

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships Program Fee Administration Policy

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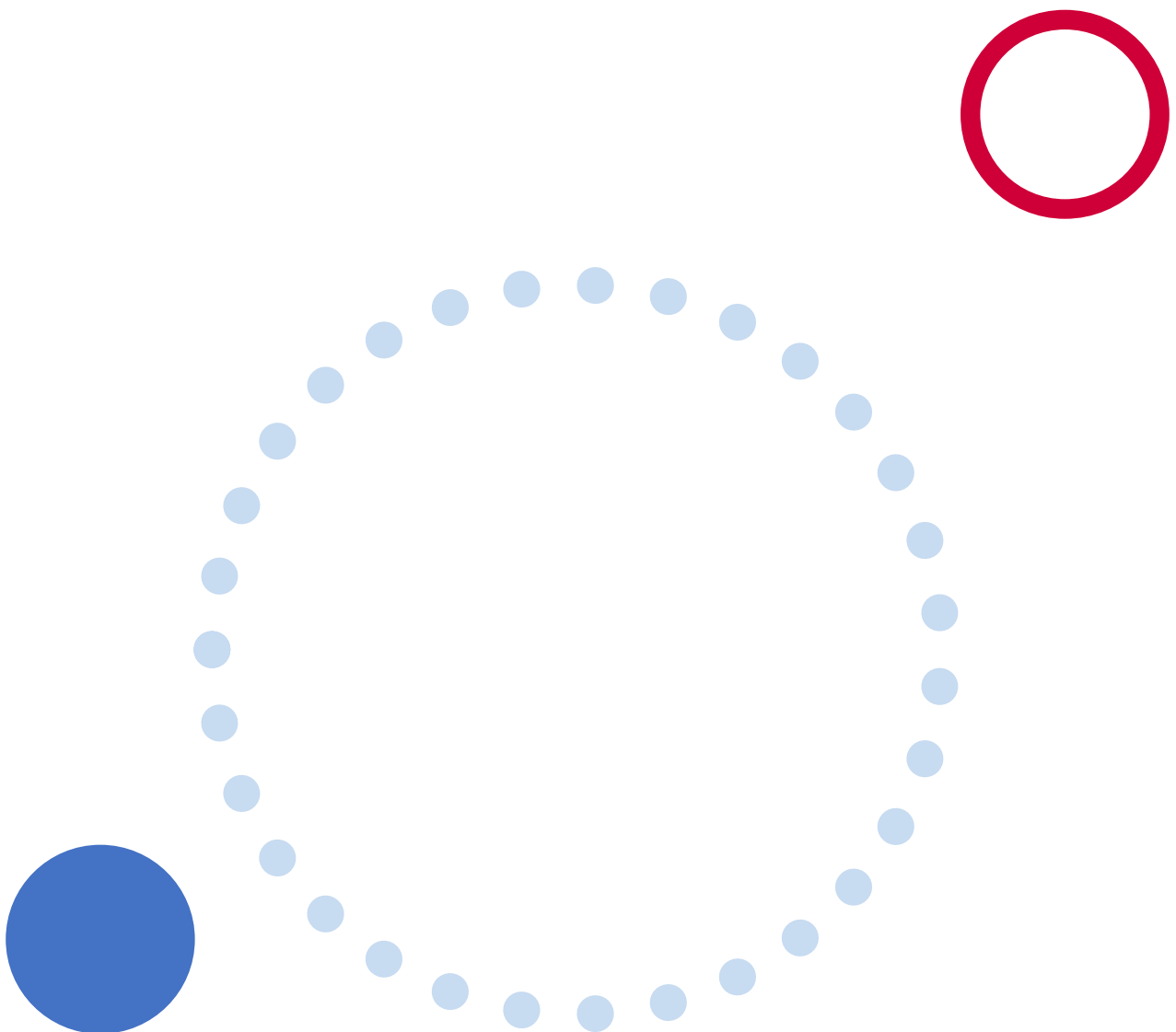


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Section 1: Introduction

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

- Smart and Skilled Contract Terms and Conditions
- Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines
- The Schedule of Prices, Fees and Subsidies
- Any other relevant Smart and Skilled policy documents.

