

## Fee-free training for children and young people in out-of-home care

Children and young people aged 15 – 17 in out-of-home care (OOHC) and young people aged 18 – 30 who have previously been in OOHC are now eligible for [Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarships](#).

The scholarships will be in place for four years and people who meet the Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarship eligibility criteria will be able to choose from more than 580 qualifications from Certificate I to Advanced Diplomas, including apprenticeships and traineeships.

### Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for a Fee-Free Scholarship, students must be:

- 15 years old or over, no longer at school, living or working in NSW
- aged between 15 and 30 years old when they start training
- an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident, Australian permanent humanitarian visa holder or New Zealand citizen
- wanting to study a Smart and Skilled course listed on the [NSW Skills List](#) or on the [NSW Skills List Additions](#)

Students seeking a fee exemption must declare that they are in OOHC or were previously in OOHC and, if requested, provide supporting evidence that they are currently in OOHC or that they have been in OOHC.

Types of evidence that students may be required to show:

For children and young people (15 – 17 years) **currently** in OOHC:

- a copy of the Children's Court Care Order, or
- a copy of the 'confirmation of placement' letter, or
- a letter from FACS or the [OOHC Designated Agency](#) verifying that the child or young person is in statutory or supported care, or
- any other evidence which clearly shows that the child or young person was in OOHC.

For young people (18 – 30 years) **previously** in OOHC:

- 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 FACS verifying the person was previously in statutory or supported care, or
- any other evidence which clearly shows that the person was previously in OOHC.

## Procedures

Students do not need to lodge a formal application. If they meet the Fee-Free Scholarship eligibility criteria, the chosen Smart and Skilled Training Provider will advise the student at enrolment that they have been provided with a scholarship.

The NSW Government will pay for course fees for Fee-Free Scholarship eligible students, directly to Smart and Skilled training providers.

## Maximum entitlement

Eligible students are entitled to one Fee-Free Scholarship per financial year, and a maximum of two Fee-Free Scholarships from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2019.

## Incidental expenses

The Fee-Free Scholarship covers the fee the student would have otherwise paid for the course had they not received the scholarship.

Training Providers may still charge fees for incidental expenses, such as text books, field trips, tool kits or transport costs. Whilst incidental expenses are **not** covered by the Fee-Free Scholarship, payment or reimbursement of these costs is generally covered by the care allowance for children and young people in OOHC. For young people who have left care such assistance should be included in the young person's leaving care planning line with the [Ministerial Guidelines on the provision of assistance after leaving out-of-home care](#).

## Further Information

- [Fee Free Scholarships at Smart and Skilled](#)
- The [Teenage Education Payment](#) (TEP) is a payment to assist authorised foster, relative and kinship carers to keep 16 and 17 year olds who are in their care, engaged in education or training.
- [Post Care Education Financial Support](#) - A new, non-means tested payment aimed at helping young people aged 18 to 24 complete year 12 or equivalent, this payment provides financial support to their carer to maintain the current living and support arrangements.
- FACS Care Leavers line 1800 994 686