



Department of Education and  
Early Childhood Development

# Guidelines for Counting Students for School Census

*February and August*



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## **Information Privacy**

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<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/privacy.aspx>

This document is also available on the internet at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/census.aspx>

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Revision .....	5
Students returning after census day (late returning students) .....	5
<b>2. Eligibility for Enrolment.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Transfers .....	6
Part-time students and time fractions .....	6
Post-Compulsory Pathways.....	7
Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).....	7
Vocational Educational and Training (VET) courses in senior schooling	7
Block credit arrangements for VET courses outside VET in the VCE .....	7
Part-time apprenticeships and traineeships.....	8
Students studying at more than one school.....	8
Students also studying at Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV) ..	9
Students at English Language Schools or English Language Centres ...	9
Students Registered for Home Schooling.....	10
<b>3. Attendance Criteria .....</b>	<b>10</b>
A. Regular attendance during the current year .....	11
B. Census day status .....	11
Students who have not attended in the current year up to census day .	12
Students returning after census day (late returning students) .....	12
<b>4. Eligibility for Student Resource Package Funding.....</b>	<b>13</b>
General and age requirements .....	13
Exemption from accredited senior secondary course requirement .....	13
Australian born residents and overseas/international students .....	14
<b>5. Conducting the Census Count .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6. Amending and Resubmitting Census Returns in Case of Error .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>7. Enrolment Verification Program .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>8. Key Contacts .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Census Guidelines and conducting the census.....	19
<b>9. Common Census Questions and Answers .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Eligibility for SRP funding, age criteria:.....	20
SRP funding for adult students .....	20
Attendance .....	21
Eligibility for enrolment, overseas born students .....	25
Part-time students and time fractions .....	27
Other .....	28

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## 1. Introduction

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development conducts a school census on two occasions in the school year. The first census occurs on the last school day in February, while the second (mid-year census) occurs on the first Friday in August.

Enrolment and other data are collected from each government school and used for planning, reporting and for allocating resources. Enrolments from the February census are the core input into the calculation of the Student Resource Package (SRP).

Schools will receive funding through the SRP for students who meet the funding criteria, enrolment eligibility criteria and attendance criteria contained in these Guidelines.

Principals of Victorian government schools must ensure that all students enrolled in their school are correctly classified on CASES21 as either SRP funded or non-SRP funded.

Each year, on the basis of a risk profile, a sample of schools is selected to verify or audit student enrolments. Principals must ensure that the school retains, for the purposes of accountability and for school enrolment verification, documentary evidence that demonstrates that each student included in census counts and classified as SRP funded meets the criteria in the Guidelines.

### Revision

The following section has been revised effective from 1 January 2014.

### Students returning after census day (late returning students)

Reference to deadline for submissions on page 12.

## 2. Eligibility for Enrolment

The key purpose of the census is to count the number of students in Victorian government schools. Importantly, a student's total full-time equivalent (FTE) time fraction as reported in the census returns must not exceed 1.0 FTE.

Only Australian residents or persons with appropriate resident status can enrol in government schools.

When a student enrolls at a government school for the first time, the principal must ascertain the student's resident status and eligibility for enrolment and obtain and file copies of:

- a birth certificate for Australian born resident students

- citizenship papers, passport or travel documents<sup>1</sup> for non-Australian residents or non-Australian born students
- for non-resident students who are exempted by the International Student Program Unit (ISPU) from fee payment, the letter provided by ISPU verifying the student's SRP funding status
- an immunisation certificate (for primary-aged students only)
- for registered home schooling students, a copy of the official letter issued by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) confirming their registration for home schooling.

## Transfers

Where a student transfers to a school from another government school, the transferring school should provide to the receiving school the relevant enrolment documentation as outlined on page 5. If this does not occur, the receiving school must obtain copies of the relevant documents when the student is enrolled.

When enrolling a transferring student the school **must** seek a transfer note<sup>2</sup> at the time of enrolment. If the transfer note is not provided, the school should keep documentary evidence of requests made to the transferring school for transfer notes (for example, copies of faxes or emails).

When a student transfers from a school, the student's transfer date is to be recorded on CASES21 as the last day of attendance at that school. The student's date of enrolment at the receiving school is to be recorded on CASES21 as the date on which the student first attends classes at the receiving school.

Where a student transfers between schools on a short term basis, the respective principals should negotiate an appropriate way to count the student so that the time fractions reflect the proportion of schooling to be provided to the student by each school over the school year.

Principals who wish to negotiate how students who change schools in the days close to census day are counted should reach agreement and advise the Census Hotline accordingly (see page 19 for Census Hotline contact details).

## Part-time students and time fractions

Students undertaking a workload less than the normal workload for that year level are to be recorded as part-time students.

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<sup>1</sup> People arriving from overseas will have a passport or, in the case of refugees, may have travel documents. Details for young children may be included on the passport or travel documents of the parents.

<sup>2</sup> The Interstate Student Data Transfer Note should be used when enrolling students who are transferring from interstate. For details see the MCEECDYA web site: [www.mceecdya.edu.au](http://www.mceecdya.edu.au)



Part-time students (**including registered home schooling students**) are counted pro rata at a time fraction assessed against the school's normal workload for that year level.

### **Post-Compulsory Pathways**

Students in the post-compulsory years should have the opportunity to participate in a broad range of pathways programs that result in successful transition to further education and employment. A number of options are available for students in the post-compulsory years<sup>3</sup>. Advice is provided below on how student enrolments are to be treated in relation to these options.