In this document, a reference to a student means a NSW school based apprentice or NSW school based trainee.

Other Smart and Skilled Programs

The requirements for the application and management of student fees under all other Smart and Skilled Programs are set out in the Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy.

1.1 Student eligibility

To be eligible to be subsidised to undertake a qualification under the SBAT Program a student must be a NSW school based apprentice or school based trainee, and the qualification must support the school based apprentice or trainee's apprenticeship or traineeship and be listed on the NSW Skills List as an apprenticeship or traineeship qualification.

Section 2: Student fees

Under the School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT) Program, 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 (they are not annual or semester fees)
- set for the student and the qualification, and will be the same regardless of the Provider chosen.

2.1 Charging fees

The Provider must only charge the student the relevant fee set by the NSW Government for the subsidised training the student is undertaking. The student fee to be charged will be confirmed when the Provider enters the student data into the School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship Enrolment facility on STS Online and a SID is issued.

The Provider must not charge the student any additional fees, except for additional costs outlined in **Section 4: Additional costs to a student**.

Note:

All references in this policy to charging a student a fee encompasses charging anyone else who may pay the fee on behalf of the student. This includes, but is not limited to:

- * the student
- * the student's employer
- * parent/guardian/any other organisation.

Examples:

1. The Provider cannot charge additional fees to recover costs for lost income resulting from the student withdrawing from training.
2. The Provider cannot charge for customisation of the qualification where the customisation is within training package rules.

2.2 Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning

Where an eligible student is granted credit transfer (CT) or recognition of prior learning (RPL) or for one or more units of competency (UoC), the qualification price will be adjusted and a new student fee determined. The qualification price is based on both fixed and variable costs and adjustments will be made to both these cost components.

Credit transfer (CT)

The Provider must comply with the VET Regulator's guidelines in connection with granting Credit Transfer.

CT provides a means for a student to gain credit in the qualification they are undertaking on the basis of having previously completed UoCs or modules in another qualification or other formal learning. Being granted CT for a UoC or module means the student does not have to undertake the UoC/module again. It reduces the amount of learning to be undertaken and may reduce the student fee.

Providers must inform a student of CT opportunities and advise them to check their academic transcripts for any previous qualifications achieved to identify any potential opportunities for CT.

Providers can also advise a student to visit the USI Registry at <https://portal.usi.gov.au/student/> to check if any information is stored by the Registry on previous training they have undertaken, to help identify any previously achieved UoC/modules that can be granted CT.

This information can be given to the Provider which may entitle the student to a reduced fee.

The Provider must grant CT for any units already achieved, where the evidence to support this is provided.

Where CT is granted, student fees are calculated as follows:

- The fixed cost of the qualification will be reduced by the proportion of UoCs given CT.
- The variable cost will be reduced by the total cost of each UoC granted CT.

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.

Example of CT:

A Certificate III has a qualification price of \$8,000 with a fixed cost of \$3,000 and a variable cost of \$5,000. The qualification consists of 25 UoCs at \$200 each.

The student fee is 25% of the qualification price (\$2,000). Student A has no CT. Student B has CT for five (5) UoCs (i.e. 20% of the qualification).

Field	Student A	Student B
Student fee prior to CT	\$2,000	\$2,000
Fixed Cost	\$3,000 No reduction	\$2,400 This is reduced by the proportion of units with CT. In this case, the reduction is 20% x \$3,000 = \$600
Variable Cost	\$5,000 No reduction	\$4,000 This is reduced by the total cost of each UoC with CT. In this case, the reduction is 5 x \$200 = \$1,000
New Qualification Price	\$8,000	\$6,400
New Student Fee (25% of new price)	\$2,000	\$1,600

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

The Provider must ensure that its Recognition Process aligns with the NSW Recognition Framework as published from time to time. Recognition of Prior Learning for Apprenticeships and Traineeships must comply with all Applicable Laws, including the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001.

RPL involves a student demonstrating they already have the skills and experience to complete the qualification (in whole or part) without needing to attend classes or participate in learning.

Providers must inform the student of RPL opportunities and of the process for applying.

Where RPL is granted, student fees are calculated as follows:

- The fixed cost of the qualification will be reduced by 50 per cent of the proportion of UoCs granted RPL.
- The variable cost will be reduced by 50 per cent of the total cost of each UoC 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.

