstanding completed training activities and/or assessment to the learner

Smart and Skilled Fee and Refund Policy

VERTO is aware of its contractual obligations under Smart and Skilled with regard to the fee and refund requirements. VERTO has implemented the following procedures to ensure the providers contractual responsibilities are maintained:

- All information regarding fees to be paid by the learner will be supplied individually on enrolment and on completion of the notification of enrolment process. The fee will be as calculated using the provider calculator.
- Learners can utilise VERTO's direct payment plan (managed by EZYPAY). Prospective learner must arrange payment schedule with VERTO once the student fee has been determined.
- Learners will be notified of any additional equipment costs prior to enrolment.
- Arranged payment schedule will ensure that all fees are paid in full prior to completion of training and assessment.
- All fees collected will be retained by VERTO.
- Where applicable, the employer will pay the fee on behalf of the trainee.
- No extra fees will be charged to learners under a sub-contacting arrangement.
- Learners will be entitled to two attempts to complete a unit of competency without additional cost. Any further attempts may incur a charge at the discretion of VERTO.
- Fees will be adjusted to reflect any RPL or CT and if necessary, refunds will be made.

Smart and Skilled Customer Protection Policy

VERTO recognises that differences and grievances can arise from time to time and that quick settlement of matters is in the best interest of all parties concerned. VERTO enforces the Smart and Skilled Consumer Protection Strategy (located here [Smart and Skilled Consumer Protection Strategy](#)) which includes the rights and obligations of the consumer, the responsibilities of the training provider, consumer protection measures (including the complaint process), and other complaint handling agencies.

In the first instance, the consumer should raise the complaint with the training services provider to resolve the matter. Additional information is available in VERTO's complaints and feedback policy (located here [VERTO Complaints and Feedback](#)). Should the matter remain unresolved, the consumer can contact Training Services NSW online ([Smart and Skilled Website](#)) by phone (1300 772 104 a) or in person (details provided here [Smart and Skilled Customer Protection for Students](#)).

For further information on the Smart and Skilled Consumer Protection Policy, consumers may contact VERTO Training Services Manager (internal Consumer Protection Officer) on 1300 4 VERTO (83786).

Disability Supplement

The purpose of the Disability Supplement is to provide additional information to assist with answering the disability question. **If you indicated the presence of a disability, impairment or long-term condition, please select the area(s) in the following list:**

Disability in this context does not include short-term disabling health conditions such as a fractured leg, influenza, or corrected physical conditions such as impaired vision managed by wearing glasses or lenses.

'11 — Hearing/deaf'

Hearing impairment is used to refer to a person who has an acquired mild, moderate, severe or profound hearing loss after learning to speak, communicates orally and maximises residual hearing with the assistance of amplification. A person who is deaf has a severe or profound hearing loss from, at, or near birth and mainly relies upon vision to communicate, whether through lip reading, gestures, cued speech, finger spelling and/or sign language.

'12 — Physical'

A physical disability affects the mobility or dexterity of a person and may include a total or partial loss of a part of the body. A physical disability may have existed since birth or may be the result of an accident, illness, or injury suffered later in life; for example, amputation, arthritis, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, paraplegia, quadriplegia or post-polio syndrome.

'13 — Intellectual'

In general, the term 'intellectual disability' is used to refer to low general intellectual functioning and difficulties in adaptive behaviour, both of which conditions were manifested before the person reached the age of 18. It may result from infection before or after birth, trauma during birth, or illness.

'14 — Learning'

A general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviours, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability.

'15 — Mental illness'

Mental illness refers to a cluster of psychological and physiological symptoms that cause a person suffering or distress and which represent a departure from a person's usual pattern and level of functioning.

'16 — Acquired brain impairment'

Acquired brain impairment is injury to the brain that results in deterioration in cognitive, physical, emotional or independent functioning. Acquired brain impairment can occur as a result of trauma, hypoxia, infection, tumour, accidents, violence, substance abuse, degenerative neurological diseases or stroke. These impairments may be either temporary or permanent and cause partial or total disability or psychosocial maladjustment.

'17 — Vision'

This covers a partial loss of sight causing difficulties in seeing, up to and including blindness. This may be present from birth or acquired as a result of disease, illness or injury.

'18 — Medical condition'

Medical condition is a temporary or permanent condition that may be hereditary, genetically acquired or of unknown origin. The condition may not be obvious or readily identifiable, yet may be mildly or severely debilitating and result in fluctuating levels of wellness and sickness, and/or periods of hospitalisation; for example, HIV/AIDS, cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, Crohn's disease, cystic fibrosis, asthma or diabetes.

'19 — Other'

A disability, impairment or long-term condition which is not suitably described by one or several disability types in combination. Autism spectrum disorders are reported under this category.