Adult & Community Education (ACE) Program

The NSW Government's Adult and Community Education (ACE) Program provides affordable, local training and education to NSW communities. Under the ACE program, participants, employers, delivery partners and providers and the government collaborate to improve learning outcomes for learners and meet community training needs.

This training is subsidised by the NSW Government.

Who Is It For?

The ACE program is designed to target Disadvantaged Students, and students in Regional and Remote communities in NSW. The ACE Program provides funding towards training up to and including Certificate III level.

The ACE Program offers support to individuals, small business owners and their staff byproviding fully subsidised accredited and non-accredited training in targeted courses ininformation technology, business services or foundation skills.

ACE may help you

- Get into work for the first time
- Return to work
- Acquire new skills, knowledge and experience and strengthen existing skills
- Improve your confidence when looking for work or education and training opportunities

Prior to Enrolling

Prospective students may be eligible to receive Subsidised Training under the ACE program. Prior to enrolling please check with Macquarie Community College to determine your eligibility.

Unique Student Identifier

As a condition of your enrolment you are required to give Macquarie Community College your Unique Student Identifier number. You may apply directly by visiting **www.usi.gov.au.**   **Find out more about USI's.**

Personal information

For the ACE program Macquarie Community College must first obtain the consent of the prospective student to the department's use of student's information. You will be asked to complete a Consent to use and disclosure of Personal Information form as part of your enrolment.

How to Enrol

Prior to enrolling please read the following information to determine your eligibility as well as to be informed of the ACE program requirements. This includes:

1. ACE eligibility criteria and evidence required
2. Fees, withdrawals, transfers and refunds
3. Credit Transfer/recognition of prior learning
4. Discontinuing subsidised training
5. Consumer protection information
6. Support services

You may be required to undertake a Language Literacy and Numeracy assessment to qualify you into your proposed course.

Am I Eligible?

To be eligible you must be:

- 15 years of age or older
- no longer at school
- living or working in NSW
- an Australian OR New Zealand Citizen, Australian Permanent Resident OR a Humanitarian Visa Holder, OR a Partner Visa Holder whose sponsor is a current or past Humanitarian Visa Holder; **AND**

Meet one or more of the following

- Identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Receive an applicable Commonwealth benefit or is a dependent child, spouse, or partner of a recipient of an applicable benefit
- Live with a disability or is the dependent child, spouse or partner of a person with a disability
- Experiencing barriers due to due to low language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills
- Identify as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and meet one or more of the eligible criteria
- Unemployed or underemployed (working less than 25 hours per week)
- Returning to the workforce after a gap of 12 months
- Looking to upskill or reskill and aged 55 or older or experiencing barriers due to unforeseen circumstances
- Experiencing hardship or barriers to education due to personal circumstances
- Aged between 15-24 with barriers to education and employment
- Have not completed year 12 or equivalent
- Living in regional and remote communities

Does not meet any of the above criteria AND is either

- Owner of a small business*; OR
- Employee of a small business or not-for-profit organization

*A small business is an enterprise with; less than 20 full time equivalent (FTE) employees; or, less than 200 FTE employees if the enterprise's primary operations is in a Regional or Remote Location.

To assist us in assessing your eligibility, you will need to provide:

1. A completed **enrolment pack**
2. Eligibility evidence and consents – please refer to Appendix C and D below.
3. Your USI number. If you do not already have a USI, Macquarie Community College may, with your consent, apply for your USI or you may apply directly by visiting **www.usi.gov.au.**   **Find out more about USI's.**

1. Fees, withdrawals, transfers and refunds

All Part Qualifications under Smart and Skilled, including the ACE Program, are fee-free for those who are eligible.

View the Fees, **Withdrawal and Refund Policy.**

2. Credit Transfer/Recognition of Prior Learning:

The College can assist with Credit Transfer (CT) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Credit Transfer (CT) is granted as a result of identifying learning outcomes already achieved through formal training. Credit outcomes may allow for entry into a qualification and/or provide credit towards the qualification.

Credit Transfer given may reduce the time required for a student to achieve the qualification.

To apply for Credit Transfer the prospective student will need to provide original or certified copies of certificates previously attained through formal training prior to completing the enrolment process.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is granted as a result of identifying and assessing previous and current informal education and training, work experience and/or life experience and knowledge. Previous learning and the evidence supplied is measured against pre-determined performance standards contained within the Units of Competency.

To apply for recognition of prior learning the prospective student should indicate their decision to apply for recognition as soon as possible after enrolment and the induction program.

