

Inside Enquiries

Practical advice to help you answer your queries

February 2026



20th
edition

Welcome

Welcome to our 20th edition of Inside Enquiries! That's a 5 year milestone. During that time, much has changed in the VET sector, yet your responsibilities as Skills First training providers remain essentially the same. That is, to provide high quality government-subsidised training to students that leads them to jobs that meet the needs of industry and employers, and to other education pathways.

Inside Enquiries is one way we can help support you in your work. It gives clear and practical advice about the common issues we see in your enquiries, especially when it comes to compliance. It keeps you updated with Skills First-relevant news. It promotes the useful resources we have so you can confidently meet your contract obligations. Also, by showcasing our visits to your workplace, it's a way for us to celebrate your fantastic work.

This purpose hasn't changed over the years.

When we survey you each year, you tell us that you find Inside Enquiries to be a very useful resource. You find it relevant and helpful. But, of course, we're always looking at ways we can improve our work.

I welcome any feedback you have about Inside Enquiries. Let us know what's useful, what's not, and what you'd like to see more of in future editions. You can tell us by submitting an enquiry using the category 'suggestions and feedback'.

We are Training Operations and Assurance, a branch of Skills and TAFE within the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions. We work closely with training providers to administer the VET funding contract, provide systems and supports, process claims for payment, and undertake Skills First funding assurance. Our work helps support quality government-subsidised-VET and the expected policy outcomes.

In this edition

We take a closer look at:

- our new video about evidence of participation
- changes to the 2026 contract and guidelines
- our new apprentices and trainees fact sheet
- changes to the internal audit tool
- how to manage mistakes on the evidence of eligibility and student declaration form
- your organisation's SVTS user access
- the 2026 Victorian Training Awards nominations
- cultural safety for First Nations peoples.

Oanh Vindurampulle

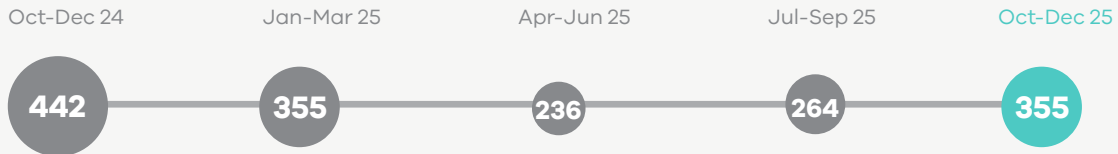
Acting Executive Director

Training Operations and Assurance, Skills and TAFE
Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions



Inside NUMBERS

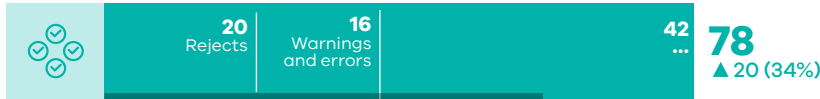
NUMBER OF ENQUIRIES



▲ 91 enquiries (34%)

BREAKDOWN OF ENQUIRIES

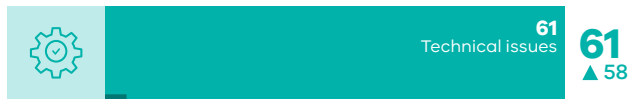
Reporting



2026 contracting



Business systems



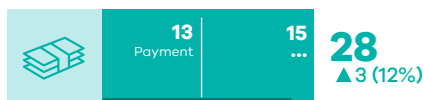
Applications



VET funding contract



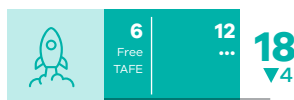
Claims



Training provider changes



Funded initiatives and programs



Audit



KEY

— July to September 2025

... Other

Inside KNOWLEDGE

Changes to the 2026 contract and guidelines

You will have seen by now that the changes to the 2026 contract and guidelines are minimal, and most are designed to reduce the administrative burden on you.

We explain the changes in our guide to content changes and guide to edits, published on 4 December 2025.

The main changes

- You now no longer need to create a separate '**statement of fees**' – unless you want to. You can provide information about fees in other ways, such as on an invoice.
- You must now tell prospective students if their program has a **practical placement**.
- When checking a student's **evidence of eligibility via a gateway service provider**, your transaction record doesn't have to show the name or date of birth.
- You can now check **evidence of permanent residence** via those gateway service providers that connect with the Visa Entitlement Verification Online System (VEVO).
- **Students under 17** don't need an exemption from school if they've completed year 12 or an equivalent qualification.
- TAFE and dual sector contracts have updated requirements for the **Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Support program**.
- We clarified some obligations for delivering **school-based apprenticeships and traineeships**, based on updated Department of Education policies and guidance.