Example of RPL:

A Certificate III has a qualification price of \$8,000 with a fixed cost of \$3,000 and a variable cost of \$5,000. The qualification consists of 25 UoCs at \$200 each.

The student fee is 25% of the qualification price (\$2,000). Student A has no RPL. Student B has RPL for five (5) UoCs (i.e. 20% of the qualification).

Field	Student A	Student B
Student fee prior to CT	\$2,000	\$2,000
Fixed Cost	\$3,000 No reduction	\$2,700 This is reduced by 50% for the proportion of units with RPL. In this case, the reduction is 50% x 20% x \$3,000 = \$300
Variable Cost	\$5,000 No reduction	\$4,500 This is reduced by 50% of the total cost of each UoC with RPL. In this case, the reduction is 50% x 5 x \$200 = \$500
New Qualification Price	\$8,000	\$7,200
New Student Fee (25% of new price)	\$2,000	\$1,800

Where RPL for a UoC(s) 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.

Note: Where a student is granted a mix of RPL and CT, the combination of the above two methodologies will be used to calculate the new student fee

2.3 Calculating and adjusting fees for CT and RPL

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

Where CT and/or RPL 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 adjust the subsidy payment and advise the Provider of the new student fee. The Provider must take all necessary steps to advise the affected student of the adjusted fee and to amend the fee levied to the student, including changing future fee payment schedules.

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

Fee for a concession student 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 lower fee i.e. the adjusted Standard Student fee.

2.4 Fees for Continuing Students

The student fee is for the whole qualification and should be determined at enrolment. It therefore applies for the duration of training for a particular enrolment (CID) even where the student is undertaking training over more than one contract period.

Section 3: Fee categories and eligibility

There are different categories of student fees, based on the qualification and the characteristics of the student.

The student fee categories are:

1. Apprenticeship
2. Traineeship
3. Concession
4. Exemptions and fee-free training

Evidence requirements for each of the fee categories is at **Appendix 1: Proof of eligibility - Acceptable evidence**.

3.1 Apprenticeship fees

Under the NSW Government's **Fee-Free Apprenticeship Initiative**, NSW School Based Apprentices who are funded under Smart and Skilled, and who commence subsidised training on or after 1 July 2018, are eligible for free training.

A school based apprentice eligible under this initiative will be exempt from fees for their apprenticeship qualification.

The apprentice eligibility requirements for this Initiative can be found in the Smart and Skilled Policy for the Fee-Free Apprenticeships Initiative.

An apprentice who commenced a School Based Apprenticeship prior to 1 July 2018 and then transition to a full apprenticeship after 1 July 2018, are not eligible under the Fee-Free Apprenticeships Initiative, for a fee exemption for the remainder of their apprenticeship qualification

For students who are not eligible, the fee for a qualification delivered to a school based apprentice under an apprenticeship pathway is lower than for a non-apprenticeship pathway and is capped at \$2,000.

3.2 Traineeship fees

Under the NSW Government's **Fee-Free Traineeship Initiative**, NSW School Based Trainees who are funded under Smart and Skilled, and commence subsidised training on or after 1 January 2020, are eligible for free training.

A school based trainee eligible under this initiative will be exempt from fees for their traineeship qualification.

The trainee eligibility requirements for this Initiative can be found in the Smart and Skilled Policy for the Fee-Free Traineeships Initiative.

For trainees who are not eligible, the fee for a qualification delivered to a trainee under a traineeship pathway is lower than for a non-traineeship pathway and is capped at \$1,000.

3.3 Concession fees

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

A student who receives a specified Commonwealth Government benefit or allowance, as listed at **Appendix 2: Specified Commonwealth Government benefits and allowances for concession fees**, is eligible for a concession fee for a qualification up to and including Certificate IV. The student must be in receipt of the specified benefit or allowance at the time of enrolment to be eligible.

The concession fee is also available to a student who is a dependant of a person receiving a specified Commonwealth Government 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.

3.4 Exemptions and fee-free training

A student who falls into one of the following categories will qualify for fee-free training:

- Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- student with a disability(ies)
- dependant child, spouse or partner of a recipient of a Disability Support Pension
- most school based apprentices and trainees.

