

Eligible options guidelines

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Acronyms	Full form
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
SEAT	Student Enrolment and Attendance Team
TRM	Territory Records Management
VET	Vocational Education and Training
NOA	Notification of Arrangements

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These guidelines are part of the Enrolment policy available on the Department of Education Policy and advisory library in the [Student enrolment and attendance section](#).

1. Introduction

The Northern Territory (NT) Department of Education is committed to working with students, parents and the community to support all students to engage in meaningful pathways. Although full-time participation in school is the preferred educational pathway for compulsory school-age children, it is acknowledged that in some instances, parents and children have individual needs and circumstances that make full-time schooling challenging.

To ensure all young people have access to education, training or employment, regardless of their individual circumstances, students who have completed year 10 and no longer wish to continue with mainstream education may enter a compulsory participation phase, where the student can participate in an external eligible option.

2. Definitions

Child living independently – is a child who is of or above the age of 14 years and not living with a parent. A child who is living with a parent is also considered to be independent if the parent is unable to control the child's behaviour in relation to enrolment, attendance, and participation.

Child of compulsory school age – is a child who has turned six years of age on or before June 30 of the school year and has not completed year 10, or turned 17 years of age, whichever comes first.

Compulsory participation phase – applies to a student who has completed year 10 and has not yet turned 17 years of age, where the student either continues with school or has been approved to participate in an external eligible option for a minimum average of 25 hours a week until they turn 17 years of age.

Former roll – is a roll in SAMS to which a student's name is moved when the student is no longer enrolled at the school. The former roll acts as a record for all students previously enrolled in the school.

Parent – signifies a child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for the child, including a person regarded as a parent of a child under Aboriginal customary law or Aboriginal tradition. However, a parent standing in the place of a parent of a child on a temporary basis is not a parent of the child.

Parental responsibility – of a person signifies that the person:

- a) has daily care and control of the child or
- b) is entitled to exercise all the powers and rights in relation to, and has full responsibility for all aspects of, the long-term care and development of the child or
- c) has daily care and control of the child, and the entitlement and responsibilities mentioned at (b) and includes a person who has been given the above responsibilities under the law of another jurisdiction.

Special circumstances – is the threshold for granting an exemption from attendance or exemption from participating in an eligible option. The circumstances must reflect the student's best interests as a priority and consider a range of factors that include a student's educational pathway.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. Students

Students have a responsibility to:

- engage with school staff to identify a suitable eligible option
- comply with all requirements of the eligible options program and actively advise school staff if they are unable to meet their obligations.

3.2. Parents

Parents have a responsibility to:

- engage with school staff and the principal to consider eligible options
- notify the school when their child intends to leave school to participate in an eligible option, including the provision of a signed Notification of Arrangements form to the school
- notify the school of any changes to the child's participation in an eligible option.

3.3. School staff

School staff have a responsibility to:

- work with students, parents, and the community in assisting students with participation in eligible options.

3.4. Principals or delegated school representative

Principals or delegated school representatives are responsible to:

- ensure student enrolment where a child is participating in an eligible option
- consider and if appropriate, approve the Notification of Arrangements form and forward to the Eligible Options Coordinator by email at eligibleoptions.doe@education.nt.gov.au
- manage student re-entry to full time attendance at school where a child transitions from an eligible option
- ensure staff are aware of NT legislation, department policy and guidelines, including flexible education strategies, school policies and processes.

3.5. Eligible Options Coordinator

The Eligible options coordinator has responsibility to

- monitor and manage compliance of students participating in an eligible option delivered through an external provider
- record details into the School Enrolment and Attendance Team (SEAT) database
- provide advice to parents, school and department staff about department policy and guidelines and legislative requirements

- work in partnership with Student Engagement Programs and Services, authorised persons and school principals to support students who are not meeting the participation requirements of an eligible option
- maintain and establish relationships with stakeholders that provide and deliver Eligible Options to students.

4. Eligible options

4.1. Categories

Students are required to have a year 10 end of year report or statement of completion to qualify for an eligible option.

Eligible options is participation in one of the following:

- approved education or training, see table below
- if 15 years of age or over, paid employment, for not less than 25 hours per week; or
- a combination of approved education, training, and paid employment.

Approved education or training	Provider
An education program or course of study or instruction	For example, Charles Darwin University or Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
A higher education course of study under the <i>Higher Education Act 2004</i>	A registered higher education provider
A VET accredited course, training package qualification, approved apprenticeship or approved traineeship under the <i>Training and Skills Development Act 2016</i>	A registered training organisation
Other education or training approved by the Chief Executive by Gazette notice	The Chief Executive may by Gazette notice approve a form of education or training.
Other education or training at an institution in a State or another Territory that would comply with the requirements of Part 4 of the <i>Education Act 2015</i> .	A government or non-government school registered training provider or registered higher education provider.

4.2. Continuing school in year 11 and 12

If a student continues in year 11 and year 12, and is under the age of 17 years, the school must:

- monitor attendance of students and if a student is at risk of or has disengaged from education, consider whether an external eligible option may be more appropriate
- where a student has not participated for four consecutive weeks, or a total of 12 weeks, three months, in a 12 month period and the school has exhausted re-engagement strategies, refer the student file to Student Engagement for appropriate action

4.3. External

Parental consent is required to participate in an external eligible option. The Notification of Arrangements (NOA) form is to be completed by parents and submitted to the school. A NOA is specifically used for young people in the final years of compulsory education - typically year 11 and 12. A NOA is used for an alternative to full time school in one or more eligible options, such as approved forms of education, training or employment. A combination of eligible options is permissible provided they equate, in total, to full-time participation, an average of 25 hours a week.

The school is required to:

- work with the provider of the identified eligible option, the student, and their parent to complete the Notification of Arrangements form
- provide a copy of the Notification of Arrangements form to the Eligible Options Coordinator by email at eligibleoptions.doe@education.nt.gov.au
- record student attendance with the 'B code - attendance not required' until approval from the Eligible Options Coordinator is received, then transfer the student from the current roll to the former roll
- place the Notification of Arrangements form on the student file which is retained by the school

The Eligible Options Coordinator is required to:

- confirm the details of the eligible option are correct and all parties involved, including parents, student, school and employer have provided written consent
- prepare a letter of confirmation to the employer, trainer or education provider outlining the arrangement and associated responsibilities
- prepare a letter of confirmation to the parent or guardian outlining the arrangement and associated responsibilities
- enter the eligible options information into the SEAT database
- contact the employer, trainer or education provider every two to four weeks to monitor the arrangement until the student turns 17 years of age
- record all correspondence and interactions in the SEAT Database
- work with the school and family to identify an alternative pathway if all parties have not agreed to the arrangement, or if the arrangement does not meet the requirements of an eligible option

5. Related policy, legislation and documents

5.1 Policy

- Enrolment policy, guidelines and procedures
- Attendance policy, guidelines and procedures
- Notification of Arrangements form

5.1. Legislation

- *Education Act 2015*
- [Higher Education Act 2004](#)
- [Training Skills and Development Act 2016](#)