USEFUL RESOURCES

- = [CN 2025-11 – Final 2026 VET funding contracts and guidelines, and associated guides \(published on 4 December 2025\)](#)
- = [2026 VET funding contracts \(version 1.0\) \(published on 4 December 2025\)](#)
- = [Guide to content changes and guides to edits \(published on 4 December 2025\)](#)

Watch our new video about evidence of participation

Last week we released our latest information video in our series about the Skills First program – [Understanding evidence of participation](#).

Evidence of participation, or EOP, is a topic you regularly tell us you'd like to know more about. Understandably so, as EOP is how you support your claims for payment. It's important to us too, because EOP shows your students are genuinely participating in their training.

This new video will help you better understand the EOP rules. We focus on some common examples of what is, and isn't, valid EOP.

Don't forget, we also have a useful [EOP fact sheet](#), which we've now updated with examples of EOP items to complement the video content. And many more fact sheets to support your understanding of the Skills First program.

We welcome your feedback on the videos, or any aspect of our work.

HAVE YOU WATCHED OUR OTHER VIDEOS?

- [How to use the internal audit tool](#)
- [Skills First requirements for apprenticeships](#)

We keep our videos in a [YouTube playlist](#). Bookmark the link for quick access.

You're welcome to embed the videos on your work intranet or share them with your colleagues.

Our new apprentices and trainees fact sheet and other fact sheet updates

We often hear that you'd like to know more about the Skills First requirements for apprenticeships and traineeships. It can be a complex topic as it involves various people and organisations who must work together to support and deliver successful apprenticeship and traineeship training.

So last year, in response to your need, we developed an [information video](#) about apprenticeships and now a new fact sheet – [Skills First apprentices and trainees](#).

This fact sheet outlines in clear and simple terms the Skills First requirements and focuses on the core information you need to know at each step of the training – from eligibility to completion.

Updates to our fact sheets for 2026

Every year, we update our [21 fact sheets and guides](#) about topics under the contract and Skills First.

This year we made small changes to several fact sheets and guides, such as the concessions, evidence of participation and student information and protection fact sheets. Our updates reflect the changes to the 2026 contract and guidelines, and are always made with a view to helping you understand more about a topic.

The updated fact sheets are listed in the appendix to contract notification CN 2026-12, together with an outline of each change.

As always, we encourage you to use these fact sheets and the FAQ function in SVTS as the first step in trying to answer your Skills First questions. Saving you the time of having to send us an enquiry.



USEFUL RESOURCES

- = [Fact sheet: Skills First apprentices and trainees](#)
- = [CN 2025-12 – 2026 fact sheets, templates and guidance \(published on 12 December 2025\)](#)

Small changes to the internal audit tool

We recently published the 2026 internal audit tool. This year we made only minor updates having made more significant improvements to the tool last year. The changes include:

- updates to reflect the 2026 contract
- updates to align the tool with the 2025 Standards for RTOs
- adding 2 new focus areas – pre-training review and enrolment requirements, and data reporting. Our recent audits showed some compliance issues in these areas.

You must conduct an internal audit of your compliance with the contract, but the way in which you do it is up to you.

The internal audit tool is an optional tool, designed using your feedback. You may choose to transfer the content of the internal audit tool into other document formats that best suit your way of working.

If you haven't already, you should begin completing it soon, so it's done by 30 June 2026. You don't need to send us a copy, but we might ask to see it.



USEFUL RESOURCES

- = [2026 Skills First internal audit tool \(published on 10 February 2026\)](#)
- = [CN 2026-03 – 2026 Skills First internal audit tool \(published on 10 February 2026\)](#)
- = [Video – How to use the internal audit tool](#)



How to manage mistakes on the evidence of eligibility and student declaration form

Sometimes a student makes a mistake, or puts wrong information on, their evidence of eligibility and student declaration form. This might be a simple error like, not circling a number, or something that goes to the heart of their eligibility for Skills First funding, like incorrectly stating the number of current program enrolments.

Help students understand the form

You have a responsibility to help students to accurately complete the form and understand their Skills First eligibility. Your advice and guidance will help to avoid unnecessary mistakes, which might affect their eligibility.

In particular, under Skills First training limits, students are generally not eligible for Skills First funding if they:

- do more than 2 programs at a time
- start more than 2 AQF qualifications in a year
- start more than 2 skill sets in a year.

This is because we only want to subsidise students for a training load that is manageable and will more likely lead to a completion.

Accordingly, students must declare their training enrolments in section B1 of the form by circling their answer. This is to capture any training they are doing for the year, at any training provider, including your organisation.

