

# ALA response to Department of Education, Skills and Employment Discussion Paper – Delivery of the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program 2023

## Addressing barriers to entry and retention

- 1. What changes could be made to the SEE program to help job seekers understand its benefits and increase their willingness to participate in the program?**
  - Curriculum must align with an individual's motivations, where possible.
  - Flexibility is required around the minimum weekly hours. For example, the minimum of 10 hours does not fit with the 'shorter/sharper' learning experience students are looking for or work in with the students other commitments.
  - Stronger collaboration between DESE, referring agencies, SEE providers and employers in support of engagement and participation.
  - Recognise and respond to the different needs between urban, regional and rural job seekers.
- 2. What additional support could be provided to job seekers with barriers to participation to help them enter and stay in the SEE program?**
  - Resourced specialists and 'wraparound' support are required for adults with very low levels of literacy and numeracy, and/or complex barriers to participation including access to affordable childcare, allied health services, career development advisors etc.
  - Coordinated support for direct outreach to adults with low literacy and numeracy through workplaces.
  - Support for direct outreach by meeting potential participants in their communities/environments particularly CALD, Indigenous and people with disabilities.

## Flexible training

- 3. Should the SEE program include the limited use of non-accredited training to support the engagement of job seekers?**

Yes

**If so, what criteria could be used, including to provide quality assurance?**

The SEE program should include more opportunities for the use of non-accredited training to support the engagement of job seekers

- Embedding literacy in vocational programs has pedagogical value, however, LLN experts also recognise that learners with very low-level skills benefit from highly supported, non-accredited adult education programs without a vocational context which may provide

- a 'soft entry' or an informal pathway to the SEE Program.
- Policy and funding support are needed for a broader approach that includes non-accredited, non-vocationally orientated LLN programs that complement and offer pathways.
- [The Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning \(LSAL\) \(Reder, 2012\)](https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/17308287/the-longitudinal-study-of-adult-learning-challenging-assumptions) identified that adult literacy programs are unlikely to achieve positive outcomes unless they also create changes in their participants' literacy and numeracy practices over time. Non-formal adult education programs can support people to 'learn how to learn'; to increase their literacy and numeracy practice and promote informal learning activities such as self-study, reading at home, understanding the numeracy in cooking, etc.
- Non-accredited programs could be designed and evaluated in terms of the increased engagement they produce in literacy and numeracy practices.
- Formal recognition of the role of Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector working in non-accredited training and opportunities to strengthen links.

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/17308287/the-longitudinal-study-of-adult-learning-challenging-assumptions>

## LLND embedded vocational training

### 4. What are some of the challenges that arise when LLND delivery is embedded in vocational training?

- VET trainers have only done minimal hours training on LLN as part of their Certificate IV TAE (prerequisite for VET) and may underestimate the level of support required.
- Adult and community based education providers have significant foundation skills expertise with restricted capacity to incorporate vocational skills development due to limited resources.
- Securing appropriate workplaces and employers for work placements.
- Embedding LLND delivery in vocational training requires adequate resourcing and assumes that educators have very detailed knowledge of both the ACSF and vocational training product.

### 5. What additional support is needed to deliver LLND embedded in vocational training to job seekers?

- Countries with the highest levels of adult literacy and numeracy recognise that high level professional skills and qualifications are required by teachers to deliver formal adult and vocational education qualifications. Australia must become one of these countries.
- High quality professional development in LLND that builds the capacity of the workforce and addresses the national skills shortage of qualified adult LLND educators is essential.

### 6. Should the SEE program prescribe LLND specific courses for clients with low levels of LLND?

Yes

#### What prescriptions should be required?

Refer Q. 3 regarding the role of non-accredited adult education for adults with very low levels of literacy and numeracy.

## Modes of delivery

- 7. Should distance learning continue in its current form or should all providers be given the opportunity to deliver distance learning? If so, how can this be managed to ensure face to face delivery is the primary delivery mode?**

No, not one single national provider. Some providers already have their own successful forms of distance learning to suit different learner needs.

- ~~8. What else should the department consider to ensure client needs are the driver of delivery modes offered by the SEE program?~~

9. What else should the department consider to ensure distance learning meets the needs of clients who require this mode of delivery?

Need to consider how to enable learner access to infrastructure, software, internet and digital skills necessary to undertake distance learning.

## Innovative projects

- 10. What future opportunities are there for using project-based funding to improve participation and engagement in the SEE program?**

The quality of adult education and LLND instruction is a critical factor for improving learner outcomes. ALA has been offering professional development to adult educators for many years. We are currently exploring the idea of an online professional learning centre, which would incorporate a learning management system complemented by live mentoring events, that will improve and strengthen adult educator's LLND knowledge, skills and abilities.

As part of this process, working with the Australian Council for Adult Literacy, ALA has developed a project scope for Building Adult LLND Workforce Capabilities.

