

Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarships



For young people in out-of-home care

If you are aged 15-30 years and are currently or have previously been in out-of-home care, you may be eligible for a Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarship.

A Fee-Free Scholarship is a government subsidy that helps you to complete your training under Smart and Skilled without paying a student fee. All qualifications on the NSW Skills List (see the Course Finder at www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au) from Certificate I to Certificate IV level, including qualifications that support apprenticeships and traineeships, are covered.

Am I eligible for a Fee-Free Scholarship?

1. You must first meet the Smart and Skilled eligibility criteria. You must be:
 - an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident, humanitarian visa holder or New Zealand citizen; and
 - no longer at school; and
 - living or working in NSW; and
 - aged 15 years or overOR
 - a NSW apprentice or a new entrant trainee undertaking a NSW Skills List qualification that supports your apprenticeship or traineeship.
2. You must also be:
 - enrolling in a Smart and Skilled subsidised Certificate I, II, III or IV level qualification with an approved Smart and Skilled training provider; and
 - aged between 15 and 30 years when you start training and
 - if aged 15-17 years, be currently in out-of-home care, or
 - if aged 18-30 years, have previously been in out-of-home care.

What is meant by 'out-of-home care'?

'Out-of-home care' is defined in section 135 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1985* and refers to children or young people who are cared for by a person other than their parent, in a place that is not their usual home.

There are two main types of out-of-home care:

- **Statutory care** - where the Children's Court has made a Care Order placing you in the parental responsibility of the Minister for Family and Community Services
- **Supported care** - where the Secretary of Family and Community Services forms the opinion that you are in need of care and protection.

How do I apply for a Fee-Free Scholarship?

You do not need to lodge a formal application.

If you meet the criteria in this fact sheet, you should advise your Smart and Skilled training provider when you enrol that you meet the out-of-home care criteria for a Fee-Free Scholarship. Your training provider will then confirm your eligibility and you will be guaranteed a scholarship to start training.

The student declaration at enrolment will ask you to confirm that the information provided, including your eligibility status, is true and correct. You may also be asked to provide evidence to support your claim.

What evidence is required?

If you are aged 15-17 years and are currently in out-of-home care:

- a copy of the Children's Court Care Order, or
- a copy of the 'Confirmation of Placement' letter, or
- a letter from Family and Community Services or the Out-of-Home Care Designated Agency verifying that you are in statutory or supported care, or
- any other evidence which clearly shows that you are in out-of-home care.

If you are aged 18-30 years and have previously been in out-of-home care:

- a copy of the expired Children's Court Care Order, or
- a copy of the 'leaving care' letter from the Minister for Family and Community Services, or
- a letter from Family and Community Services verifying you were previously in statutory or supported care, or
- any other evidence which clearly shows that you were previously in out-of-home care.

Where can I train?

You can enrol with a Smart and Skilled training provider of your choice. Training providers include:

- TAFE NSW
- NSW adult and community education colleges
- private training colleges
- NSW government departments
- employers and industry organisations.

How much is the Fee-Free Scholarship worth?

The Fee-Free Scholarship covers your student fee. It is paid directly to your Smart and Skilled training provider by the NSW Government.

You may still be charged fees for 'incidental expenses', such as for essential tools or for field trips. Your training provider must let you know of any fees for incidental expenses at enrolment.

How many scholarships can I receive?

You may undertake one Fee-Free Scholarship per financial year¹, and a maximum of two scholarships between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2019. This means if you undertake Fee-Free Scholarship training in one financial year, you cannot receive another Fee-Free Scholarship for another course if it is in the same financial year.

Are there other eligibility categories for Fee-Free Scholarships?

If you do not meet the out-of-home care criteria in this fact sheet, you may still qualify for a Fee-Free Scholarship if you meet the Smart and Skilled eligibility criteria and:

- you are aged between 15 and 30 years and eligible for a Smart and Skilled concession fee; or
- you are aged 15 years or over and are experiencing or have experienced domestic and family violence, or are the dependant of someone who is experiencing or has experienced domestic and family violence.

To find out more about the other eligibility categories for Fee-Free Scholarships, please see the fact sheets *Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarships – For concession-eligible students* and *Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarships – For people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic and family violence*.

Are there other circumstances under Smart and Skilled where I do not have to pay a student fee?

You do not have to pay a student fee if you meet the Smart and Skilled eligibility criteria and:

- you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (through descent, self-identification or community identification); or
- you meet the Smart and Skilled disability criteria (proof of a disability support pension or documentary evidence from an appropriate medical professional is required); or
- you are the dependant of a disability support pension recipient.

In these cases, you are eligible for a fee exemption. Go to smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/for-students/students-with-additional-needs to find out more.

¹ A financial year starts on 1 July and finishes 30 June the following year.

Steps for finding a Smart and Skilled course and receiving a Fee-Free Scholarship

1. Check your eligibility for Smart and Skilled at smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/are-you-eligible.
2. Use the Course Finder function at smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/sands/find-a-course to find a training course and a Smart and Skilled provider that offers that course.
3. Once you have selected a course and a training provider, take note of the provider's website and other contact details so that you can contact them to enquire about the course you are interested in.
4. Ensure you have the required evidence of your eligibility for a Fee-Free Scholarship.
5. Visit your chosen training provider's website to find out what you need to do to enrol or alternatively call them and advise that you meet the relevant criteria for a Fee-Free Scholarship and wish to enrol.

General enrolment information is available at smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/for-students/how-to-enrol.

For more information

For more information and fact sheets, see smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/for-students/fee-free-scholarships or contact 1300 772 104 or smartandskilled.enquiries@industry.nsw.gov.au.

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