What to do if you find an error

If you discover that a student has made an error on the form, you must:

- make a note of this error on the form
- add your name and date to the note, and any other annotation
- briefly explain how this affects your assessment of the student's eligibility.

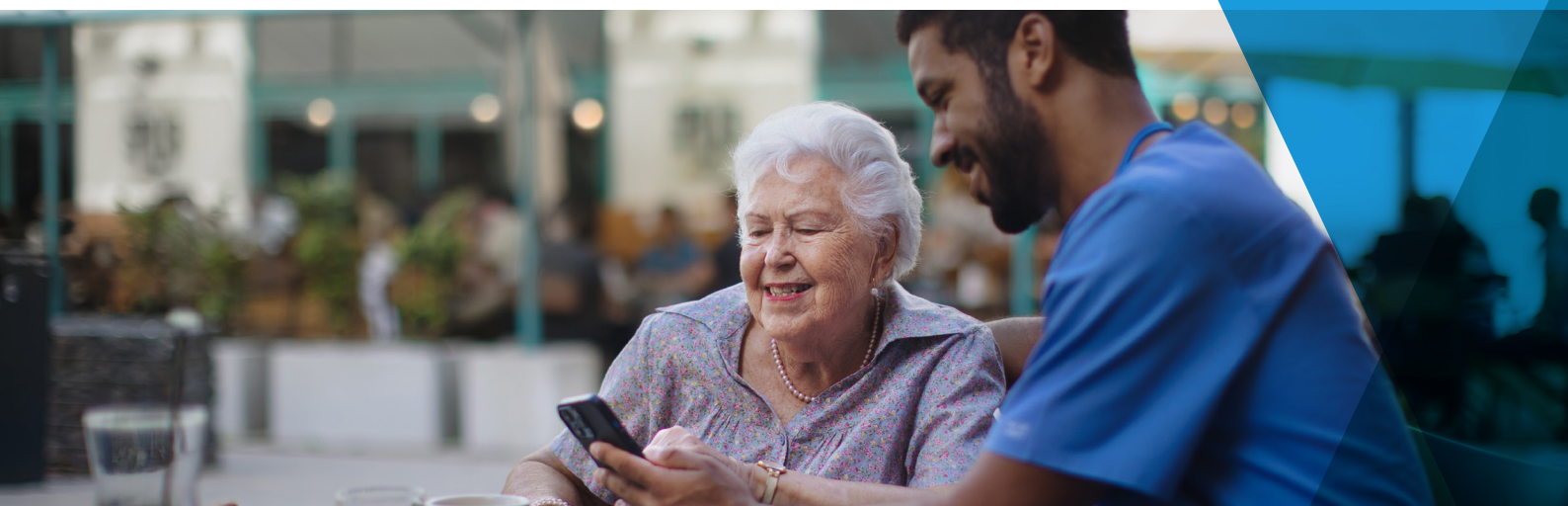
One option is to do this in the 'notes' section of the form.

An example of an error is where the student's answers in section B might indicate they are not eligible for Skills First, but your further discussions with the student provides context that proves they are eligible. You would then note this on the form, using the process described above.



USEFUL RESOURCES

- = [2026 evidence of eligibility and student declaration form \(published on 4 December 2025\)](#)
- = [Fact sheet: Sighting and retaining evidence of eligibility](#)
- = [Fact sheet: Student eligibility](#)
- = [Fact sheet: Recordkeeping requirements](#)



Time to review your organisation's SVTS user access

Your organisation is responsible for managing the SVTS user access for your staff.

Specifically, a person from your organisation is assigned with an 'RTO User Administrator' role. This person manages the SVTS user access for your staff.

Do a user audit twice a year

As a minimum, you should audit your organisation's user access twice a year. This makes sure you have current and appropriate access controls. You should also do one whenever there are staffing or role changes.

Now is the time for your first user audit. This should be a full review of all the staff at your organisation who have access to SVTS.

Why do I need a user audit?

Regular user audits help you confirm that:

- only your current staff and authorised users can access SVTS
- SVTS access levels align with that person's role and responsibilities
- you've removed access for staff who have left your organisation, changed roles, or no longer need SVTS access.

Importantly, SVTS contains sensitive information. So regular user access reviews are a critical part of meeting our security, privacy, and governance obligations.

How to complete the user audit

To complete your user audit, please read the **VicGov CIAM user guide - step 2 - Organisation Administrator Guide 2.0**, found in the [documents section](#) of SVTS (published on 7 October 2024).

You will need to:

- sign in to the VicGov CIAM user manager (page 5 of the guide)
- review your organisation's user list and assigned roles
- remove access for any users who no longer need it by following the 'delete a user' instructions (page 35 of the guide).