### **Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)**

For the purposes of SRP funding, VCAL studies are considered equivalent to VCE studies and any reference to VCE also applies to VCAL.

### **Vocational Educational and Training (VET) courses in senior schooling**

The time spent by students in VET in the VCE is part of the normal VCE school workload.

### **Block credit arrangements for VET courses outside VET in the VCE**

In order for block credit study to be counted towards the FTE workload at the school and to be eligible for SRP funding, students undertaking a VET program under approved block credit arrangements are required to meet all the criteria listed below as follows:

- students are enrolled in a VET/Further Education (FE) program at AQF Level II or above, and
- the VET program is an agreed part of the student's full-time workload, and
- the school has a signed Memorandum of Understanding with an external provider for the delivery of the VET/FE program or the school delivering the program is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and the program is within their Scope of Registration.

If these criteria are not met, the student's time fraction is to be calculated according to Figure 1 below, excluding the VET/FE studies that do not meet the above criteria.

Where the student's time fraction is less than 1.0, there will be no additional time fraction added relating to the block credit studies.

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<sup>3</sup> These include the VCE, VCAL (including community VCAL re engagement programs) at intermediate level or Higher, VET at Certificate II or higher and the International Baccalaureate.

### Part-time apprenticeships and traineeships

The time spent by students in the Part-time Apprenticeships and Traineeships for School Students program is part of the normal VCE workload. For SRP funding purposes, the student's time fraction is to be calculated according to Figure 1, excluding those VCE VET units that are delivered by a RTO and for which the RTO is paid directly by the Department.

Where the student's time fraction is less than 1.0, schools should add an additional 0.1 in recognition of the support schools provide for the Part-time Apprenticeships and Traineeships for School Students program component of the VCE.

Figure 1: VCE students studying in only one school

Number of VCE units per semester FTE	FTE
4 or more	1.0
3	0.7
2	0.5
1	0.2

Schools must contact the Census Hotline, preferably by phone or email, for advice on counting students aged between 18 and 20 years who are in receipt of Disability Program funding and who are undertaking three or fewer VCE units.

### Students studying at more than one school

As a general rule, the time fraction for a student enrolled in more than one school should be adjusted by the schools involved to ensure that the student's time fraction at each school reflects the time actually spent and the workload undertaken. The student's total time fraction must not exceed 1.0 FTE across all of the schools attended.

In some circumstances, the home school may prefer to count a student who is also studying at another regular school for the full-time fraction (usually 1.0 FTE) and negotiate an appropriate transfer of resources to the second school. In this case, the second school would not include that student in their census counts. Shared VET programs are one example where this transfer of resources has been a preferred option. (Refer to Question 34 in the attached *Common Census Questions and Answers* for advice on recording such arrangements on CASES21.)



## Students also studying at Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV)

Students undertaking subjects by correspondence tuition through the Distance Education Centre Victoria or the Victorian School of Languages (VSL) should be counted by their home school as part-time students.

Schools should use Figure 2 to determine and claim the appropriate time fraction (FTE) for students undertaking combinations of units studied at the school and DECV/VSL.

Saturday language classes conducted by the VSL are to be disregarded in calculating a student's time fraction at your school.

Figure 2

<i>VCE Units undertaken at school</i>	6	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
<i>VCE Units undertaken at DECV/VSL</i>	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Time fraction (FTE) that school should count student</i>	1	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3

Students in all school years up to and including Year 10 who are undertaking a full school workload (six or more subjects) and studying no more than one subject by correspondence will count as full-time at the home school. If any student studies more than one subject by correspondence or fewer than six school subjects, that student should be counted part-time at each location with the time fractions shared between the school and DECV according to their workload.

## Students at English Language Schools or English Language Centres

Students at English Language Schools or English Language Centres in metropolitan regions are counted at these locations and should not be included in the census counts of the school at which they were originally enrolled.

The only exception is for students in Outposted Programs for English as a Second Language who should be counted at their home school rather than at the school where the outposting is conducted. Where students attend an English Language Centre in a country region, students should be counted at their home school.

Questions 22–29 in the *Common Census Questions and Answers* section provide practical examples of the application of the enrolment eligibility criteria

## Students Registered for Home Schooling<sup>4</sup>

A home schooling family is eligible to approach their neighbourhood Government school to seek to partially enrol a home schooled student (of compulsory school age) in specific activities, providing the student is registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)<sup>5</sup>.

Principals have the discretion to decline the enrolment where there are reasonable grounds for doing so (such as a school decision to cap class sizes in particular year levels and/or subject areas, which have already been reached).

Any complaints regarding declined enrolments which are unable to be resolved at the school level should be referred to the relevant Regional Director.

Students registered for home schooling who partially enrol at a school should be counted as part-time students according to their agreed attendance ratio.

The remainder of the time fraction should be assigned to the 'home schooling' option on CASES 21.

Partially enrolled home schooling students should be marked absent when they are not in attendance for the activity or program for which they are enrolled.

At this stage, partial enrolment is only available to registered home schooling students of compulsory school age.

## 3. Attendance Criteria

Principals must ensure that all records relating to attendance are retained by the school for all students who are included in census counts. These records (such as manual rolls and absence notes) will be used to verify that students meet the attendance criteria.

Regular attendance after census day will be considered as evidence of continuing enrolment and will be taken into account in any review of decisions regarding the counting of students.

The following attendance criteria apply to both SRP funded and non-SRP funded students. Attendance rolls must be examined to ensure

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<sup>4</sup> Guidelines for home schooling students are available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/homeschool.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Further information regarding home schooling registration requirements is available on the VRQA's website at <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/registration/Pages/homeschooldefault.aspx>

that only students who meet both of the following criteria (A and B below) are included in census counts.

