

Enrolling students under 17

This fact sheet explains your role and responsibilities when enrolling a student under 17 in Skills First training.

Background

All children and young people in Victoria aged from 6 to 17 years are legally required to be at school unless they've been granted an exemption from school attendance.

You can only enrol a student who will be under 17 when their Skills First training starts if they have an exemption from school attendance.

But students under 17 don't need an exemption to enrol in Skills First training if they:

- are still enrolled in school and doing a Skills First-funded school-based apprenticeship/traineeship or a Head Start apprenticeship/traineeship
- have a year 12 or an equivalent qualification.

Program requirements

A student under 17 can only be granted an exemption if the training is **either**:

- on a full-time basis of at least 25 hours a week
- a combination of training and employment averaging at least 25 hours a week.

The exemption process

You can't ask for an exemption on a student's behalf. The [exemption process](#) is managed by the student's school and involves the student and their parents/carers.

Even though you don't have a formal role in the process, you can advise the school or the student's parents or carers about suitable and appropriate training options for the student.

Supporting students through letters of offer

You can give a student a letter of offer for a place in training to support their exemption process. Students can attach this letter to their exemption from school application form.

If you choose, you can do all or part of a pre-training review with the student. You can include this information in a letter of offer to explain why the training would be suitable and appropriate for the student.

A letter of offer will help the school principal or a regional director decide if enrolment in training is in the student's best interests. They may decide not to grant an exemption until they have seen a letter of offer.

Evidence of exemption

You must sight and retain evidence of an exemption if you're enrolling a student who will be under 17 when their training starts. Each region has its own process. Some give the student an exemption document in 2 parts: the exemption itself and the details of the training.

Evidence of exemption requirements

Student circumstances

Who can grant an exemption and the format required depends on the student's circumstances:

Students who have:	can be granted an exemption by:	The exemption must be in the form of:
completed year 10	either the school principal or the Department of Education's regional director.	either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a signed endorsement page from a completed exemption from school application form• a signed letter or a signed certificate.<ul style="list-style-type: none">i A regional director may grant an exemption if a school principal has refused and it's been referred to the Department of Education for review.
not completed year 10	the Department of Education's regional director only.	a signed letter or a signed certificate. <ul style="list-style-type: none">i An exemption from school application form alone isn't evidence of an exemption for a student who hasn't completed Year 10.
not ever been enrolled in a Victorian school	the Department of Education's regional director only.	a signed letter or a signed certificate. <ul style="list-style-type: none">i Home-schooled students or those from overseas or interstate should contact their regional office to discuss training options.

Details about the training

The evidence of exemption must include information about the training the student will do. If the training is:

- a non-traineeship or non-apprenticeship, the evidence of exemption must specify you as the training provider and the names of the programs the student will do
- an apprenticeship or traineeship, the evidence of exemption must specify the employer.

The requirements are different for an apprenticeship or traineeship because when seeking an exemption, an apprentice or trainee student will know their employer but may not have picked a training provider yet.

Program changes

When an approver grants an exemption it is for the student to do specific training.

Changes to a student's program, program hours or training provider must be approved by the person who granted the exemption. You must sign and retain approval of changes before updating an enrolment.

You **don't** need further approval if the student takes longer to complete the training than indicated on the exemption.

You must also notify the Department of Education's regional office and the student's previous school (if relevant) if a student who is still under 17 stops attending or completes their training. The school will support the student by talking to them about alternative pathways.

Department of Education contacts

To tell the Department of Education about a student under 17, email the Youth Pathways and Transitions teams at regional offices, using the details below.

Region	Youth Pathways and Transitions
North East	pathways.transitions.nev@education.vic.gov.au
North West	pathways.transitions.nwv@education.vic.gov.au
South East	pathways.transitions.sev@education.vic.gov.au
South West	pathways.transitions.swv@education.vic.gov.au

Example scenarios

Example 1 - Anna is 15

<p>She has completed Year 10 and wants to enrol in a Certificate II in Ecology.</p> <p>Her school principal has completed and signed the exemption from school application form.</p> <p>She has a copy of the endorsement page from the exemption form.</p>	<p>Can I enrol Anna?</p> <p>Yes.</p>
---	---

Example 2 - Sashin is 16

<p>He has not completed Year 10. He wants to enrol in a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care.</p> <p>He has a signed letter from his principal.</p>	<p>Can I enrol Sashin?</p> <p>No.</p> <p>As Sashin has not completed Year 10, only the regional director can grant the exemption.</p>
--	--

Example 3 - Latifan is 16

<p>They have just arrived from NSW and have never attended a school in Victoria.</p> <p>They want to enrol in a Certificate II in Salon Assistant.</p> <p>Their NSW school principal has sent an email stating they are no longer enrolled at school.</p>	<p>Can I enrol Latifan?</p> <p>No.</p> <p>As Latifan has never been enrolled in a Victorian school, they need a regional director to grant an exemption.</p>
---	---

© Copyright State of Victoria, Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions 2025
Except for any logos, emblems, trademarks, artwork and photography this document is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence.