

# Adult Community Education Program 2022-25 Guidelines

## 1. Introduction

The South Australian Government invests in the state's vocational education and training (VET) system to skill South Australia's workforce for today and the future.

VET plays a critical role in equipping South Australians with the skills, qualifications and technical expertise required by industry to drive economic participation and productivity in a modern economy.

The Adult Community Education program (ACE) supports pre-entry, community-based pathways for people to build and improve their foundation skills to successfully transition to VET courses, apprenticeships, traineeships, higher education, and employment.

*Examples:*

- Delivering a project that supports people wanting to participate in learning and further training but who face social and economic barriers to participation. Courses include maths for work, computer literacy and English language.
- Pre-employment pathway courses providing opportunities for participants facing barriers to employment and long-term unemployment.

The Department for Education (Skills SA) invites organisations to develop projects targeting:

- Level 1 non-accredited foundation skills training  
OR
- Level 2 blended non-accredited and accredited foundation skills with a vocational focus.

## 2. Project intent

ACE projects support engagement and ongoing connection through innovative, community-based delivery approaches, which build learner pathways that support participants to seamlessly transition from ACE to VET.

This investment is designed to capitalise on the foundation skills delivery expertise within ACE. It will strategically position the sector to develop new and existing pathways that clearly and measurably respond to participant needs and move them forward on their learning journey. These projects will enhance collaboration between community education providers, the VET training providers and employers.

Successful projects will deliver responsive training to specific cohorts in a community setting. Projects that integrate community-based training with sustainable delivery approaches with clear learner pathways, that are scalable and provide support services for learners, will be highly regarded.

Level 1 and Level 2 projects will be built around foundation skills development and vocationally focused curriculum and may include:

- identified accredited units of competency from the Foundation Skills (FSK) Training Package (Attachment A)
- fit for purpose units of competency that can be delivered to supplement learner preparedness - including study skills, preparing for work, building resilience, and communication
- combinations of accredited and non-accredited micro-credentials (the latter ideally mapped to identified accredited learning outcomes).

### Level 1 projects

Delivered in a community setting, Level 1 projects target:

- non-accredited skills development built from the existing list of FSK Training Package units as a framework for activities that improve language, literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy capabilities (Attachment A)
- jobseekers to acquire the skills and build resilience needed to transition to VET or employment
- existing workers seeking to improve their foundation skills in a community-based setting (these projects in particular will be highly regarded).

### Level 2 projects

Must demonstrate partnerships between community-based organisations and other partners including Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), education providers, employers, industry sector organisations or peak industry partners to deliver projects targeting:

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- foundation skills activity based around a vocational pathway (i.e., the outcome is a student enrolment in VET or employment)
- combined accredited and non-accredited training activity
- accredited activity delivered by an RTO that includes units from vocational courses relevant to the project<sup>1</sup>
- connections to opportunities in Training Priority Project (TPP) streams or other Skills SA initiatives where possible
- employer-driven projects for existing workers to support productivity improvements through workplace literacy and numeracy.

Applicants can apply for both Level 1 and Level 2 projects. Multiple submissions across each level will be considered. Skills SA will also consider applications from consortia that consolidate local partnership opportunities and increase opportunities for access and outcomes for students.

Skills SA will also initiate targeted ACE projects where these support partnerships and pathways that facilitate increased access to community-based education and student outcomes, particularly in regional South Australia.

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<sup>1</sup> Accredited units must be delivered by an RTO with applicable courses on scope.



## 3. General information

### 3.1 Project design

It is important that projects are appropriate for learners and will deliver completion and transition outcomes.

Project design criteria that are considered in assessment test that the project:

- supports one or more of the targeted groups
- evidences the applicant's capacity, capability, knowledge, and skills, to deliver progressive and flexible community-based learning and training to targeted and diverse groups of learners
- includes a range of partnerships to deliver the project, assist participant referral processes and maintain support services throughout the project
- demonstrates that project delivery methods and settings are suited to the needs of the targeted learners
- incorporates proven successful strategies to maintain the target group's participation in training and transition to VET, further learning, or employment
- builds connections with employers and industry to assist participants to navigate the work environment and, where relevant, practice new skills through work visits or simulated environments, work experience, and assists to plan their transition to further study or employment.

