

How to consider literacy and numeracy skills

This fact sheet provides guidance on how to consider literacy and numeracy skills as part of a Skills First pre-training review.

Pre-training review purpose

You must undertake a pre-training review to ensure that Skills First students are enrolled in training that is suitable and appropriate for them.

The pre-training review helps you to understand the student's objectives for training and help them select a program that:

- meets their needs
- links to job or further study opportunities
- minimises duplication of existing competencies.

Considering literacy and numeracy skills is just one element of a holistic pre-training review, but it's an important one. It helps to decide the right level of study for a student, and whether they need any additional support.

Your pre-training review business process

We don't prescribe how you should consider each element of the pre-training review. But you must have a clear and documented business process that shows how you use the pre-training review to enrol students in suitable and appropriate training. For each student, you must document why you decided the training is suitable.

Things to factor into your business process

You should consider:

- whether your training and assessment strategies specify literacy and numeracy skill levels or entry requirements (including any specified in training packages)
- how you flag any additional support the student needs and communicate it to teachers (for example, in an individual support plan or training plan).

Sample pre-training review template

We provide an optional template that you can use to document your pre-training review decisions. This is published in the documents section of SVTS.

Considering literacy and numeracy

You can use your professional expertise to decide the best way to consider a student's literacy and numeracy skills.

We don't mandate any tool or process

Use of the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) is considered best practice. It is a robust, uniform and valid way to identify literacy and numeracy skills.

However, we **don't** prescribe a particular assessment, tool or process to assess literacy and numeracy as part of the pre-training review.

We prefer you to be free to invest in literacy and numeracy assessment tools that suit your students, your context and your business process. For example:

- tools that are contextualised for your industry
- Commonwealth Government-approved tools if you administer VET Student Loans.

Methods you could use

There is a range of methods for considering literacy and numeracy skills including:

- adopting an established, validated assessment tool
- modifying an established tool
- developing your own tool or process.

Your own process might consider:

- results of any previous literacy and numeracy assessments you've done with the student
- secondary school results
- qualifications you've previously issued to the student.

Whichever method you use to consider literacy and numeracy skills, it is important that it's flexible enough to cater for different student cohorts and circumstances.

A formal assessment

Using a formal assessment or 'test' can be administratively efficient and provide consistent and comparable results. But for some students, such as disengaged learners or Aboriginal Victorians, formal tests or exam-like assessments may not be the most appropriate option.

If so, there are other indicators of literacy and numeracy you could use such as:

- how easily they navigate and complete a written application
- a discussion to gauge their speaking and listening skills
- the result of an informal assessment activity
- samples of recent written work.

Year 12 results

From 2022, a senior secondary student statement of results will show whether minimum standards for literacy and numeracy have been achieved through the General Achievement Test (GAT).

Year 12 results may provide enough information for some students, for others it may not, depending on the program they're enrolling in.

For example, a student who has studied only humanities subjects and now wants to enrol in the Certificate III in Surveying and Spatial Information Services may benefit from an additional assessment of numeracy skills.

Information from a past enrolment

If you've already considered a student's literacy and numeracy skills for a previous enrolment and they now want to enrol in a new program, you'll need to do a pre-training review for the new enrolment.

You can use the initial results and assessment outcomes but carefully consider these results in the context of the proposed new program.

Online assessments

Online assessments can be efficient and convenient for both you and your students and provide consistent results.

However, as with other methods, you need to think about how you confirm or reconcile those results with other information gathered during the pre-training review. For example, conversations with the student.

You also need to think about how to ensure the student completed the test themselves, without help.

Support for students

If your pre-training review finds that accredited training is not suitable for the student, you should consider whether a pathway program would be a good first step. This could include pre-accredited training in a supported environment.

If the training is suitable, but the student will need support, you should provide educational support options, in line with regulatory standards. For example, you might consider modifying training materials or methods, or offering additional foundation skills subjects.

Literacy and Numeracy Support Program at TAFE

This is an initiative that enables TAFEs and dual sector universities to package up to 100 hours of literacy and numeracy support subjects for Skills First students who need help with basic foundation skills to successfully complete vocational qualifications.

TAFEs and dual sector universities must not charge tuition fees for subjects delivered under this initiative – it's treated as a Free TAFE short course.

The literacy and numeracy support implementation guide provides more information, including:

- the list of subjects available
- which qualifications you must have on your scope of registration.

You don't need to do a further pre-training review to justify enrolling the student in the literacy and numeracy support program subjects.

Literacy and numeracy support is not treated like a foundation skills program, so even if a student has a qualification higher than a Certificate IV, they're still eligible.

Literacy and numeracy support subjects **don't** count as a skill set towards the student's '2 in a year' or '2 at a time' limit on Skills First training.



Further information

- Submit an [SVTS](#) enquiry
- Skills First pre-training review template published in the documents section of [SVTS](#)
- The [Learn Local website](#) has useful information about referral paths to pre-accredited training.