Fee exemption for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student

An Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student can prove their status and eligibility for a fee exemption through descent, self-identification and community identification.

A student eligible for this fee category will be exempt from fees for any Smart and Skilled enrolments for which they are eligible.

Fee exemption for a Student with a disability(ies)

A student will be eligible for a fee exemption on the basis of disability if the student is:

- in receipt of the Commonwealth Government Disability Support Pension, or
- assessed as having documentary evidence of support demonstrating a clear additional need as a result of the student's disability.

A student eligible for this fee category will be exempt from fees for any Smart and Skilled enrolments for which they are eligible.

Fee exemption for a student who is a dependant of a person with a disability(ies)

A student who seeks a fee exemption on the basis of this category will need to provide documentary evidence to show they are a dependant child, spouse or partner of someone who is receiving a Commonwealth Government Disability Support Pension.

A student eligible for this fee category will be exempt from fees for any Smart and Skilled enrolments for which they are eligible.

3.5 Evidence of eligibility

A student must declare that the information they provide with regards to eligibility is true, accurate, complete and not misleading.

Additionally, for some fee types, a student may be required to provide evidence to support their eligibility for the Smart and Skilled fee type. The Provider must sight or maintain acceptable evidence as detailed in **Appendix 1 - Proof of eligibility - Acceptable evidence**.

Section 4: Additional fees

The price of a qualification, which is made up of the government subsidy and student fee, covers the total costs incurred by the Provider to deliver the training, including training materials, learning resources and assessment.

A Provider must not charge the student any additional fees for the subsidised training, except where specified in the following subsections.

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

The Provider must issue receipts for any monies collected by the Provider for additional charges. The Provider must retain copies of any receipts issued.

The following is applicable for both full and part qualifications (including single UoC or module delivery) undertaken under Smart and Skilled.

Note: All references in this policy to charging a student a fee, and to make the student aware of fees and costs, encompass anyone who may pay the fee on behalf of the student. This includes, but is not limited to:

- * the student
- * the student's parent or guardian
- * the student's employer
- * any other organisation or entity

4.1 Customisation of training

The Provider cannot charge an additional fee for customisation of the training where the customisation is within training package rules, except in the specific instances outlined in **section 4.2 Incidental Expenses**.

If the customisation results in training delivery in excess of the training package rules, see **section 4.3 Additional training** for details on allowable charges.

4.2 Incidental expenses

There may be some instances where the Provider can charge 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.

- published learning resources that are non-essential to training delivery, become the physical property of the student and are retained by the student on completion of training;

Example

Published textbook

Note: The Provider cannot charge for

* learning resources such as workbooks or learner guides, that are essential to the delivery of training,

* a hard copy text book where an online version is available for the student free of charge (unless the student is informed of the additional charges for the hard copy text book and agrees to purchase it).

* learning resources that have been replicated by the Provider (e.g photocopies, or computer printouts whether they have been bound or not).

* learning resources that have been developed “in house” by the Provider.

- 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; and

Examples

1. The textbook for a qualification is an online resource but a student would like a hardcopy. In this instance, the Provider may charge the student for the textbook. The textbook would become the personal property of the student.

2. The Provider may charge an employer if it requests the development of alternative bespoke forms of materials/resources which are for use in training delivered exclusively to employees of the employer.

3. A Provider uses a particular brand of heavy vehicle engine for training and assessment. The Provider may arrange to deliver training to a group of employees and the employer requests that the training be delivered on a different brand of heavy vehicle engine used in its workplace. The Provider must reasonably explore options to provide access to the requested brand of equipment without an additional charge, such as use of the employer’s equipment for on-site training and assessment, or to rent the equipment. If the request cannot be fulfilled within the Smart and Skilled funding for the qualification, the Provider and employer may make an agreement for an additional fee to cover the cost.

Note:

The Provider cannot charge an additional fee to maintain or upgrade their equipment in order to fulfil a request outlined in Example 2.

- field trips and food, transport and accommodation costs associated with the provision of field trips that form part of the training.

4.3 Additional training

The student may request additional units of competency to be delivered in conjunction with their Smart and Skilled subsidised qualification. This would be UoCs that are over and above what is required under the training package rules to achieve the qualification.