### 3.2 Project components

Projects must include:

- a training schedule outlined in the budget template that identifies the non-accredited and accredited training from the FSK Training Package
- an ACE Upfront Assessment of Need (UAN) assessment for all learners that must be undertaken prior to commencement and at completion of any training
- delivery of accredited training **by an RTO with the course on scope in partnership with the community-based organisation** (Level 2 projects only)
- individually customised student-centred transition plans based on a 'warm' referral principle for learners to transition to further training and employment
- industry visits, employer engagement or student work placement where appropriate.

### 3.3 Industry exposure

Industry exposure improves workplace readiness and strengthens the connection between vocational learning and employment. It also provides participants with an understanding of the work environment and an opportunity to apply their learning in a real work context.

Where relevant, projects may include opportunities for work placement, work experience or industry visits that form a key element of contextualised delivery. Where this is not possible, opportunities for exposure to employer expectations and workplace culture such as through workplace site visits or employer led workshops, should be factored into project design.

### 3.4 Training scope

Skills SA will consider support for any foundation skills-based training in a community education setting, provided the course fits within the project's objectives and demonstrated needs of the participants and where such support will not disrupt a healthy fee-for-service market.

Community-based organisations are required to partner with a Skills SA approved RTO to deliver accredited training. In cases where a project is targeting more than one vocational area, organisations may need to engage multiple approved RTOs to deliver accredited training, as a single RTO may not have the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) scope to deliver specific vocationally focused projects, for example, construction and community services require specialised training delivery expertise.

### 3.5 Training and enrolment

Training must be fully delivered within the contractual timeframe for the allocated training places. Commencement of training must occur after execution of the Skills SA Funded Activity Agreement (FAA) for the approved project and before the no new student enrolment date. The no new enrolment date is 3 weeks prior to the last training completion date, or 26 May in the year of completion. All projects must be completed, resulted and reporting completed by 30 June 2025 where projects are planned to be delivered over multiple years; otherwise by 30 June in the year of funding.

For projects that continue across multiple years, a budget and training schedule must be provided for the first year and updated prior to the start of each year to reflect the learnings from the previous year. For example, a project that is delivered in 2022-23 and 2023-24 must include a budget and training schedule for 2022-23, and prior to 2023-24 commencing, the budget template and training schedule must be updated to reflect the learnings from 2022-23 and provided to Skills SA. This update is required for funding to be released each year, and will also be reflected in the agreed project milestones.

### 3.6 Upfront Assessment of Need

The UAN applies to all ACE projects. Participants will be required to complete the UAN to demonstrate suitability for ACE courses, including any pre-requisites, and identify additional supports best suited to ensure a successful training outcome.

Community-based organisations and participating RTOs cannot subcontract their enrolment obligations, including the UAN, to a third party. Community-based organisations and RTOs must be compliant with this contractual obligation to be eligible to apply for a project.

Further information about the UAN is available on the South Australian Skills Gateway <https://providers.skills.sa.gov.au/Deliver/Upfront-Assessment-of-Need>

### 3.7 Needs of target groups

Projects should consider 'fit-for-purpose' strategies for a specific target group, that is, existing workers or learners below ACSF level 1<sup>2</sup>, and the needs and objectives of individual learners.

All participants must undertake the UAN by using the Basic Skills Indicator (BSI) that has been specifically designed for the ACE sector. The BSI is an online tool with questions to understand a student's reading and numeracy skill level. This is unique to the ACE sector and must be undertaken at commencement and completion of training, so a student's progress is understood and demonstrable.

The UAN will help identify appropriate supports to assist participants successfully complete projects and transition to further education, training, and employment. Successful applicants will be required to provide evidence of the suitability of the delivery strategies to the target group and report on outcomes during the project.

ACE projects are not supported by Skills SA Learner Support Services. However, participants with complex needs are eligible to access mentoring support through their community-based provider. Mentoring through community-based providers supports participants experiencing living, learning and transition issues that impact on retention, completion and the transition to further training or employment.

Projects that target participation from complementary activity such as community-based initiatives supported by the Department of Human Services that support the transition of individuals to community-centred learning projects will be highly regarded.

### 3.8 Project partnerships

Community-based organisations will be expected to demonstrate partnerships with key organisations that support promotion to, and recruitment of targeted learners, and provide appropriate service supports during training.

Partnerships may be demonstrated through:

- referral of people living with disability who are not eligible to access support services through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) from relevant agencies

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<sup>2</sup> ACSF – Australian Core Skills Framework level 1.