### **A. Regular attendance during the current year**

A principal may determine that a student is eligible to be included in the census count if the student has attended the school regularly prior to census day.

*Regular attendance is defined as attendance for at least 80 per cent of the time the student is enrolled at the school in the current year.*

Approved absences count as attendance. Students who average more than one day's unapproved absence per week will be deemed not to have attended regularly.

Approved absences must be supported by appropriate notes, usually from parents or guardians, or other documentary evidence that the school has accepted the explanation for the absences.

Students who have attended irregularly in the current year up to census day may be included in the census counts if the school has documentary evidence that consistent efforts are being made to encourage attendance<sup>6</sup> and that the student is continuing at the school.

This evidence would include up-to-date documentation in a student's file of:

- correspondence between parents/guardians and the school
- strategies used by the school to improve attendance, including referral to the student welfare co-ordinator and records of meetings with the student and parents/guardians
- correspondence between the Regional Office and the school
- negotiations with external providers/agencies
- a Managed Individual Pathways plan, for students of over 15 years of age.

Students who enrol and first attend a school on census day may be included in that school's census count provided that the student has not been included in the census return of any other Victorian government or non-government school. As verification of this, the previous school must be contacted and a transfer note obtained. (See Transfers page 6)

### **B. Census day status**

A principal may determine that a student is eligible to be included in the census count if the student is enrolled at the school, meets attendance criteria A (page 10) and:

- has attended on census day OR
- has attended in the current year prior to census day but is absent on census day and the school has documentary evidence that the student is continuing at the school OR

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<sup>6</sup> The publication *Student Attendance Guidelines* provides detailed information regarding managing and supporting student attendance. <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/attendance.aspx>

- has attended in the current year prior to census day but is absent on census day

and:

- has attended regularly for the first two full school weeks of term and has accepted a late tertiary or TAFE offer made after that time OR
- is attending an Alternative Education Setting (for example, Secondary Teaching Unit or Social Adjustment Centre).

### **Students who have not attended in the current year up to census day**

A student who due to illness has not attended up to census day during the current year can be included in census counts only if the school has documentary evidence that the student has been supplied with appropriate work.

Students who receive support under the Home-Based Educational Support Program (HBESP) can also be included in the census counts only if the school has received a formal email notification from the Student Wellbeing Division confirming eligibility for the HBESP in the current year. Further information regarding the HBESP is available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/needs/Pages/homebased.aspx>

All other students who have not attended in the current year must **NOT** be included in census counts.

### **Students returning after census day (late returning students)**

Written requests can be made for a re-calculation of the SRP to include students enrolled in the previous year who returned to school between March and the end of the first week of Term 2. These should be forwarded by letter or fax to the Department by the last school day in May to the Census Hotline. (See page 19 for contact details).

Schools seeking such adjustments need to provide supporting documentation demonstrating that:

- the student was enrolled at the school in the previous year
- the student has not been included in any Victorian government or non-government school's February census count and
- the student returned to school on or before the end of the first week of Term 2.

Changes to the SRP for students returning after census day will be processed after the enrolments from the mid-year census have been finalised. Where the SRP funded enrolment remains stable or decreases between February and August, no additional funding will be provided. Where the SRP funded enrolment increases between February and August, the SRP will be recalculated to reflect the increase that is attributed to any returning students.

Questions 7–21 in the *Common Census Questions and Answers* section provide practical examples of the application of these attendance criteria. Questions 7 and 8 provide information on counting students who return to school after census day.

## 4. Eligibility for Student Resource Package Funding

### General and age requirements

In general, only students who have resident status in Australia and are aged four years and eight months or over and under 18 years of age, as at 1 January in the relevant school year, are eligible for SRP funding.

Documentary evidence relating to age can include proof of date and place of birth and, where relevant, a copy of citizenship papers, passport or travel documents. The International Student Program Unit (ISPU)<sup>7</sup> provides advice on the enrolment and eligibility for SRP funding of overseas born non-resident students.

**A child who has not attained the age of 5 years by 30 April** in the particular school year may be classified as SRP funded only if written approval for early age entry has been granted by the relevant Regional Director.

**Students aged between 18 and 20 years on 1 January** may be classified as SRP funded only if they are undertaking an accredited senior secondary course<sup>8</sup> in a secondary school.

For the purposes of determining SRP funding, an accredited senior secondary course means an accredited course leading to a senior secondary qualification and any other accredited course pertaining to year 11 or 12. It includes studies in the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). Registered home schooling students enrolled at a school are eligible for SRP funding on a pro-rata basis.

### Exemption from accredited senior secondary course requirement

Students who have been unable to complete Year 10 by the year in which they turn 18 years of age may be granted an exemption from the accredited senior secondary course requirement (page 12) if the delay was due to causes of a temporary nature beyond their control or due to a lack of access to educational facilities. Students transferring from Language Schools and Centres will be deemed to meet this exemption criterion. To gain an exemption for SRP purposes, students will also need to be less than 21 years of age on 31 December of the year in which they will complete Year 10.

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<sup>7</sup> For telephone and fax details of the International Student Program Unit (ISPU) see page 19.

<sup>8</sup> For further details on VCE and other post-compulsory pathways, refer to page 6.

These exemptions will be considered by the Department during processing of the February school census. (See page 19 for contact details of the Census Hotline) Students clearly eligible will be granted SRP funding and students clearly ineligible will be removed from census counts, with SRP funding being reduced accordingly.