The Provider must attempt to cover the costs of delivering the requested additional UoCs within the Smart and Skilled funding for the qualification.

If this is not possible, the Provider must make all reasonable attempts to source alternative subsidised funding for the additional training prior to entering into fee-for-service arrangements with the student.

Where subsidised funding is not available, the student must agree to any fee-for-service charges prior to enrolment.

At the successful completion of training, the student will be issued with the qualification plus a statement of attainment for the additional UoCs delivered.

Example

A student is undertaking subsidised training that requires 15 units of competency to achieve the full qualification. The student, or their employer, requests an additional 5 UoCs to be delivered, either from this or another qualification. The cost of the additional units cannot be absorbed by the funding received by the Training Provider for the full qualification. The Provider accesses alternate funding for the delivery of the 5 additional UoCs.

Section 5: Paying fees

5.1 Levying of student fees

School based apprentices or trainees must not be levied the student fee or any additional costs directly. The payment of student fees and any additional costs, if applicable, is managed by the student's school sector.

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

Where a student does not complete the qualification while at school, for example a student undertaking a school based traineeship, the Provider must only levy the proportion of the student fee, via the school sector, for the proportion of the qualification undertaken whilst at school.

After finishing Year 12, the student can be directly levied the proportion of student fee for the remaining portion of the qualification that will be undertaken

The Provider must collect all fees to be paid by the time they complete their subsidised training. A Provider, or a related entity or organisation, must not pay the student fee on behalf of a student unless the Provider is also:

- the employer of the student; or
- is a provider of government-funded employment services (Jobactive) and the student is a client.

There are no other circumstances whereby a Provider may pay a fee on behalf of a student.

The Provider must retain student fees that it collects or evidence that either of the two conditions above were met.

Note:

The SID issued by the SBAT Enrolment facility will be retained for the duration of the students training. Specifically, where a school based apprentice continues in the apprenticeship after finishing Year 12.

5.2 Subcontracting

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.

5.3 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 without penalty cut-off date

Where a student withdraws from training after the cut-off date, 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.

5.4 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 the student aware of the policy prior to or at enrolment.

5.5 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 CT and/or RPL 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.

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

5.6 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.

5.7 Changes to Student Fees

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

5.8 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, or
- their Provider has closed, or has had their contract terminated, or the Provider cannot continue to deliver training to the student in the delivery mode chosen by the student and it is not possible for the student to continue training in an alternative delivery mode.

A student who transfers 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 subsequent Provider of the student 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.

A student who transfers due to Provider closure or contract termination or change in delivery mode

As mentioned, a student may be forced to transfer from their initial Smart and Skilled Provider to another Smart and Skilled Provider to complete their training because:

- their Provider has closed
- their Provider has had its contract terminated
- their Provider cannot continue to deliver training to the student in the delivery mode chosen by the student and it is not possible for the student to continue training in an alternative delivery mode.

Students in these situations will be supported to complete their training in a replacement course with a subsequent provider.

The following rules apply in these circumstances

- 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.

The subsequent Provider must obtain the following documentation 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 and a receipt of payment 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 fee to be charged to the student.

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 fee to be charged to the student.

5.9 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.

5.10 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 \$1,500 (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 on the ASQA website.

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.

Section 6: Student access to fee policies

6.1 School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship Program 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.

6.2 Provider's policies

As listed throughout this document, the Provider must also make the student 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.

Appendix 1: Proof of eligibility - Acceptable evidence

(Should be read in conjunction with [Section 3: Fee Category eligibility](#))

At enrolment, a student declaration is acceptable where a form of evidence is required to be sighted or collected by the Provider. The required evidence, however, must be sighted or collected by the Provider prior to submitting Training Activity Data for an enrolled student who has Commenced to ensure the student is charged the appropriate fee.

