# Sighting and retaining evidence of eligibility

This fact sheet explains what must be sighted and retained when you check a student’s evidence of eligibility for the Skills First program. Read it alongside the VET Funding Contract and Guidelines About Eligibility.

## Background

Before you enrol a student in Skills Firsttraining, you must make sure they’re eligible, by confirming they’re an Australian or New Zealand citizen or a permanent resident of Australia.

You must establish eligibility in a robust way that we can verify at an audit or review. This includes sighting and retaining copies of documents.

## Types of evidence we accept

### Proving citizenship/permanent residence

We accept these documents as proof of citizenship/ permanent residence:

| If the student is: | You can accept **ANY** of these: |
| --- | --- |
| an Australian citizen | * Australian birth certificate (not birth extract) * current Australian passport * Australian citizenship certificate * current green Medicare card * Australian certificate of registration by descent |
| a New Zealand citizen | * current New Zealand passport * New Zealand birth certificate * New Zealand citizenship certificate * current green Medicare card |
| a permanent resident | * current green Medicare card * formal confirmation of permanent residence granted by the Department of Home Affairs **AND** the student’s foreign passport or ImmiCard |
| an asylum seeker enrolling under the Asylum Seeker VET program | * a ‘Referral to Government Subsidised Training - Asylum Seekers’ form from the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre or the Australian Red Cross * confirmation through the Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) system that the student has a valid visa type that we accept for participation in the program |
| in exceptional circumstances | * a proxy declaration signed by the training provider CEO or a government or community services provider, approved by the department |

### Using a proxy declaration

You must make all reasonable efforts to help a student prove their eligibility in the conventional way. If a student doesn’t have an accepted form of evidence of eligibility, they may be able to make a case to show they’re in **exceptional circumstances**. Follow these steps to help a student in this situation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Step 1:** | Decide whether you think the student is in exceptional circumstances.  This **doesn’t** include where a student is unwilling to bear the cost or inconvenience of obtaining documents.  It **may** include where student grew up in a remote location and their birth was not registered or is experiencing disadvantage or estrangement from family or guardians and they don’t have access to identity documents. |
| **Step 2:** | If the student is in exceptional circumstances, lodge an SVTS enquiry and ask us to approve a proxy declaration. Include any supporting information to make the case for the student. For example, a declaration signed by your CEO, or a representative from a government department or community service provider. |
| **Step 3:** | We’ll reply with a decision. If we approve, keep a copy of the declaration and our approval. |

## Ways to sight and retain evidence

There are **6** ways to sight and retain evidence of eligibility so you can help students in different circumstances:

| SIGHT: | RETAIN: |
| --- | --- |
| 1. An original document, presented in person | A photocopy or electronic copy |
| 1. An **original** certified copy of the document, presented in person or sent by post | A photocopy or electronic copy |
| 1. Confirmation the student’s details are verified to match a current and valid document in the Document Verification Service (DVS) | A transaction record showing the document was verified in the DVS |
| 1. A green Medicare card displayed on a Digital Wallet through the Express Plus Medicare mobile app | A written declaration that includes the authorised delegate’s name and the date they sighted the card, the card number and the card holder’s name. |
| 1. An email or pdf document the student has obtained from the VEVO system that confirms they hold a permanent visa   **AND**  An original or certified copy of the student’s foreign passport or ImmiCard | Electronic or paper copies of both documents |
| 1. Your own VEVO check on the student’s behalf, that shows they hold a permanent visa and that the details on the VEVO check match the details on their foreign passport or ImmiCard | A VEVO transaction record that shows the student’s details and permanent visa status |

### ****Sighting certified copies of a document****

A certified copy is made when a student presents their original document and a photocopy of it to a ‘certifier’. For information about who can be a certifier, see the Guidelines About Eligibility, or the [Department of Justice and Community Safety website](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/certifiedcopies).

### Formally confirming permanent residence

In most cases, permanent residents can use a green Medicare card as evidence of Skills First eligibility*.* If the student doesn’t have a green Medicare card, you can confirm permanent residence through VEVO. If a student gives you a self-generated VEVO check, this may be in the form of an email or pdf document. You’ll need to:

* look for the logo of the Department of Home Affairs on the VEVO check
* look for information in the VEVO check that clearly shows the student has a permanent visa
* make sure the student’s name on the VEVO check is the same as it is on their passport or ImmiCard.

### Using the DVS

The Document Verification Service (DVS) is a Commonwealth Government service. It’s a national online system that allows organisations to compare an individual's identifying information with a government record.

We encourage you to use the DVS as an efficient and secure way to check Skills First eligibility*.*

You can use it to check a range of Australian government-issued documents, including passports, Medicare cards and birth certificates.

#### **Engage a Gateway Service Provider**

To use the DVS, you must engage a Gateway Service Provider. This is an organisation authorised by the Commonwealth Government to match information requests to and from the DVS. For more information about how to become a DVS user, refer to the [Commonwealth Government’s website](https://beta.idmatch.gov.au/for-organisations/business-user).

**Sighting and retaining evidence**

When you use the DVS, you **don’t** have to sight and retain a copy of the student’s document. Instead, you sight confirmation from the Gateway Service Provider that the details on the student’s document match a current and valid record in the DVS database.

You must retain a transaction record that shows the student’s details, and that they were verified to match a valid and current document in the DVS. You don’t need to print this − you can retain it electronically. An electronic record can usually be kept within the Gateway Service Provider’s administrative platform. But if not, keep a secure electronic version that can’t be easily altered.

**If a document can’t be verified**

If a student’s evidence can’t be verified through the DVS, you need to give them the opportunity to provide it in another way before making a final decision about their eligibility.

## ****Using eligibility evidence again for future enrolments****

If you keep a copy of the student’s eligibility evidence on file, you can use it again the next time they enrol with you.

* If you use a means other than the DVS to verify the evidence, the document must still be current and valid.
* If you use the DVS to verify the evidence and you don’t retain an expiry date, you can continue to use it **only** for enrolments that occur in the same calendar year as the DVS check.

You must continue to keep a copy of the evidence for audit or review purposes.

You must also make all other assessments of the student’s eligibility for the new enrolment.

## Further information

Submit an enquiry via [SVTS](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/svts)

[Fact sheet: Skills First Eligibility](https://www.vic.gov.au/vet-funding-contracts#fact-sheets)

[Fact sheet: Using electronic signatures](https://www.vic.gov.au/vet-funding-contracts#fact-sheets)

[Fact sheet: Recordkeeping requirement](https://www.vic.gov.au/vet-funding-contracts#fact-sheets)

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