Where student eligibility for SRP funding is in doubt, schools will be contacted and asked to provide documentary evidence to support the granting of an exemption.

Schools that prefer to be granted an exemption prior to the census should contact the Census Hotline to arrange to provide appropriate documentation.

**Students aged 18 or over** on 1 January may only be enrolled at and attend an English Language School/Centre or approved outposted intensive English language program if they were under 18 years of age as at 1 January in the year they first attended the course. They may continue to be enrolled and SRP funded until they complete their 6 or 12 month intensive English language course.

**Students aged 21 and over** on 1 January cannot be SRP-funded. These students may undertake an accredited senior secondary course through a nominated Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institution or Adult Community Education (ACE) provider.

Questions 2–6 in the *Common Census Questions and Answers* section provide practical examples of the application of these age eligibility criteria.

### **Australian born residents and overseas/international students**

An Overseas Student is defined in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 as “a person holding a visa under the Migration Act 1958 (Commonwealth) which allows the person, whether expressly or otherwise to study in a school in Victoria”. This consists of:

- Overseas students on an international student visa, i.e. the student is the primary student visa holder enrolled at a Victorian Government school and has a Certificate of Enrolment
- Dependants, i.e. the student is the secondary visa holder of a number of specific visa sub classes.

A Ministerial Order specifies the fees to be paid by or on behalf of Overseas Students enrolled at a Government school for the instruction, education and related services to the Overseas Student by the school.

The Ministerial Order also identifies those Overseas Students who are exempt from paying tuition and related fees. Schools enrolling these students are eligible for School Resource Package funding.

The following categories of students are eligible for SRP funding:

- Australian born residents;
- holders of resident visas in one of the following visa subclasses: 100–299; 800–802; 804–806; 808; 814; 820; 826; 831–838; 840–846; 850–851; 855–859; 861–864; 866; 880–882; 884; 890–893;
- holders of a New Zealand passport or holders of a subclass 444 special category visa;
- holders of a temporary resident visa in one of the following visa sub-classes: 300–310; 411–416; 418–424; 426–428; 430; 442–451, 457<sup>9</sup>; 461; 471; 495; 497; 499; 576; 785–786; 995; Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) should be entered on CASES21 as 995.
- For holders of Bridging Visas, including Asylum or Protection Visa applicants: contact the International Education Division (IED) to confirm eligibility for SRP funding for all bridging visa holders.

Students on certain visa sub-classes not listed above may not be eligible for enrolment or may be required to pay fees prior to enrolling in a government school.

The following categories of students are **not eligible** for SRP funding:

- holders of a temporary resident visa in one of the following visa sub-classes: 410; 417; 425; 432; 456; 459; 462; 470; 675; 676; 679; 685; 686; 771; 773; 956; 976; 977, ETA (Electronic Travel Authority)
- holders of a student visas or dependents of a student visa holder: 560; 562; 563; 570; 571<sup>10</sup>; 572; 573; 574<sup>11</sup>; 575; 580.

Also, particular categories of overseas students are required to pay an application fee/Application for Enrolment forms are available from IED. Schools should retain and file a copy of the letter issued to the applicant by IED upon assessment of the application.

For information on fee-paying & SRP funded overseas students refer to the key resource for schools, the 'Overseas Student Fee Payment & Exemptions List' which provides a listing of all entrant categories, visa subclasses and the fee-payment or SRP eligible status under the Ministerial Order, available at:

[http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/curriculum/oss\\_chstudfee.pdf](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/curriculum/oss_chstudfee.pdf)

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<sup>9</sup> Dependents of 457 visa holders are only eligible for enrolment in standard primary, secondary or P-12 schools while the principal 457 visa holder is resident in Australia. Enrolment enquiries for Special Schools should be referred to the ISPU as special visa conditions apply to 457 dependents in Special Schools.

<sup>10</sup> Unless the student is an Exchange student participating in a registered exchange program. See section on Exchange Students.

<sup>11</sup> Some dependent students holding 572, 573 and 574 may be eligible for a fee exemption. ISPU will assess eligibility on receipt of an application.



It is encouraged that all school staff refer to this document in the enrolment of overseas students, temporary and permanent residents in Victorian Government schools.

The IED manages the International Student Program for fee-paying and exempt international student visa holders (persons holding a subclass 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576) visa subclasses. For queries regarding the enrolment of overseas students and temporary entrants, contact the International Education Division on 9637 2990 or email [international@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:international@edumail.vic.gov.au). Enquiries relating to the dependants of Permanent residents (SRP eligible students) should be directed to the Targeted Initiatives Branch on 9637 2135 or email [ESL@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:ESL@edumail.vic.gov.au).

The VRQA manages overseas secondary student exchange organisations. To be eligible for SRP funding, students on exchange programs must enter Australia through a registered student exchange organisation and hold a 571 visa sub-class and the appropriate statistical code.

For questions regarding students entering Australia as part of a student exchange program please contact the Program Co-ordinator at the VRQA on (03) 9651 3801 or email [vrqa.student.exchange@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa.student.exchange@edumail.vic.gov.au).

For all other queries regarding SRP eligibility for student exchanges, please contact the IED on (03) 9637 2990. Contact the Executive Officer, Student Exchanges, International Education Division on (03) 9637 2990 for advice if the student has not entered Australia under the auspices of a registered student exchange organisation.