- referrals for foundation skills support for people not eligible for Australian Government support
- referrals from RTOs for eligible participants not yet ready for VET
- partnering with employers, industry sectors or supply chains to support workforces facing recognised literacy and numeracy challenges
- flexible delivery options (for example, co-locating training with other community-centred services and education providers)
- dedicated and appropriately skilled staff to support and meet learner needs
- adopting a learner-centred, responsive, and flexible approach to meeting the needs of individuals and their communities
- building relationships with employers to help participants understand the world of work and where possible, provide work experience and industry visits
- mentoring or targeted group support to promote skill cluster and unit of competency completion
- submitting consortium applications that increase access and outcomes, especially in regional South Australia.

### 3.9 Project activities

Project activity funding will be based on the design and duration of the project and may include exposure to a range of delivery sites, specialised supports that assist participants to remain in training and successfully transition to further learning, and employment opportunities. This is in addition to funding for the delivery of non-accredited and accredited training.

Skills SA will consider the cost effectiveness, value for money and community-based delivery for all projects. Where a learner is undertaking a cluster of units or non-accredited training the cost should not be more than an accredited course nor take as long to complete. Flexibility of projects that meet student needs will be highly regarded.

Project activity funds are calculated separately to training delivery funds. Funding for the delivery of training is based on the non-accredited and accredited training to be delivered as outlined in the application.

Project activity funding can be sought for:

- implementing the UAN for community education
- developing student-centred transition plans
- coordinating activities to attract, select, retain, and support project participants
- coordinating and delivering project elements (excluding the delivery of training identified in the project)
- liaising with participants, employers, industry, and other project partners
- coordinating and supporting industry visits and information sessions, and preparing participants for work opportunities and selecting vocational pathways
- working with employers to engage and upskill existing workers
- additional goods such as personal protective equipment for participants



- workplace mentoring to support retention of participants
- provision of student support services
- travel related expenses for learners to access face to face services out of the workplace or across training sites.

### 3.10 Project outcomes

Outcomes will be negotiated by Skills SA on a project-by-project basis and must be reported as part of the final report.

The outcomes for ACE projects may include:

- demonstrated improvement in participant foundation skills
- transition from a Level 1 to a Level 2 project
- enrolment in a VET course
- a VET course completion
- employment or self-employment
- transition to higher education
- transition to other project initiatives.

Achievement of outcomes may impact on an applicant's performance history for subsequent applications – refer to *Assessment process and criteria*.

### 3.11 What can't be funded

The following cannot be funded through the ACE program:

- project activity undertaken before a contract is executed and/or retrospective funding for project activity undertaken before the contract is executed
- student course fee contributions
- activities that duplicate existing state or Australian Government services or supports and/or are already funded or more appropriately funded through another state or Australian Government initiative
- community education led projects that do not partner with RTOs to deliver accredited training
- preparation of project applications
- purchasing assets/capital equipment, e.g., IT equipment, systems or applications, buildings, or vehicles
- wage subsidies for participants
- school enrolled students.

Skills SA reserves the right to make exemptions to the above in the context of approved priorities relating to strategic training and skills objectives.



## 3.12 Applicant eligibility

ACE program projects are for non-government RTOs, education providers<sup>3</sup> and community-based organisations contracted by Skills SA to deliver training under a FAA.

To be eligible to apply for a project, a proponent must:

- be a community-based organisation or training provider with training as the primary focus of their business (these organisations will be awarded an FAA if their application is successful) OR
  - be a non-government RTO with an FAA
- AND**
- have a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
  - be compliant with the delivery and reporting of the ACE UAN process
  - ensure the course to be delivered is on the RTO's ASQA scope.

An education or community-based provider can apply for an ACE project and receive funding for project management and short form training. Where the project incorporates accredited training, providers must partner with an RTO for delivery of accredited training.

Proponents can partner with TAFE SA for the delivery of accredited training. These activities will be funded through TAFE SA's existing funding arrangements. These partnerships, including the scope of project delivery must be endorsed by the authorised TAFE SA delegate prior to applying to Skills SA.

**Submissions from consortia will be well regarded** and be required to provide evidence of the applicant and partner commitment to deliver combined elements of the project.

Skills SA reserves the right to make exemptions to the above in the context of approved priorities relating to strategic training and skills objectives.

## 3.13 Participant eligibility

ACE projects must assist South Australians that are:

- aged 17 years or over and not enrolled in school, OR
- early school leavers with or without non-school qualifications<sup>4</sup>, OR
- an Australian resident, or if not an Australian resident, have an eligible visa (please visit <https://www.skills.sa.gov.au/courses-careers/eligibility-explained>), OR
- participants transitioning from other South Australian Government funded initiatives, OR
- existing employees needing to upskill their foundation skills, OR

<sup>3</sup> An education provider is an organisation that provides education as a main or secondary function. It can be a public or private education institution including an RTO approved by ASQA, a higher education provider, or a community organisation or a registered private business that delivers training.