If you have any questions or experience issues while reviewing or managing user access, please contact the CIAM support team at svts.support@ecodev.vic.gov.au.



USEFUL RESOURCES

- = [VicGov CIAM user guide – How to log in with multi-factor authentication_v2](#) (published on 12 May 2025)
- = [VicGov CIAM user guide – step 2 – organisation administrator guide 2.0](#) (published on 7 October 2024)
- = [VicGov CIAM user guide – step 1 – activate your VicGov CIAM account](#) (published on 18 June 2024)



Inside NEWS

2026 Victorian Training Awards nominations are now open

Are you a VET superstar? Or know someone who is?

Nominations for the [2026 Victorian Training Awards](#) are now open, and we want to celebrate your success stories.

For 72 years, the awards have recognised and honoured the outstanding achievements of hard-working students, apprentices, trainees, teachers and organisations in the Victorian TAFE and training sector.

Becoming a Victorian Training Awards finalist or winner can open a world of opportunities such as networking, professional development, employment prospects, mentoring and more.

There are 14 different awards categories that showcase the remarkable Victorian VET stories and how skills and training changes people's lives.

Go to [our website](#) to find out more and submit your nominations.

A new resource to help you support cultural safety for First Nations peoples

When cultural safety is embedded in everyday education and employment practices, First Nations peoples are more able to participate, succeed and lead with confidence.

Engaged by the Commonwealth's Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, [Ninti One](#) has created the [RTO Guide: Engaging First Nations communities, staff and students](#). This guide provides practical advice to help you embed cultural safety across your organisation.

Cultural safety is both a teaching and workforce responsibility. In your training delivery, you should be creating an inclusive learning environment where First Nations students feel respected, supported and able to succeed.

You also have a responsibility to support First Nations staff. So they feel culturally safe to grow their careers and take on leadership roles.



Free professional development for Skills First practitioners

In a few weeks, the [VET Development Centre](#) begins its free training sessions for Skills First practitioners.

Its [semester 1 calendar](#) is out now.

The centre offers a broad range of workshops – online and in-person – for staff involved in the design and review of course content and assessments. It's also a great way for you to meet other practitioners, and to share ideas and challenges.

The sessions are funded by the Victorian Government. They run from March to October.

[Register now.](#)

In other news...

Since the last issue of Inside Enquiries, we've published the following information on SVTS:

- CN 2025-10 – Draft 2026 VET funding contracts and guidelines, and approved course lists (published on 12 November 2025)
- 2026 funded programs report (published on 12 November 2025)
- 2026 training needs list (published on 12 November 2025)
- Victorian VET Student Statistical Collection Guidelines – 2026 and summary of changes (published on 17 November 2025)
- 2025 SVTS EOY Reporting Guide (published on 25 November 2025)
- CN 2025-11 – Final 2026 VET funding contracts and guidelines, and associated guides (published on 4 December 2025)
- Guide to contract content changes and guides to edits (published on 4 December 2025)
- Final 2026 standard VET funding contract (version 1.0) (published on 4 December 2025)
- Final 2026 TAFE VET funding contract (version 1.0) (published on 4 December 2025)
- Final 2026 dual sector VET funding contract (version 1.0) (published on 4 December 2025)
- Final 2026 guidelines about eligibility (version 1.0) (published on 4 December 2025)
- Final 2026 guidelines about fees (version 1.0) (published on 4 December 2025)
- Final 2026 guidelines about apprenticeship/ traineeship training delivery (version 1.0) (published on 4 December 2025)
- Final 2026 Skills First quality charter (version 1.0) (published on 4 December 2025)
- 2026 evidence of eligibility and student declaration form (Word version) (published on 4 December 2025)
- CN 2025-12 – 2026 fact sheets, templates and guidance (published on 12 December 2025)
- The various 2026 fact sheets, templates and guides (published on 12 December 2025)
- Guide to data reporting, claims and payments in SVTS (published on 12 December 2025)
- CN 2026-01 – 2026 SVTS payment processing dates (published on 20 January 2026)
- VET Development Centre calendar – 2026 semester 1 (published on 9 February 2026)
- CN 2026-02 – Subcontracting and brokering (published on 10 February 2026)
- 2026 reporting brokering services form (published on 10 February 2026)
- CN 2026-03 – 2026 Skills First internal audit tool (published on 10 February 2026)
- 2026 Skills First internal audit tool (published on 10 February 2026)
- Fact sheet: evidence of participation (published on 17 February 2026)
- Video – Understanding evidence of participation (published on 17 February 2026)

Regularly log in to SVTS to keep up to date with what's happening in the Skills First program.