We will be happy to provide you with an RPL kit after speaking directly with you to ensure you understand the requirements of this process.

3. Discontinuing subsidised training:

It is hoped that you should not need to discontinue your course. If you wish to discontinue your course we ask that you inform Macquarie Community College in writing. Any refunds owing will be remitted in accordance with our Refund Policy.

If you wish to defer or discontinue your course please write, with your reasons, to:

Attn: Training Administration **trainingadmin@macquarie.nsw.edu.au**

4. Consumer protection information:

Your feedback is important to us at Macquarie Community College. To protect your rights as a student please refer to the following documents:

Consumer Protection Policy

Smart and Skilled Consumer Protection Strategy

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the NSW Smart and Skilled Customer Support Centre directly at 13 28 11 or visit **https://skills.education.nsw.gov.au/**

5. Support Services for Students:

Macquarie Community College is committed to creating an environment where our students feel welcome, respected and supported.

Macquarie Community College caters to diverse client learning needs and aims to identify and respond to the learning needs of all students. All students are encouraged to express their views about their learning needs at all stages of their learning experience, from the initial enrolment and induction stage to completion stage. Macquarie Community College is committed to providing students with additional support, advice or assistance while training. To achieve this and to ensure the quality delivery of training and education, Macquarie Community College will assist and support students as appropriate and/or refer them to qualified counsellors. Staff will respond to and attempt to alleviate any signs of distress or discomfort of students.

Macquarie Community College staff members understand the principles of **access and equity** and are familiar with learning options available to accommodate a variety of pathways to completing qualifications, which are identified within the Training and Assessment Strategy.

A learner experiencing genuine difficulties experienced in completing a program in the allotted time is encouraged to alert their Trainer and/or bring this to the attention of the Lead Trainer at the first available opportunity.

Our continuous improvement processes gather feedback to monitor and improve services to meet student needs.

Read more about our **Support Services for Students.**

Academic Support:

Course Program Manager/Lead Trainer
1300 845 888

Student Support:

Customer Service/Course Program Manager/Lead Trainer
1300 845 888

Language, Literacy and Numeracy Support:

Course Program Manager/Lead Trainer
1300 845 888

Should you require an interpreter:

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)
131 450

Appendix C

This Appendix C sets out the **general eligibility criteria** that applies to all students under the ACE Program. This general eligibility criteria applies in addition to the specific eligibility criteria set out in Appendix D.

Student general eligibility checklist:

- ☐ **A.** aged 15 or over
- ☐ **B.** no longer enrolled in secondary school (homeschool exception)
- ☐ **C.** live or work in NSW (Exception A)
- ☐ **D.** have a USI

E. meets one of the following requirements

- ☐ Australian citizen
- ☐ Australian permanent resident
- ☐ NZ citizen
- ☐ Eligible Asylum Seeker
- ☐ Meet Refugee or Humanitarian Visa requirements

Note: This is a summary of the general eligibility criteria detailed in Appendix C.

1. What are the general eligibility requirements for students?

To be eligible for Funded Training, the student must:

A. be aged 15 years or older; **AND**

> **Evidence:** Identity Evidence (defined below) or USI (validity checked with USI Registry)

B. be no longer enrolled in secondary education unless they are a registered home school student; **AND**

no longer enrolled in secondary education: a student who has left school (whether by school education or an alternative pathway) in adherence with the NSW School Leaving Age Policy and the Education Act 1990 (NSW)

www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/ea1990104/s21b.html) and the Educational Amendment (School Leaving Age) Regulation 2009 (NSW). This does not apply to any students in year 12 after the completion of term 3.

Registered home school student: a student registered by the NSW Education Standards

Authority as a home schooled student

> **Evidence:** Copy of current certificate of home schooling registration, which clearly indicates the period of time for which the student will be home schooled

C. live/work in NSW unless Exception A applies; **AND**

Exception A: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who do not live or work in New South Wales but live with a postcode identified on the Exception A Schedule as provided by the Department

> **Evidence:**
> - any Commonwealth or NSW Government evidence of living location, or
> - employer-issued document confirming employment in NSW

D. have a USI (see clause 7.2 of Contract Conditions); **AND**

> **Evidence:** USI data from a valid USI at enrolment

E. be either:

- an Australian citizen; **OR**

> **Evidence:**
> - Australian birth certificate; or
> - Australian passport; or
> - Certificate of Australian Citizenship (Naturalisation Certificate); or
> - Green Medicare Card