<sup>4</sup> Early school leavers are those who leave secondary school without finishing year 12. Non-school qualifications are any qualifications outside of high school up to and including Certificate III level qualifications.

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- identifying as Aboriginal, young people under 25 years, mature age (45 years and over), from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, people with disability, women returning to work or women seeking to enter non-traditional occupations.

Unless stated otherwise, access to accredited training funding through the Skills SA Subsidised Training List (STL) will be determined by the same eligibility and entitlement rules that apply under the STL – see <https://www.skills.sa.gov.au/courses-careers/eligibility-explained> . Access to exemptions under special circumstance provisions will also apply.



## 4. Assessment process and criteria

Applications will be assessed as they are submitted. Skills SA aims to ensure that applicants will be notified of assessment outcomes within four weeks of submission. This is a guide only and subject to change if further information is required from to support assessment.

The key areas of assessment criteria are:

- applicant eligibility
- applicant past performance
- project design
- value for money.

Skills SA co-design support or advice and submission of an application do not guarantee project funding.

### 4.1 Applicant past performance

Past performance will be considered where an applicant has received funding from Skills SA (including the Department for Innovation and Skills) over the past three financial years. It encompasses contract compliance and achievement of contracted outcomes. For applicants with no performance history, Skills SA will take a risk management approach, which may involve supporting a smaller scale project in the first instance.

### 4.2 Project design

This criterion assesses the design of the project in meeting the project objectives. Criteria that will be considered when assessing project design include:

- Does the training and support strategies form a framework for activities that improve language, literacy, numeracy or digital literacy capabilities?
- Are the delivery methods and settings suited to the needs of the participants?
- Does the project include strategies to maintain participation, complete the project and build the resilience needed to improve their foundation skills and transition along their learning journey?

Factors such as the suitability of the training to the aims of the project and identified needs of the participants are also considered.

### 4.3 Value for money

Assessment will consider the value for money of each application including that the project is robust, contains realistic solutions, is time sensitive, and meets the needs of students, industry, regions or the training and skills market. Cost comparisons with other available funding and similar funded projects are used to assess this criterion. Factors such as public value and the existence of a healthy fee for service market are also considered.

## 5. Successful applications

### 5.1 Funding agreement and deliverables

Successful applicants will be offered a new FAA outlining the details of the project.

Applicants will grant a broad license to Skills SA to use project outcomes and deliverables to share learnings, procure new delivery models based on review of successful projects, and promulgate good practice. This will be negotiated during contracting and specified accordingly.

It is expected that successful applicants will share their project results or findings broadly by developing case studies or other materials accessible to the ACE and VET sector. If an applicant engages a third party, it is applicant's responsibility to ensure that the third party understands how the project outcomes and deliverables can be used by Skills SA.

### 5.2 Payments

The new FAA will outline the annual payment structure and agreed project milestones for each year of the FAA. Payment for project activities will be made against agreed key milestones, with payment percentage being negotiated during contract development.

Payment for accredited training is paid at the unit of competency level in line with South Australian Vocational Education and Training Fee Framework<sup>5</sup> published by Skills SA. Commencement of project activity must occur within the contractual timeframe.

As part of its ongoing budget management strategy, Skills SA will liaise with successful applicants regularly and monitor project activity. Projects of significant value and/or impact should expect to have Skills SA representation in project governance. Where project activities do not meet milestones and funding is not paid, to maximise training investment opportunities, Skills SA reserves the right to redistribute project funds not paid after the specified project milestone dates.

### 5.3 Reporting

Reporting is a key requirement of funding for all projects and includes providing any project training needs data to Skills SA. Successful proponents will be required to report annually to Skills SA on participant information and against milestones and timeframes that will be agreed during project approval stage.

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<sup>5</sup> The DE subsidy calculator allows you to estimate the subsidy for accredited training units of competency is accessible via the course search function at <https://providers.skills.sa.gov.au/Get-Started/Subsidised-Training-List>.

## 6. How to apply

Eligible applicants can apply at <https://providers.skills.sa.gov.au/Apply/Accredited-training/Adult-Community-Education-Program-project>

Applicants are welcome to discuss their proposal with Skills SA prior to applying by contacting the Skills SA Infoline on **1800 673 097**.

