Mature age student enrolment – procedures

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# Policy statement

The Northern Territory (NT) Department of Education (the department) is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment. This includes implementing measures to safeguard students and staff at NT Government schools while supporting mature age students to access school education. These procedures outline the protocols to be followed by prospective mature age students, principals, and department staff in relation to enrolment of a mature age student at an NT Government school.

A prospective mature age student is a person who is 18 years or older and has not been enrolled in a school in the preceding 12 months. They must undertake a criminal history check in addition to completing all enrolment requirements expected of any student enrolling in an NT Government school.

A person is not considered as a prospective mature age student where they:

* turn 18 while they are studying or participating in an eligible option
* have been enrolled in a school during the previous 12 months.

Regional Directors School Operations are delegated with the responsibility for reviewing a mature age student’s application and criminal record report. They have a mandatory duty under the *Education Act 2015* (the Act) to refuse enrolment in an NT Government school if there is a conviction for a disqualifying offence. An enrolment application that is refused on this basis cannot be reviewed or appealed by the applicant under the Act*.*

The Senior Director School Operations is delegated with the responsibility for reviewing a decision made by the school principal on a mature age student’s enrolment application to enrol in an NT Government school.

Tuition for the standard curriculum program is provided free to all in NT Government schools, including mature age students.

Information on school fees for international students is available on the NT Government International students’ webpage.

# Procedures for enrolment

## Prospective mature age students

Must do actions for prospective mature age students (applicant):

1. The applicant checks the list of disqualifying offences in Disqualifying offences for mature students on the department’s website.
2. If the applicant has a conviction of a disqualifying offence, they must discontinue the enrolment application.
3. If the applicant has not been convicted of a disqualifying offence, then the applicant must discuss possible enrolment with the principal of the school that they intend to enrol at.
4. Undertake a criminal history check at their own cost prior to enrolment, noting a criminal history check can take time to be conducted and processed. Instructions for applying for a criminal history check are available on the SAFE NT website. International applicants must provide a police clearance from their country of residence.
5. Complete the Enrolment application addendum form and provide this to the principal to complete the checklist on the last section of the form. Do not provide the supporting documents to the principal.
6. Submit the enrolment application using the enrolment form on the Department of Education website to the Regional Director School Operations at [schoolops@education.nt.gov.au](mailto:schoolops@education.nt.gov.au) with the subject line Mature age student enrolment application – <school name> – <applicant name> and attach:
   * the completed Enrolment application addendum form
   * criminal record report
   * all enrolment requirements as per the department’s Enrolment procedures.
7. If the enrolment application is refused, and the applicant wants the decision made by the principal reviewed, they can dispute the decision within 14 calendar days by:

* completing the Request to review an enrolment application form
* attaching the completed Enrolment application addendum form and criminal record report
* send it to the school principal.

## Principals

Must do actions for principals:

1. Discuss possible enrolment with the applicant and provide advice as well as support about their enrolment requirements.
2. Ensure the applicant is aware of the requirement to undertake a criminal history check at their own cost and that any criminal record report will be reviewed by the Regional Director School Operations to protect their privacy prior to admission into an NT Government school.
3. Advise the applicant of other opportunities including commencing an application for additional semesters or engaging in an alternative education option.
4. Provide the applicant with advice to enable their participation in other education or vocational options if they are not successful in enrolment at a school.
5. Complete the checklist on the last section of the Enrolment application addendum form and advise the applicant to submit this to the Regional Director School Operations at [schoolops@education.nt.gov.au](mailto:schoolops@education.nt.gov.au).
6. Provide advice about the process by which enrolment decisions can be reviewed.
7. Within 14 days of receipt from the Regional Director School Operations, the school principal must decide whether to grant or refuse an enrolment application. The principal must consider:

* the applicant’s criminal history – any criminal record report forwarded by the Regional Director School Operations and any pending charges disclosed in the application
* the reason given by the applicant for seeking enrolment
* the likely educational outcome of enrolment and whether the same or a similar outcome could be obtained by other means
* the safety and welfare of all school community members
* the suitability of other education, training, or employment options.

1. Provide written notice to the applicant if the enrolment is granted or refused.
2. Cancel enrolment by written notice if the applicant:
   * without reasonable excuse, has not attended the school for at least 8 school weeks, or
   * over a period of at least 8 school weeks has, without reasonable excuse, attended the school for less than 50% of the time during which instruction is provided at the school, or
   * in the opinion of the principal, is not making satisfactory progress.
3. If a Request to review an enrolment application form is received from the applicant, complete the checklist on the last section of the form. Send the form to the Senior Director School Operations at [schoolops@education.nt.gov.au](mailto:schoolops@education.nt.gov.au) with the subject line Mature age student – Request to review – <school name> – <applicant name> and attach:
   * the completed Request to review an enrolment application form
   * the completed Enrolment application addendum form
   * criminal record report.
4. Ensure that all criminal record reports and associated documentation are destroyed as soon as practicable after the information is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was obtained.

## Regional Directors School Operations

Must do actions for Regional Directors School Operations:

1. Receive and consider the applicant’s enrolment application when all relevant documentation has been provided by the applicant, including:
   * a completed Student enrolment form with all required supporting documentation
   * the criminal record report
   * a completed Enrolment application addendum form.

Ensure:

* + all enrolment information is protected and managed confidentially
  + that neither a part nor all of the applicant’s enrolment application is shared unless required to do so by law or unless the applicant provides written consent.

1. Assess the applicants criminal record report to identify any disqualifying offences and refuse enrolment if identified. The list of disqualifying offences is available in Disqualifying offences for mature students on the department’s website.
2. Decide whether to forward a criminal record report, in whole or in part, to the principal of the NT Government school together with the application for enrolment, if it shows a criminal history of any kind, other than a conviction for a disqualifying offence.
3. Ensure that all criminal record reports and associated documentation are destroyed as soon as practicable after the information is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was obtained.
4. Notify school of the outcome of the assessment.

## Senior Director School Operations

Must do actions for the Senior Director School Operations:

1. Review enrolment decision to confirm, vary, or set aside and substitutes a different decision made by the school principal to grant or refuse an applicant’s enrolment. The decision must be made as soon as practicable after the application for review is made.
2. Has discretion to extend the time allowed for making an application to review.
3. Give written notice to the applicant whose decision was reviewed using the Review for enrolment decision for mature age student enrolment application letter template and provide a copy to the school principal and Regional Directors School Operations.
4. Ensure that all criminal record reports and associated documents are destroyed as soon as practicable after the information is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was obtained.

# Procedures for disputes, requests for review and complaints

## Dispute of a criminal record report

To dispute the accuracy of a criminal record report, applicants must:

* contact SAFE NT via contact details on the SAFE NT Employment screening webpage
* re-submit their criminal record report if it is amended by SAFE NT
* not attend a school during the dispute period.

## Review of an enrolment decision

To dispute an enrolment determination, applicants must:

* within 14 calendar days of receipt of the decision that they are not eligible to enrol, apply for a review by completing the Request to review an enrolment application form available on the department’s website
* submit the Request to review an enrolment application form to the principal of the NT Government school that made the decision to refuse their application. The school principal will then complete the checklist on the last section of the form and send it to the Senior Director School Operations at [schoolops@education.nt.gov.au](mailto:schoolops@education.nt.gov.au)
* not attend a school during the review period.

In the circumstances where an applicant has a conviction for a disqualifying offence under Schedule 1 of the Education Regulations 2015, their enrolment application must be rejected under Part 4, Division 5 of the *Education Act 2015* and this decision cannot be disputed.

## Complaints

To make a complaint about any part of their enrolment process or outcome, applicants follow the process outlined on the NT Government Make a complaint about a school webpage.

# Disposal of criminal record reports and associated documentation

All criminal record reports and associated documentation must be destroyed as soon as practical after the information is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was obtained.

# Disqualifying offences

Wherever a singular expression is used, that expression is considered as including the plural where required by context, and vice versa. Refer to information on Disqualifying offences for mature aged students on the department’s website.

# Related legislation, procedures, resources and information

## Legislation

* *Education* [*Act*](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/reviews-and-consultations/education-act) *2015**–* <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/EDUCATION-ACT-2015>
* *Information Act 2002 –* <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/INFORMATION-ACT-2002>

## Procedures and resources

* Enrolment procedures – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment/enrolment>
* Information sheet for disqualifying offences – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment/enrolment>
* Mature age student enrolment process flowchart – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment/enrolment>
* Pending charges declaration form – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment/enrolment>
* Request to review an enrolment application form – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment/enrolment>

## Information

* Apply for a criminal history check – <https://nt.gov.au/law/crime/apply-for-a-criminal-history-check>
* Disqualifying offences for mature age students – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment/enrolment>
* Information privacy principles – <https://infocomm.nt.gov.au/privacy/information-privacy-principles>
* Make a complaint about a school – <https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/make-a-complaint-about-a-school>
* SAFE NT Employment Screening – <https://pfes.nt.gov.au/SAFENT>
* School fees for international students – <https://nt.gov.au/learning/international-education/study-at-an-nt-government-school/school-fees-for-international-students>

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| Acronyms | Full form |
| NT | Northern Territory |

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