- a permanent Australian resident; **OR**

> **Evidence:**
> - a Certificate of Evidence of Resident Status (CERS), which confirms status as an Australian permanent resident; or
> - use the Department of Home Affair's Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) facility to confirm status as Australian permanent resident and check passport; or
> - Green Medicare Card

- a New Zealand citizen; **OR**

> **Evidence:**
> - New Zealand birth certificate; or
> - New Zealand passport; or
> - Green Medicare Card

- someone who meets the **Refugee or Humanitarian Visa requirements** as defined by the Department; **OR**

- an **Eligible Asylum Seeker** as defined by the Department

2. What are the evidence requirements?

a. The evidence indicated above and elsewhere in the ACE Contract (including in section 4 of Appendix A) must be verified by the ACE Provider.

b. Where evidence is sighted but not kept, a record that confirms sighting of the evidence and a description of the evidence, must be maintained by the ACE Provider. The record must be dated and signed by a person authorised by the ACE Provider. The name of the signatory and their position should also be captured.

c. If requested by the Department, the ACE Provider must provide a copy of the evidence or proof the evidence has been sighted.

3. What is Identity Evidence?

Identity Evidence is evidence that can confirm the identity of the student as follows:

- Government issued photographic identification (e.g. passport or driver's licence)
- letter or statement from a referring agency confirming the identity of the student; or
- Staff Declaration confirming student's identity.

4. How should evidence requirements be addressed for students who are inmates with NSW Corrective Services?

Students who are inmates in NSW correctional facilities do not have access to many of the documents required to allow the ACE Provider to assess student eligibility.

NSW Corrective Services records information in the Offender Integrated Management System **(OIMS)** which can verify if the student:

- is living or working in NSW
- is a Australian citizen, New Zealand citizen or permanent Australian resident
- meets the Refugee and Humanitarian Visa requirements or is an Eligible Asylum Seeker

ACE Providers must make arrangements with the correctional facility on how information to support eligibility will be accessed/sighted. The sighting of information recorded on OIMS is deemed as sufficient evidence if recorded by the ACE Provider per section 2(b) above.

Appendix D

This Appendix D sets out the **specific eligibility criteria** that applies to all students under the ACE Program. This specific eligibility criteria applies in addition to the general eligibility criteria set out in Appendix C.

1. How is specific student eligibility determined and evidenced?

Students must meet the specific eligibility criteria of a Funding Stream (as set out below).

Important information: If a student meets the criteria for more than one Funding Stream, the Funding Stream that should be prioritised is as follows:

CSD   then   **CSE**   then   **SLP**   then   **TSB**   then   **CSR**

e.g., if a student meets the eligibility requirements for CSD, the CSD Funding Stream must be used.

Funding Stream	Specific eligibility criteria
CSD	Disadvantaged Students are eligible for the CSD Funding Stream. A Disadvantaged Student is a student who meets one or more of the following criteria (each a CSD Criteria): a. is a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live (Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander); **OR** **Evidence:** • proof of receipt of a Disability Support Pension (if applicable) • a letter from a medical practitioner or their health professional, government agency or school counsellor • referral from a supporting agency or community organisation e.g., disability employment agency; or • Staff Declaration*
	b. is a recipient of an Applicable Benefit, or is a dependent child, spouse, or partner of a recipient of an Applicable Benefit; **OR** **Evidence:** • proof of receipt of Applicable Benefits such as current Commonwealth benefits card, letter or income statement from Services Australia; or • referral by a supporting agency or community organisation e.g., a Workforce Australia agency/partner.
	c. has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or is a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or is a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment; **OR** **Evidence:** • proof of receipt of a Disability Support Pension (if applicable) • a letter from a medical practitioner or their health professional, government agency or school counsellor • referral from a supporting agency or community organisation e.g., disability employment agency; or • Staff Declaration*

d. has a disability or is the dependent child, spouse or partner of a person with a disability; **OR**

Evidence:
- supporting letter or other evidence from a government agency, medical professional, relevant support agency or community organisation; or
- Staff Declaration*

e. has low language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills - i.e., ACFS Level 2 or lower; may not be able to effectively participate in society e.g. inability to read a book or newspaper, understand road signs, transport timetables, fill out a form, read instructions or use digital devices and or the internet; **OR**