Applications will be open from 1 August 2022 and are subject to a contestable assessment process and available budget over each funding year for the ACE program over 2022-25.

Funding can be sought for varying project durations ranging from a 6-month project up to and including a tri-annual project that is delivered over three years. All projects must be completed, resulted and reporting completed by 30 June 2025.

## Further Assistance

Call the Skills SA Infoline on 1800 673 097

Email: [skills@sa.gov.au](mailto:skills@sa.gov.au)

Visit: [www.providers.skills.sa.gov.au](http://www.providers.skills.sa.gov.au)

[Adult Community Education Program project \(skills.sa.gov.au\)](https://providers.skills.sa.gov.au/Apply/Accredited-training/Adult-Community-Education-Program-project)

[Foundation Skills Projects Toolkit](#)

# ATTACHMENT A

## Australian Core Skills Framework: foundation skills training units

The [Australian Core Skills Framework](#) provides guidance to trainers and tutors and assessors in effective assessment and delivery for learners operating at ACSF levels 1-5, and for those beginning their learning below ACSF Level 1, the ACSF Pre-Level 1 supplement provides a summary set of information describing each skill.

The Foundation Skills Training Package (FSK) includes units of competency that can support learners develop the learning, reading writing, oral communication, and numeracy skills, and the expected level of performance. It is understood that achievement of an FSK unit does not indicate achievement of an entire ACSF level.

| <b><u>Australian Core Skills Framework Pre-Level 1</u></b>                          |
|---|
| FSK Foundation Skills Training Package 2019   |
| FSKLRG001 - Prepare to participate in a learning environment                        |
| FSKNUM001 - Use beginning whole number skills up to 100 for work                    |
| FSKNUM002 - Use beginning skills related to time and 2D shapes for work             |
| FSKOCM001 - Participate in highly familiar spoken exchanges                         |
| FSKRDG001 - Recognise extremely short and simple workplace signs and symbols        |
| FSKWTG001 - Complete personal details on extremely simple and short workplace forms |

| <b>Australian Core Skills Framework Level 1</b>                                   |
|---|
| FSK Foundation Skills TP 2020   |
| FSKDIG001 - Use digital technology for short and basic workplace tasks            |
| FSKLRG002 - Identify strategies to respond to short and simple workplace problems |
| FSKLRG003 - Use short and simple strategies for career planning                   |
| FSKLRG004 - Use short and simple strategies for work-related learning             |
| FSKNUM003 - Use whole numbers and halves for work                                 |
| FSKNUM004 - Use basic and familiar metric measurements for work                   |
| FSKNUM005 - Use familiar 2D shapes for work                                       |

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| FSKNUM006 - Use simple and highly familiar spatial information for work      |
| SKNUM007 - Use simple data for work  |
| FSKOCM002 - Engage in short and simple spoken exchanges at work              |
| FSKRDG002 - Read and respond to short and simple workplace signs and symbols |
| FSKRDG004 - Read and respond to short and simple workplace information       |
| FSKWTG002 - Write short and simple workplace formatted texts                 |
| FSKWTG003 - Write short and simple workplace information                     |
| FSKOCM002 - Engage in short and simple spoken exchanges at work              |

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| <b>Australian Core Skills Framework Level 2</b>  |
| FSK Foundation Skills TP 2020  |
| FSKRDG005 - Read and respond to simple and familiar workplace procedures               |
| FSKRDG006 - Read and respond to simple informal workplace texts                        |
| FSKRDG007 - Read and respond to simple workplace information                           |
| FSKDIG002 - Use digital technology for routine and simple workplace tasks              |
| FSKLRG005 - Use strategies to plan simple workplace tasks                              |
| FSKLRG006 - Participate in work placement  |
| FSKLRG007 - Use strategies to identify job opportunities                               |
| FSKLRG008 - Use simple strategies for work-related learning                            |
| FSKNUM008 - Use whole numbers and simple fractions, decimals, and percentages for work |
| FSKNUM009 - Use familiar and simple metric measurements for work                       |
| FSKNUM010 - Use common shapes for work   |
| FSKNUM011 - Use familiar and simple spatial information for work                       |
| FSKNUM012 - Use familiar and simple data for work                                      |
| FSKNUM013 - Construct simple tables and graphs for work                                |
| FSKOCM003 - Participate in familiar spoken interactions at work                        |
| FSKWTG006 - Write simple workplace information   |
| FSKWTG005 - Write simple workplace formatted texts                                     |
| <b>Total: 38 units</b>   |