For further information or queries regarding the enrolment of overseas students or temporary entrants refer to the [Overseas Student – ‘Fee Payment & Exemptions Listing’](#) or contact the IED on 9637 2990 email [international@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:international@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## 5. Conducting the Census Count

Principals should use these Guidelines to classify students as **SRP funded** or **non-SRP funded** and record this funding status on CASES21. Student enrolment details that prove eligibility for SRP funding must be retained for verification purposes.

It is the responsibility of principals to ensure that the school has a sound, well understood and reliably implemented process for recording and verifying student attendance throughout the school year.

Principals should arrange for attendance rolls to be examined to ensure that both SRP and non-SRP funded students are **counted in accordance with census attendance criteria**. Use the CASES21 Enrolment Census application to exclude from the census count students who do not meet the attendance criteria.

An examination of manual rolls and CASES21 or other electronic attendance records may be necessary to confirm that students are correctly included in census counts. It is strongly recommended that principals who rely on electronic or CASES21 attendance records have February attendance verified by the relevant class teacher, home-group teacher or year level co-ordinator prior to finalising the census return.

Enrolment and attendance records and other documentary evidence that prove a student's eligibility to be included in census counts must be retained for verification purposes.

Principals should refer to the *CASES21 Enrolment Census Process Guide*<sup>12</sup> for detailed instructions on preparing their student data in CASES21.

## 6. Amending and Resubmitting Census Returns in Case of Error

**Schools should RESUBMIT their census return in the week following census day if the initial return is found to be INCORRECT.** For example, a student originally included in census counts who was expected to return and meet ongoing enrolment criteria may subsequently be found to have transferred to another school and thus the original census count would have to be reduced.

Students who have not attended a Victorian government school by census day in the current school year CANNOT be included in the census counts, even if they attend a school immediately after census day. The only exception is for students who have been absent due to illness. (See page 12)

Refer to Question 14 in the *Common Census Questions and Answers* for further information on students starting school or changing schools around census time.

## 7. Enrolment Verification Program

The aim of the February School Census Returns Verification is to identify the accuracy of the February School Census returns submitted to the Department by selected Victorian Government schools, using a predetermined census verification process.

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<sup>12</sup> Available at :

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/census.aspx>

Typically, a sample of schools is selected for Enrolment Verification from all regions, based on a risk profile methodology. The sample will include primary, secondary, P-12, language and special schools.

The Census Verification will be undertaken during a four-week period usually beginning in the second week of Term 2. Several contractors will be employed to undertake the verification process with a team of authorised enrolment verifiers.

Principals of participating schools can appeal a decision made by an enrolment verifier on the basis that the decision:

- was not in accordance with the current guidelines for counting students for school census; or
- failed to take into account documentary evidence (e.g. attendance rolls, diary notes, parental correspondence) the school presented that supports the claim for the student's inclusion in the census count; or
- involves a student who is at risk of being disengaged from school and the school has been actively working to re-engage them. Please refer to the following link for more information about identifying students at risk,  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/disengagedrisk.aspx>

**Principals must lodge an appeal within 3 working days after the completion of the enrolment verification at their school.** Appeals can be lodged in the form of an email or written correspondence to the Census Hotline (see Section 8 for contact details). Principals must ensure that appropriate documentation is provided to support their claim.

## 8. Key Contacts

### **Census Guidelines and conducting the census**

Queries regarding the Census, Enrolment Guidelines, funding students returning after census day and the Enrolment Verification Program should be directed to:

Census Hotline  
Data Collections and Reporting Unit  
Performance and Evaluation Division  
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
Level 3, 33 St Andrews Place  
PO Box 4367  
MELBOURNE 3001  
Telephone (03) 9637 3225  
Facsimile (03) 9637 2830  
Email: [census@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:census@edumail.vic.gov.au)

### **Overseas Students**

Queries regarding enrolment and funding of overseas students should be directed to:

International Student Program Unit (ISPU)  
Telephone (03) 9637 2990  
Email: [international@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:international@edumail.vic.gov.au)

### **Exchange Students**

Queries regarding students on exchange programs should be directed to:

VRQA (Student Exchange): Telephone (03) 9651 3801  
International Division: Telephone (03) 9637 2990

### **New arrival students**

Queries regarding enrolment and funding of new arrival students should be directed to:

The EAL Unit Telephone (03) 9637 2023  
Facsimile (03) 9637 2040  
Email: [esl@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:esl@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## 9. Common Census Questions and Answers

### Eligibility for SRP funding, age criteria:

#### **Q1 Are students younger than 4 years and 8 months on 1 January able to be enrolled in schools?**

No, only in special circumstances with the prior written approval of the Regional Director. Parents should apply through their Regional Office.

#### **Q2 How is student age calculated?**

Student age is calculated as the age in completed years as at 1 January of the current school year. For example, students aged 18 to 20 refers to students who have turned 18 but have not yet turned 21 by 1 January of the relevant school year.

### SRP funding for adult students

#### **Q3 Can I enrol a student who is over 21 years of age and receive Student Resource Package funding?**

Adults aged 21 or over as at 1 January can be enrolled in schools but will not be eligible for SRP funding. There are specific institutions where adult students may undertake accredited senior secondary courses such as the VCE – for example, TAFE institutions and Adult Community Education providers. Where TAFE institutions or ACE providers do not offer certain accredited senior secondary courses such as VCE courses, nominated TAFE institutes and ACE providers can organise an alternative course.

Adult students do not necessarily require VCE to undertake tertiary studies. For more specific information please contact the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) on 1300 364 133.

