

Employment Skills Development Programs

Frequently asked questions

What are the employment skills development programs?

Employment skills development program (ESDP) is a term used in the *Further Education and Training Act 2014* (FET Act) to describe and recognise a diverse range of programs and activities that young people can undertake as part of their compulsory participation phase.¹ The compulsory participation phase is strictly defined in legislation, but generally applies to young people who are 15 years but are not yet 17 years. It does not apply to young people who are working more than 25 hours per week.

Young people can participate in a range of eligible options including going to school, undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship, or undertaking further education (vocational education and training or university studies) to meet the compulsory participation phase requirements. ESDPs provide young people with an alternative eligible option under their compulsory participation phase.

ESDPs offer young people informal education and training activities which prepare them for employment or further training. Assistance may also be offered to help young people find a job, traineeship or apprenticeship; enrol in a training course; or return to school. In addition, ESDPs may provide support with personal and social problems.

Programs recognised as ESDPs are run by a range of different types of organisations, vary in length and what they might offer. Community-based organisations are generally the main providers of this type of program.

All recognised programs align with the principals set out in the [Principles for Employment Skills Development Programs](#).

Who do employment skills development programs target?

Young people participating on ESDPs are generally 15 to 17 years, but can be a year or two older. Given their focus on work readiness, ESDPs are not suitable for young people aged 14 years or younger.

ESDPs are primarily designed to help young early school leavers to become 'job ready'. While not the primary target group, young people who are still enrolled at school but at high risk of disengagement, and for whom all other alternative education programs have been exhausted, may also participate on an ESDP.

What are non-departmental employment skills development programs?

Non-departmental programs refer to programs that are not funded or delivered by the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT). These programs may be provided by community-based organisations, other government agencies, corporate bodies or philanthropic bodies that run programs that include young people aged 15 to 17 years.



Where can I find a list of recognised programs?

Programs that have been recognised by the department (as the delegated authority under the FET Act) have been placed on the [register of employment skills development programs](#). You can look up the register to find details of the programs and how to contact the provider.

Who is responsible for managing the recognition of programs?

Under the FET Act, the department has the authority to register non-departmental ESDPs, with the Director, Training and Skills Pathways, Investment Division, to exercise powers and delegated the recognition of non-departmental and departmental ESDPs.

The Investment Division within the department manages the recognition process and maintains the register.

How can organisations apply to get their program recognised and placed on the register?

If you are a community-based organisation, government agency, corporate body or philanthropic body that runs programs that include young people aged 15 to 17 years and want to make sure that these young people are able to participate during their compulsory participation phase, you will need to make an application to the department to place your program on the register. For further information, please contact the department on 1300 369 935.

Programs run by registered training organisations and educational institutions only need apply where:

- The program is not formally accredited through a recognised body
- The young people participating are not enrolled with the status of 'school student' as defined by legislation.

Where government agencies provide grant funding or purchase services from the not-for-profit sector or the corporate sector, it is preferable that the government agency applies for coverage of the program on behalf of all its program providers. Organisations are required to complete an Employment Skills Development Program application form and submit to the department, with any relevant attachments.

There is no cost to apply for registration of a non-departmental ESDP. Organisations will be notified within twenty (20) working days if their application has been successful.

[Read more about applying.](#)

How long do programs remain on the register?

A non-departmental ESDP may be placed on the register for the period that funding is assured to deliver the program. This period cannot exceed three (3) years. If there are any changes to the organisation or program details during this period, the department must be notified in writing.

Where the program subsequently receives continued funding beyond the initial recognition period which was less than three (3) years, and there is no substantial change to the program design, an organisation can apply in writing to the department to maintain their registration without having to resubmit a complete application.

Are there obligations program providers have to meet under Queensland legislation?

The department is guided by the principles of employment skills development programs when assessing the recognition of non-departmental ESDPs. The principles are:

1. Primary target cohort or participant eligibility includes young people covered by the compulsory participation phase.
2. The program seeking recognition as an ESDP is not already covered under the eligible option categories outlined in the FET Act and *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*.
3. Program goals and outcomes are employment oriented.
4. Participation requirements provide effective engagement of young people.
5. Administrative safeguards for young people are evident.

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

For more information regarding Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) as well as Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) credits, refer to the QCAA website or phone (07) 3864 0299.

More information

For more information visit the [Employment Skills Development Programs](#) page or phone 1300 369 935.