Requirement	Evidence	Evidence requirements
Proof of Identity:		
1. Proof of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School enrolment. 	Evidence sighted or collected by Provider
Program eligibility:		
2. Registration as a NSW School based apprentice or NSW School based trainee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Contract identifier (TCID) number 	Department system check against details of approved or registered Training Contract stored in the Department's database
Concession fee eligibility:		
3. Concession Fee: Dependant of Commonwealth Government Benefit Recipient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dependant child, spouse or partner of someone who is receiving a specified Commonwealth Government benefit or allowance, must provide documentary evidence that Centrelink recognises the student as the dependant <p>The evidence must clearly show the CRN of the benefit or Commonwealth Government benefit recipient.</p>	Evidence sighted or collected by Provider
Exemptions, waivers and fee-free training eligibility:		
4. Fee Exemption: Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	N/A	Student declaration/signature
5. Fee Exemption: Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 demonstrating a clear additional need as a result of the student's disability. This evidence must be a letter or statement from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a medical practitioner; or an appropriate government agency such as Veteran's Affairs or a TAFE NSW teacher consultant (for a student 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). 	Evidence sighted or collected by Provider

Requirement	Evidence	Evidence requirements
6. Fee Exemption: Dependant of a person with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentary evidence that Centrelink recognises the student as a dependant child, spouse or partner of someone who is receiving a Commonwealth Government Disability Support Pension. <p>The evidence should clearly show the Centrelink Reference Number (CRN) of the Disability Support Pension recipient.</p>	Evidence sighted or collected by Provider
7. Fee-free training - Fee-free Apprenticeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of commencement of Smart and Skilled training must be 1 July 2018 or later <p>For additional information, refer to Smart and Skilled Policy for the Fee-free Apprenticeships Initiative</p>	Student declaration/signature at enrolment
8.. Fee-free training – Fee-free Traineeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of commencement of Smart and Skilled training must be 1 January 2020 or later <p>For additional information, refer to Smart and Skilled Policy for the Fee-free Traineeships Initiative</p>	Student declaration/signature at enrolment
9. Fee-free training – Skilling for Recovery Initiative	<p>For evidence requirements, refer to Appendix 3: Skilling for Recovery Initiative</p>	Student declaration/signature at enrolment

Loading to Provider: Evidence Requirements		
10. Needs Loading: Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A student that meets eligibility/evidence requirements for a fee exemption based on being an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander will automatically attract a loading (as per requirement 13) 	
11. Needs Loading: Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A student that meets eligibility/evidence requirements for a fee exemption based on Disability will automatically attract a loading (as per requirement 14). <p>Dependants of a recipient of a Disability Support Pension do not attract a loading.</p>	
12. Location Loading: Residential address – regional or remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per requirement 1 	

NOTE:

- All evidence must be able to be verified by the Provider. At the Department’s discretion, the Department may request a copy of the evidence or proof that the evidence has been sighted.
- Where evidence is sighted but not kept, a record that confirms sighting of the evidence and a description of the evidence, must be maintained by the Provider. The record must be dated and signed by a person authorised by the Provider. The name of the signatory and their position should also be captured.
- 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
- If a student declares their status in relation to a disability, concession or long-term unemployment or identify as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander at a point in time **after** enrolment, the Provider must:
 - sight or collect the relevant evidence within 28 days of being notified by the student, and
 - abide by the **Declaring Student Status after Enrolment Policy (Version 2.0)**, located in the Support Documents section of STS Online.

Students who are inmates with NSW Corrective Services

Students who are inmates in NSW correctional facilities do not have access to many of the documents required to allow the Provider to assess program or fee eligibility.

NSW Corrective Services records information in the Offender Integrated Management System (OIMS) which can verify:

- Smart and Skilled Eligibility:
 - Living or working in NSW
 - Citizenship: Australian citizen, New Zealand citizen and permanent Australian resident
 - Humanitarian visa holder (Refugee or asylum seeker)
- Concession, exemptions, fee-free scholarship and other fee-free training eligibility:
 - Commonwealth benefit status
 - Disability status
 - Domestic and Family Violence status
 - Humanitarian visa holder (Refugee or asylum seeker) – as above

Providers must make arrangements with the correctional facility on how information to support eligibility will be accessed/sighted. The sighting of information recorded on OIMS is deemed as sufficient evidence, however must be recorded by the Provider as per note 2 above.

Appendix 2: Specified Commonwealth Government benefits and allowances for concession fees

Commonwealth Government benefits and allowances	
Age Pension	Austudy
Carer Payment (see comment below)	Disability Support Pension
Farm Household Allowance	Family Tax Benefit Part A (maximum rate)
JobSeeker Payment	Parenting Payment (Single)
Special Benefit	Veterans' Affairs Pensions
Veterans' Children Education Scheme	Widow Allowance
Youth Allowance	

Comments:

- A NSW Apprentice on a JobSeeker Payment or a NSW Apprentice who is the dependant of a person receiving a JobSeeker Payment is not eligible for a concession fee.
- A NSW New Entrant Trainee on a JobSeeker Payment or a NSW New Entrant who is the dependant of a person receiving a JobSeeker Payment is not eligible for a concession fee.
- The Carer Payment is a specific benefit paid by the Commonwealth Government; this category does not include the Carer Allowance or Carer Adjustment Payment.

Changes to Commonwealth benefits and allowances affecting Smart and Skilled concession fees - JobSeeker Payment

From 20 March 2020, the Commonwealth Government introduced a new JobSeeker Payment as the main working age payment for people between 22 years old to Age Pension age. As a result, five current working age payments eligible for a concession fee under Smart and Skilled will be progressively consolidated or ceased.

Four payments which have ceased from 20 March 2020 and have be replaced by the new JobSeeker Payment are as follows:

- Newstart Allowance
- Wife Pension
- Sickness Allowance
- Widow B Pension

The Widow Allowance, which also attracts a concession fee, will transition in 2022 as recipients reach Age Pension age.

Appendix 3: Skilling for Recovery Initiative

Skilling for Recovery is part of a matched funding commitment of almost \$320 million between the NSW and Australian governments under the JobTrainer Fund. Skilling for Recovery is a key component of the State's COVID-19 Recovery Plan.

It includes an additional 100,000 fee-free full and part qualification training places to reskill, retrain and redeploy the workforce to industries where there are skills shortages and emerging employment opportunities. Skilling for Recovery will help job seekers retrain or up-skill to enhance their credentials and support school leavers to enter the workforce for the first time.

Student eligibility

To be eligible for fee-free training under Skilling for Recovery, a student must:

- meet the eligibility criteria for Smart and Skilled training;

and be

- youth aged 17-24 years; or
- Commonwealth Benefit Recipient; or
- unemployed (Not a Commonwealth Benefit Recipient); or
- employed expected to become unemployed.

Eligibility will be extended to school students in specific circumstances.

Evidence of eligibility

“Youth (17-24)”

As per requirement 6 in Appendix 3 Proof of Eligibility - Acceptable Evidence of the *Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy*.

“Commonwealth Benefit Recipient”

As per requirements 11 or 12 in Appendix 3 Proof of Eligibility - Acceptable Evidence of the *Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy*.

“Unemployed (Not a Commonwealth Benefit Recipient)”

A letter of separation from the employer at enrolment. If this is not available, the student must sign a declaration at enrolment that they are unemployed.

The 'NAT00080 – Client' file, reported through eReporting, collects employment status. Please ensure that the labour force status is recorded and reported in the data file via eReporting following commencement of training.

VALUE	DESCRIPTION – LABOUR FORCE STATUS IDENTIFIER
Unemployed	
06	Unemployed – seeking full-time work
07	Unemployed – seeking part-time work
Not in the labour force	
08	Not employed – not seeking employment

“People expected to become unemployed”

Evidence indicating the person meets the criteria for one of the four categories listed in *the Smart and Skilled Policy for Skilling for Recovery Initiative*.

This could be a letter, email, employment contract, notice of redundancy or other documentation relating to employment.

For the “**Low skilled/unskilled employee**” category, a person will be considered low, or with no, skills if they do not hold a qualification at CERT III or above.

For the “**workers in declining industries**” category, Providers will need approval from the Department for declining industries. Providers should contact their Strategic Relationship Manager.

For a person who meets the “**returning to work (employed for six months or less)**” category the evidence of employment will need to show that the start date of employment is no more than six months before the training commencement date.

Evidence can be supplied by the student or employer.

If evidence is not available, then a signed declaration by the current employer, confirming the employee meets the relevant “expected to become unemployed” category as per the *Smart and Skilled Policy for Skilling for Recovery Initiative*, will suffice.