If resourced appropriately, this project will deliver high quality professional development that addresses the national skills shortage of qualified adult LLND educators; builds the capacity of the workforce; both professionals and volunteers and offers pathways into accredited LLND training.

This project will also integrate an online repository of peer-reviewed and publicly available curated LLND teaching resources that will support adult educators to meet the diverse needs of adult literacy learners across Australia.

## Appropriately qualified and skilled workforce

- 11. Does the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (or equivalent) appropriately equip teachers to deliver "best practice" training to SEE clients? If yes, why? If not, why not?**

No

- Australia does not have enough skilled practitioners to meet growing LLND needs. In a largely casualised workforce, there is a general lack of enthusiasm to undertake qualifications, without the assurance of full-time employment.

- Adults with low levels of literacy and numeracy need to be ‘taught by people with the appropriate skills’ (Perkins, 2009). However, the full extent of the adult LLND workforce is not completely visible and often pathways into the profession are not consciously made. There are also limited options to pursue higher qualifications in this area.
- The Certificate IV does not cover the broad spectrum of skills required to effectively deliver LLND skills to SEE clients and focuses on vocational or workplace-based training and ASQA compliance. Practitioners would benefit from ongoing professional development opportunities to keep skills current and in line with best practice (see answer to Q10).

**12. Should the SEE program mandate minimum qualifications for teachers to better support the clients? If yes, what should they be? If not, why not?**

Yes

- Qualifications for LLND teachers could be in line with the EAL/CSWE curriculum requirements.

**13. Noting that the SEE program does not directly employ teachers, how else can the SEE program provide reasonable support for teachers?**

- What is needed is ‘access to initial training programs and ongoing professional development, incorporating the appropriate theoretical and practical knowledge and skills’ (Perkins, 2006). Both educators and assessors should have access to professional development to support best practice delivery of the SEE program.
- Other support may include facilitating the sharing of resources and enabling peer networking.

## Payment model

~~14. What should the department consider in reviewing the SEE payment model?~~

~~15. What costs are faced by SEE providers which need to be accounted for in the payment model?~~

**16. If the department were to adopt a model based on payments on achievement of milestones would this impact the business of delivering SEE? If yes, how? If no, why not?**

Yes

**If yes, how? If no, why not?**

The payment model should account for the different SEE cohorts. For example, some SEE students face difficult life circumstances (family breakdown, domestic violence, at risk of homelessness etc.) which can impact on them meeting the milestones. Providers should not be penalised for things outside of their control when they have commenced the program with the learner in good faith that it would be completed.

**17. How do you think the application of loadings could support better engagement of disadvantaged cohorts?**

- Loading for students with very low-levels to allow for significantly smaller class sizes
- Funding of bilingual support staff, education support staff and counsellors to learners at-risk of disengagement from the program
- Supporting educators to deliver digital literacy training.
- Rural and regional locations should have a smaller commencement size.

**Provider performance framework**

~~18. Are the proposed KPIs outlined in the table above appropriate? If yes, why? If no, why not?~~

**Program outcomes**

~~19. How often should a client's LLND progress in the SEE program be assessed?~~

~~20. What other assessment strategies could reduce over assessment while still meeting regulatory and program requirements?~~

~~21. What other factors should be considered to measure service delivery effectiveness to achieve the SEE program's outcomes?~~

**Quality Assurance**

**Ensuring quality LLND delivery Professional Development Resource development**

**22. What do you think could be improved or prioritised within the current quality assurance provider role?**

- Priority focus on good practice - quality assurance of teaching through tailored professional development, with access to good resources, planning, teaching strategies and a community(ies) of practice.
- Creation of a national resource and assessment task bank for SEE
- Consider reviewing the Guidelines for best practice design and delivery in consultation with providers to ensure the complexities of program delivery are responsive and the volume of learning components addressed.

~~23. How can the quality assurance process be streamlined for SEE providers while providing similar or better levels of assurance?~~

**24. How should the quality of training be evaluated / measured?**

- Student feedback against their goals
- Teacher feedback against their program goals
- Participation/attendance of students
- Continuous improvement through up to date professional development
- Online surveys/interviews/accessible in relevant languages and tailored to smart phones

## Procurement

**25. Do you think a longer contract duration will provide more value to clients and government from the SEE program? If so, why? If not, why?**

Yes

Provides more confidence for provider in terms of sustainable strategic planning and including:  
investment in facilities, resources, staff development and retention.

~~**26. Do you think a multi-provider model will support increased access to training in the SEE program? Why?**~~

**27. Do you think specialist service delivery to groups of learners with certain characteristics/needs will improve engagement and attainment in the SEE program?**

Yes

It could help improve access, engagement and retention if loadings were provided to support learners with support needs through:

- Classroom aides
- Pathways and career counsellors
- Mental health specialists
- CALD support
- Cultural support for Indigenous Australians.

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### Reference

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