

LEARNING MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

The compulsory education age is legislation designed to keep young people engaged in learning for longer so they can reap lifelong benefits.

THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION AGE IS NOW 17.

From January 1 2009, young South Australians must be in full-time education or training until they turn 17 or gain a qualification. This is different to the compulsory school age which stays at 16.

Bad news

Did you know that young people trying to get a job before they have any qualifications face a one in five chance of being unemployed. It's tougher to get a decent job if you leave education too soon.

Good news

Research by the Australian National University found that on average, young people with just one extra year of learning earned around 10% higher salaries. Over a lifetime, that's over \$200,000. It's worth the effort to stay in learning.

More good news

In 2007, almost 90% of graduates from vocational education programs were employed or in further study after training.

It's your future. Make learning work for you today.

What is the difference between the Compulsory School Age and the Compulsory Education Age?

The Compulsory School Age requires children to be in school from when they turn 6 until they turn 16 or successfully apply for an exemption. The Compulsory Education Age requires all young people between the ages of 16 and 17 to participate in an approved learning program. This may be delivered through a school or other training organisation, or can be an apprenticeship or traineeship, or a combination of these. Alternatively, students may apply for an exemption.

To illustrate the distinction, a 15 year old requires an exemption to enrol in a full-time TAFE course whereas a 16 year old does not. For a 16 year old, a full-time TAFE course is an approved learning program.

Does a 16 year old still need an exemption to start full time attendance with a registered training organisation, as is the case for 15 year olds?

No. A 16 year old is free to choose what form of learning they engage with, providing it is full time.

What if a 16 year old wants to do a part-time TAFE course as part of their approved learning program?

Any part-time learning or training, whether with TAFE, any private registered training organisation (RTO) or university, is a valid option for 16 year olds and may be incorporated into the student's full-time approved learning program. Many students will have programs that include both in-school and out-of-school learning.

What responsibility does the registered training organisation have if the young person leaves their training program?

They should contact the Department of Education and Children's Services on 8226 0044 to enable follow up to occur.

Will a 16 year old's eligibility for the Commonwealth Youth Allowance be affected by the Compulsory Education Age legislation?

No. Their eligibility for Youth Allowance will not be affected.

What happens if they want to leave to get a job?

They need to complete an [application for exemption](#) to the Department of Education and Children's Services, enclosing a letter of offer from the employer outlining the position. The job must be for 25 hours a week or more.

What is an approved learning program?

An approved learning program is one or a combination of the following:

- secondary education
- university degree, diploma or other award
- TAFE course
- accredited courses offered by a private Registered Training Organisation
- apprenticeship or traineeship
- other types of programs approved by the Minister

Can students have a part time job whilst attending at school?

Yes, providing they are in full time study.

Do students need to apply for an exemption to go to TAFE or some other training program?

No, this is only required for students aged 15, but not for the compulsory education age, which covers 16 year olds.

Do students need to apply for exemption if they want to start working?

Yes. The school has copies of the application form. The employer needs to provide a letter of offer, for employment of 25 hours or more a week. The student cannot start until the approval has been granted. See the Forms menu for a sample letter of offer.

How do students apply for exemption?

They need to complete an application for exemption and submit it to the Principal, who will discuss the situation with them. There is a central person in each sector who approves exemptions for one month or greater. The Principal can approve exemptions up to a month.

Can students get an exemption from participation for other situations?

Yes. They can apply for an exemption for family or caring responsibilities, or due to personal health reasons, for example, pregnancy.