#### **Q4 Under what circumstances can a student who is aged 18 on 1 January be exempt from the sole VCE study requirement and thus receive SRP funding?**

The Guidelines allow that a student may be granted an exemption if they have been unable to complete Year 10 by the year they turn 18 and the delay was due to causes of a temporary nature beyond their control or a lack of educational facilities. The student will also need to be under 21 on 31 December of the year in which they complete Year 10. The following examples would meet this exemption criterion:

- a student recently arrived in Australia from a refugee camp where educational facilities were limited;
- a student who through accident or illness has had their education temporarily disrupted;
- a student transferring to a school in Year 10 from an English Language School or Centre.

Following the census, in cases where eligibility is unclear, schools will be requested to provide evidence that the student has experienced such a temporary disruption to their schooling. If desired, schools may apply prior to the census to the Census Hotline for an exemption.

**Q5 Can a student who turned 18 last December complete their English Language Centre course this year?**

Yes. Students who will be 18 at the start of the school year can complete the approved intensive English language course that they commenced in the previous year when they were under 18 years of age.

## **Attendance**

**Q6 Can I include a student who is on an extended overseas holiday and is not due to return until after census day as SRP funded in the February census?**

No. A student must have attended regularly during the current year to be included in the February census count for SRP-funding purposes. Use the manual exclusion facility in the CASES21 Enrolment Census application to exclude the student from the SRP-funded count. Under circumstances outlined on page 11 of these Guidelines, schools may apply for the recalculation of their SRP to allow funding for the students who return to school by the end of the first week of Term 2 of the current year.

Applications for recalculation must be in writing, sent to the Department by the last school day in May and include a copy of supporting documentation.

**Q7 What supporting documentation do I need to include with my application to receive funding for students returning after census day?**

For these students to be considered for SRP funding you will need to provide the Department with a copy of all the supporting documentation, as listed on page 10 of these Guidelines, by the last school day in May. Note that changes to the SRP for these students will be processed after the mid-year census. The documentation should include proof that:

- 1) The student was enrolled at the school in the previous year – for example, a copy of the enrolment form confirming enrolment date or a copy of the December roll to confirm the student’s attendance in the previous year;
- 2) The student has not been included in any other Victorian government or non-government school’s February census count -
  - a) a copy of the final census report *Students excluded from the February Census Count* to confirm student was not claimed for SRP-funding; and
  - b) a copy of the note from the parents informing the school of the student’s intended absence from the commencement of the school year until after census day for reasons such as an overseas or interstate holiday;
- 3) The student returned to school on or before the end of the first week of Term 2 – a copy of the relevant year’s attendance roll confirming student’s return date and ongoing attendance.

**Q8 A sibling of a student having an extended holiday is due to start in Prep. Can I request funding for this Prep student as a late returning student?**

Yes, if the school provides evidence that the enrolment process had commenced and that classes were structured to include this Prep student at the beginning of the new school year.

**Q9 Can I count a student who usually attends my school but is in foster care (or a refuge) and is attending another school at census time?**

The student should generally be counted where he/she meets attendance criteria and is enrolled and attends on census day. Where a student transfers between schools on a short-term basis, eg: a short foster care placement, principals should negotiate to share funding across the two schools to reflect the schooling provided over the school year, while ensuring the student's total FTE between both schools adds to no more than the student's workload (up to 1.0).

**Q10 One of my students was attending an Alternative Education Setting around census time, can I count this student?**

Yes. Students enrolled in Alternative Education Settings such as a Social Adjustment Centres or Secondary Teaching Units are involved in short term programs and are to be counted at the home school only.

**Q11 Can I count a student who is attending an English Language School or Centre on census day?**

No. This student will be included in the census count of the English Language School or Centre. The student should be set to **inactive** on CASES21 at your school for census counts.

**Q12 Can I count a student who has met regular attendance criteria but will be away from my school for a short period including census day?**

If you have documentary evidence that the student is validly enrolled at your school, has met regular attendance criteria in the current year, is not attending any other school **and** will be returning to your school, then you should count the student.

If the student is attending another school **and** you have documentary evidence that the student is returning to your school, then you need to negotiate with the principal of the other school how the student is to be counted so that both schools receive a fair proportion of the student's FTE, also ensuring that the student is counted to a maximum of 1.0 FTE.

If the principals cannot reach agreement, the documentary evidence held by both schools as to the validity of the student's enrolment and the expected duration of the enrolment will be considered. The Department's practice is to count students in the school at which they have a valid, regular, ongoing enrolment. The Department and the Enrolment Verifier will consider documentary evidence of valid



enrolment and of attendance before and after census day in any review of where the student should be counted.

Refer also to Q14 on Valid Enrolments.

### **Q13 Can I count a new student who started at my school after census day?**

Students who enrol at the school after census day **cannot** be included in the census counts. Contact the Census Hotline in the rare event that the student enrolls at your school in the week after census day and if:

- the student has regularly attended and was eligible to be counted in another Victorian government school **and**
- both the transferring school and the receiving school agree that the receiving school can count all or part of the FTE for the student **and**
- both schools resubmit their census returns by no later than one week after census day and ensure that the student is counted to a total of no more than 1.0 FTE.

You should also contact the Census Hotline if a student meets the following criteria:

- the student has regularly attended a Victorian government school in the current school year **and**
- was not eligible to be counted in any other school's census count **and**
- was absent from school on census day (as part of a short absence from the Victorian government school system such as moving from Warrnambool to Bairnsdale and taking a few days to do so) **and**
- made a valid enrolment (refer to Q14) and commenced attending classes at your school in the week after census day **and**
- is a continuing student at your school.

The Department may agree that counting the student at your school is consistent with the Department's intention to count such students in the census return of the school where they will be a continuing student.