Evidence:
- language literacy and numeracy pre assessment against the Australian Core Skills Framework **(ACSF)**, Core Skills for Work Framework or other pre training assessment

f. identifies as culturally and linguistically diverse **(CALD)** and meets one or more of the following criteria:
- main language spoken at home is not English
- proficiency in spoken English is below the required standard to complete vocational training and/or employment
- experiencing cultural barriers
- experiencing social isolation; **OR**

Evidence:
- language literacy and numeracy pre assessment against the Australian Core Skills Framework, Core Skills for Work Framework or other pre training assessment
- Staff Declaration* (to support additional criteria if applicable).

g. is either:
- unemployed
- underemployed (working less than 25 hours per week)
- returning to the workforce after a gap of over 12 months
- looking to reskill or upskill: (a) and are aged 55 or older, or (b) due to unforeseen circumstances, e.g., COVID-19 impact, industry closure, recovering from injuries and or mental health issues; **OR**

Evidence:
- supporting letter or other evidence from a government agency, medical professional, relevant support agency or community organisation; or
- Staff Declaration*

h. is affected by economic disadvantage – i.e. a person who is experiencing significant socio-economic hardship; not having sufficient resources to cover the basics and achieve a reasonable standard of living; experiencing negative impacts on social and emotional wellbeing, physical health, and the ability to create a stable home environment; prevented from participating in communities and from thriving; **OR**

Evidence:
- supporting letter or other evidence from a government agency, medical professional, relevant support agency or community organisation; or
- Staff Declaration*

i. is affected by personal circumstances that mean the student requires support to access educational opportunities, for example if the student:
- has/is experiencing domestic violence, family violence or coercion
- is recovering from drug/alcohol abuse; or
- has exited the criminal justice system or is at risk of entering the criminal justice system; **OR**

Evidence:
- supporting letter or other evidence from a government agency, medical professional, relevant support agency or community organisation; or
- Staff Declaration*

j. is aged between 15-24 years and at risk of not otherwise progressing to further education, training or employment; **OR**

Evidence:
- referral by a supporting agency or community organisation; or
- Staff Declaration*

k. has not achieved year 12 or equivalent education

Evidence:
- supporting letter or other evidence from a government agency, medical professional, relevant support agency or community organisation; or
- Staff Declaration*

*Staff Declaration: Only to be used where other evidence is not possible. A **Staff Declaration** is a declaration from an employee of the ACE Provider confirming, based on information provided by the student or from other sources, the student meets the CSD Criteria specified. The employee must be authorised by the ACE Provider to make any Staff Declarations. The ACE Provider must follow any other guidance provided by the Department about Staff Declarations.

Funding Stream	Specific eligibility criteria
CSR	A student is eligible for the CSR Funding Stream if the student: a. does not meet any CSD Criteria; **AND** b. lives or works in a Regional or Remote Location (that is, is any location that is not classified as "Major Cities (RA1)" on the following website: **http://doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/Publishing.nsf/Content/locator**, or as otherwise advised by the Department. **Evidence:** • Proof of address (eg driver's license, utility bill, electoral roll or employment contract)

Funding Stream	Specific eligibility criteria
TSB	A student is eligible for the TSB Funding Stream if the student: a. does not meet any CSD Criteria; **AND** b. is either: • owner of a small business; **OR** • employee of a small business or not-for-profit organisation. **A small business** is an enterprise with: less than 20 full time equivalent **(FTE)** employees; or, less than 200 FTE employees if the enterprise's primary operations is in a Regional or Remote Location (as defined above in CSR). **Evidence:** • if the student is an employee – letter from the employer confirming employment and that the employer meets the definition of a small business or is a not-for-profit • if the student is the owner of a small business – statement from student confirming the business meets the definition of a small business
SLP	A student is eligible for the SLP Funding Stream if the student: • does not meet any CSD Criteria; **AND** • aged under 24 years **Evidence:** • Identity Evidence (see Appendix C) or USI (validity checked with USI Registry)
CSE	A student is eligible for the CSE Funding Stream if the student meets the criteria identified in the approved CSE Application

2. What are Applicable Benefits? Applicable Benefits are the following Commonwealth benefits and allowances:

Age Pension	Austudy
Carer Payment*	Disability Support Pension
Farm Household Allowance	Family Tax Benefit Part A (maximum rate)
Jobseeker Payment	Parenting Payment (Single)
Special Benefit	Veterans' Affairs Pensions
Veterans' Children Education Scheme	Youth Allowance
Widow Allowance	

*The Carer Payment is a specific benefit paid by the Commonwealth; this category does not include the Carer Allowance or Carer Adjustment Pay.