All other students, including students from interstate or overseas or from the non-government sector, who enrol (first attend classes) at your school after census day **cannot** be included in census counts.

### **Q14 What is a valid enrolment?**

A 'valid' enrolment occurs as a consequence of admission or transfer into a government school for students who meet both age and residency criteria.

A birth certificate or equivalent for Australian-born students; residency evidence, passport or travel documents for non-Australian-born students; and an immunisation certificate (for primary school students) are required for students enrolling for the first time in a Victorian government school.

A transfer note, immunisation certificate (for primary students), and,

in the case of non-Australian born students, passport or travel documents are required for students transferring from another school.

No student may be admitted to a Victorian government school without a signed enrolment form. In the majority of cases, the form should be signed by a parent/guardian. Where a student is of post-compulsory age and living independently, the form can be completed and signed by the student.

Students whose enrolment form is signed but whose admission form/transfer documentation (including immunisation certificates for primary students) is not complete, should be allowed to attend classes and the required data added when available.

Schools must retain and provide the transfer note, or evidence of a request for a transfer note, as supporting evidence of the validity of the enrolment.

#### **Q15 Why do I need to retain attendance records?**

The attendance roll is a legal document and permanent record of the attendance of all students. Accurate roll keeping is required by legislation and attendance records must be maintained for all students. Attendance and absences must be accurately recorded **at least on a half-day basis**. The VCAA requires that class attendance for VCE students is recorded.

Accurate collection, maintenance and storage of these records are part of a school's duty of care. These records are also used to assist schools and enrolment verifiers in verifying that students have been correctly included in census counts.

#### **Q16 How do attendance records affect census counts?**

Principals must use attendance records to decide whether individual students meet the 80% regular attendance criterion to be eligible to be counted in the census.

If principals rely on CASES21 or other electronic absence records, they must ensure that the school has a sound process for accurately recording and verifying the attendance records.

#### **Q17 Can I count a student who has attended less than 80% of the time?**

Yes, but only if the school has documentary evidence (see Q20) that demonstrates that the school has made and continues to make consistent efforts to encourage attendance and that the student is continuing at the school.

#### **Q18 Can I count a student who has only attended school for 5 days this year but has provided notes and has approved absences on virtually all other days?**

Yes, assuming the student is continuing at the school. Census guidelines allow approved absences to count towards attendance for the purposes of meeting the 80% regular attendance requirement. Schools must consider the reason provided when determining whether to approve the absence.

**Q19 What documentary evidence do I need to support the counting and SRP funding of students with irregular attendance where more than 20% of potential attendance was unapproved absence? How will the verification process deal with such cases?**

Schools should endeavour to re-engage students in schooling and to encourage irregular attendees to remain at school and attend regularly.

To be eligible for SRP funding, the irregular attendee must have attended school in the month prior to the census day and be continuing (ie attended after census day and up to the date of enrolment verification, even if irregularly) at the school. There should be documentary evidence on the student's file of the school's efforts to support the student's attendance at school such as records of phone contact, letters, visits, attendance agreements made with students/families, school plans to support attendance, and liaison with regional, community or other government agencies such as Community Services.

Contact which does not indicate any engagement with the student's family/carers – or in the case of older students, the student themselves (such as unreturned letters or phone calls) – cannot be considered as documentary evidence to support the counting of the student.

The intention of providing funding for irregular attendees aims to support schools in their sustained efforts to reengage these students.

The enrolment verification process would expect to find evidence that the school follow-up and documentation to re-engage the student in education did not only occur prior to census day but that it had continued up to the time of verification. If there is no evidence of further attendance, or further follow-up of the student post-census day, then the school will not be eligible for funding for this student.

Evidence must be available on the student file at the time of the enrolment verification.

**Q20 Under what circumstances would I need to resubmit my school's census return?**

If your checking of the original census return in the week after census day reveals that the original return was incorrect, resubmit the return with the correct counts. Refer to the *CASES21 Enrolment Census Process Guide* for more information on resubmission of census returns.

**Eligibility for enrolment, overseas born students**

**Q21 Where can I get advice about overseas born students who may have to pay fees?**

The International Student Program Unit arranges the enrolment of potential fee-paying overseas students (including temporary fee-paying students and dependants of overseas students). The Unit will

also advise on eligibility for enrolment and SRP funding, and the availability of support services. (See page 19 for contact details.)

**Q22 How can I determine if a student is an international student or a local student?**

Schools must ask to see either, a birth certificate or a valid passport, visa or travel documents, prior to enrolling a student in school. Photocopies of these documents must be retained in the student's file. Australian (including Norfolk Islanders) and New Zealand citizens are not required to pay international student tuition fees. Students from other countries will have to pay international student tuition fees unless they fall into a visa category that allows an exemption from these fees.

International students will hold both a passport and a visa. The visa class determines whether or not a student is required to pay tuition fees. If a student does not appear to have a visa in their passport, this may indicate that they have been granted an electronic visa. Students in this category should be advised to attend a Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs office in order to have their visa evidenced. The ISPU can advise on eligibility for enrolment and whether the student is eligible for SRP funding or is required to pay tuition fees. (See page 19 for contact details.)

**Q23 Are full fee-paying students classified as SRP funded?**

No. Schools receive separate funding for these students. Overseas fee-paying students should be recorded on CASES21 as non-SRP funded.

**Q24 What information do I need to put into CASES21 for overseas students?**

Information should be entered as for any other student, ensuring that details including surname, first name and date of birth are correct. In addition ensure the student has a correct International Student Unit ID Number or AASES number (as applicable).

**Q25 How do I enter visa details on CASES21?**

Schools must enter visa details through the Demographics tab screen of CASES21 program ST11001/ST11001T. A student's visa details can relate to a Permanent or Temporary Residence Visa.

If the student holds a Permanent Residence Visa, then:

- Enter the student's Resident Status as 'P' for Permanent;
- Enter the student's Basis of Permanent Residency as P (Permanent Residence Visa); and
- Enter the visa sub-class as recorded on their visa.

If the student holds a Temporary Residence Visa, then:

- Enter the student's Residence Status as 'T' for Temporary;
- Enter the visa sub-class as recorded on their visa; and
- Enter the Visa Expiry Date and Statistical Code when prompted as CASES21 will require these details for some visas.

**Q26 What do I do when CASES21 indicates that a student's visa has expired?**

Contact the student's family to obtain up-to-date visa details. File a copy of the updated visa details and amend CASES21 accordingly. Advise the ISPU of the new visa expiry date. Ensure that this information in CASES21 is up to date. (See page 19 for contact details.)

**Q27 How should I record the date of birth for a refugee student who only knows their year of birth?**

Record the date of birth as 2 January in the year of birth.

**Q28 Are exchange students visiting my school eligible for SRP funding?**

Exchange students are eligible for SRP funding if the exchange was organised through a Registered Secondary Student Exchange Organisation. A list of Registered Exchange Organisations can be obtained from the Student Exchange section of the following website: <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/registration/Pages/studentexchange.aspx>

Contact the Executive Officer Student Exchanges, International Division on (03) 9651 3948 if you are unsure about an exchange student's eligibility.

## **Part-time students and time fractions**

**Q29 What time fraction should be used for a student attending two schools on a part-time basis?**

Time fractions for all part-time students should reflect the workload undertaken and time spent at each school, and should not add to more than 1.0 FTE. Prior to census day, schools should reach agreement with each other on consistent counting of students. Where schools agree on a transfer of resources, a student who attends two regular schools may be counted at their full-time fraction by their home school and excluded from census counts by the second school.

**Q30 Why is a student counted as 1.0 FTE if they do 4 VCE units at my school yet another student at my school doing 4 VCE units plus one through Distance Education Victoria is counted at 0.9 at my school?**

Students undertaking 4 or more VCE units at one school are deemed to be undertaking a full VCE workload and count as 1.0 FTE. In the majority of cases, students study at only one school. Where a student is enrolled in more than one school the student's time fraction at each school should add up to 1.0 FTE overall. Schools are entitled to share students according to the workload and time at each school.

In the above scenario, the workload for the student would indicate the school should count the student at 0.8 and Distance Education at 0.2 FTE. In recognition of the support provided by the school for the student's Distance Education studies, 0.1 has been added to the student's time fraction. Hence the student is counted at the school at a time fraction of 0.9 FTE (Figure 2 page 9)

**Q31 What time fraction applies to students in the Part-Time Apprenticeships and Traineeships for School Students program?**

For SRP purposes these students should be counted for SRP purposes at the time fraction appropriate to the number of VCE units for which they are enrolled, excluding units provided by Registered Training Organisations (RTO) paid for directly by the Department. Refer to the Figure 1 page 8 in these Guidelines for the relevant time fraction.

For example, a student studying 5 units 4 at the school and 1 unit through an RTO may be counted full-time at the school.

If a student is enrolled in 3 or fewer units at the school, an additional 0.1 may be allowed in recognition of the support schools provide to oversee the Part-Time Apprenticeships and Traineeships for School Students program.

To ensure the student is recognised as being in full-time education, it is essential that schools record the Other School Attended as TAFE (9971) in the Part-Time screens in CASES21. This student's time fractions at your school and TAFE should add to a total of 1.0 FTE.

**Other**

**Q32 My school has a staggered program for Prep students whereby the time spent at school gradually increases. How should the Prep students not yet attending on a fulltime basis by census day be counted?**

Students should be counted at 1.0 FTE unless they are enrolled on an ongoing part-time basis (in which case they are to be counted at their eventual part-time time-fraction).

**Q33 Are immunisation certificates required to be presented when secondary students enrol at a school?**

No. All primary-aged students who enrolled at a Primary, Special or P-12 school from 1991 should have presented an Immunisation Status Certificate to the school. It is not a requirement for secondary schools to collect immunisation certificates or to record immunisation status details on CASES21.

**Q34 How do I record a student on CASES21 whose SRP funding is being claimed by another school?**

For students who do most of their study at one school (referred to in these Guidelines as the home school) with some study at a second school, the schools may agree that the home school will claim all SRP funding and transfer resources to the second school for the additional subject. To reflect this outcome in each school's census return, the following needs to occur:

- The home school should record the student on CASES21 as SRP funded and full-time at the school.
- The second school should record the student on CASES21 as follows:

- Go to the School tab screen of CASES21 program ST11001/ST11001T and set the Full-Time field to N to indicate that the student is part-time;
- Enter the time fraction appropriate to the workload being undertaken at the school;
- Click on the Part-Time details “daisy-chain” link that appears;
- Ensure the home school is recorded as sharing the student with the remainder of the time fraction so that the total time fraction equals 1;
- Go to the Finance tab screen of CASES21 program ST11001/ST11001T and set the Eligible for SRP Funding field to N; and
- Exclude the student from the census count using the CASES21 Enrolment Census Application. Refer to the *CASES21 Enrolment Census Process Guide* for assistance in using this option.