English classes for eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants in Australia

ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAM

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is the Australian Government’s largest settlement programme, providing English language tuition to eligible new migrants and humanitarian entrants since 1948.

The AMEP helps new arrivals learn basic English skills that will assist them to successfully settle and confidently participate socially and economically in Australia. The AMEP is available to migrants from the family, skilled and humanitarian visa streams and provides up to 510 hours of English language tuition within the first five years of visa commencement or arrival in Australia.

The programme is administered by the Department of Education and Training and is underpinned by the Immigration (Education) Act 1971 and the Immigration (Education) Regulations 1992.

SUB-PROGRAMMES

Special Preparatory Programme

The Special Preparatory Programme provides up to 400 additional hours of tailored English classes to eligible humanitarian clients in recognition of their greater learning and support needs arising from difficult pre-migration experiences, such as torture or trauma, and/or limited prior schooling.

Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training

To assist with the transition to work in Australia, eligible clients may participate in the Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training programme. This programme provides up to 200 additional hours of vocation-specific English language tuition, including up to 80 hours of work experience placement in a diverse range of fields, to help clients gain familiarity with Australian workplace culture and practices.

ELIGIBILITY

The AMEP is available to all eligible permanent visa holders 18 years of age or over who do not have a functional level of English language proficiency.

Access is extended to some temporary visa holders as specified in the legislative instrument English Courses for Holders of Certain Temporary Visas. The temporary visa classes include:

- Bridging F (Class WF)
- Business Skills (Provisional) (Class UR)
- Business Skills (Provisional) (Class EB)
- Interdependency (Provisional) (Class UG)
Under 18 years old

Migrants and humanitarian entrants aged between 15 and 17 years of age, who do not have functional English and whose needs are not met through mainstream schooling, may also be eligible to participate in the programme.

Participation is generally determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration individual circumstances and in consultation with local schools.

Timeframes

To participate in the programme, eligible visa holders must meet legislative timeframes for registration, commencement and completion. The time limits below apply from the date the prospective client’s eligible visa came into effect or the date they arrived in Australia, whichever is later.

18 years and over
- Register within six months.
- Commence tuition within 12 months.
- Complete tuition within five years.

Below 18 years
- Register and commence tuition within 12 months.
- Complete tuition within five years.

Functional English

In addition to the legislative timeframes, eligible visa holders must also be assessed (by qualified personnel) as having less than a ‘basic social proficiency’ level of English defined in the legislative instrument ‘Procedures or Standards for Functional English’.

CURRICULUM

The Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE) is an accredited competency-based national curriculum and assessment framework used in the education and training sector in Australia. Following an assessment of their English language proficiency, background and prior learning experience, clients are placed in one of three CSWE levels within the programme, beginning at Level I and progressing through to Level III (equivalent to functional English). Clients who have had very limited prior education and exposure to the English language, may be placed in a pre-CSWE course designed to prepare them for entry into Level I.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

The AMEP is delivered at around 250 locations across Australia, and is designed to accommodate client’s learning needs by offering a range of learning options and combinations including:

- classroom tuition through either full-time or part-time study, including weekend and night classes where available
- distance learning through a package of learning materials supported by regular telephone or internet contact with
  - a qualified teacher
  - home tutoring by a trained volunteer
  - self-paced e-learning using an online package to support and supplement learning on an independent basis.

Distance learning

Distance learning offers clients the choice of online learning or traditional work books with supplementary materials. Regular contact with a qualified teacher is provided over the phone or on the internet for clients undertaking this mode of study.
Home Tutor Scheme

The Home Tutor Scheme provides English language assistance through trained volunteers, generally on a one-on-one basis. Home tutoring usually takes place in the informal atmosphere of the client’s own home or at another mutually convenient venue. It is an additional support service for clients, and a valuable alternative, particularly for clients who for various reasons are not able to attend classroom-based tuition or teacher-assisted distance learning.

Self-paced e-learning

Self-paced e-learning modules are available through the AMEP distance learning website at http://amepdl.net.au.

The online tool is used by AMEP clients to help improve their English language skills and is also available to new migrants (including those intending to migrate to Australia) so they can learn about a range of relevant topics including work, housing, health and the law.

Support Services

Pathway Advisers

Educational pathway advisers are employed by AMEP service providers to provide clients with guidance and support throughout their time in the programme.

Pathway advisers interview clients when they enter the programme and keep track of their learning needs and objectives using Individual Pathway Guides. These guides record information such as previous education and qualifications, goals, proposed learning pathways and learning progress and outcomes.

Pathway advisers may also refer clients to appropriate third party support services where necessary, such as Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office, torture and trauma services, and vocational education providers for study options following the completion of the AMEP.

Childcare

Childcare is available to AMEP clients with children under school age. Childcare is arranged by AMEP service providers and is generally located close to the client’s class. Some childcare centres may be located at the same site as the AMEP learning centre.

Childcare placements are generally secured in time to coincide with the client’s commencement of the programme; however, due to high demand this is not always possible.

All childcare services offered must meet relevant state and territory regulations and may include:

- accredited licensed long day care services
- registered occasional care centres
- registered family day care services
- registered in-home care
- crèches and adjunct childcare that comply with state
- and territory childcare legislation.

Youth classes

Some AMEP service providers offer youth-specific courses for clients under the age of 25 years. These are designed to provide a greater level of support for young people who require more intensive English language tuition.

Youth-specific courses are tailored programmes with both a social and educational focus, which targets the specific needs of young people.

Courses are developed by AMEP service providers in partnership with local schools, community groups, youth services and the vocational education sector.
Settlement course

The AMEP offers a settlement course for all programme clients to help them develop basic settlement skills for negotiating daily activities in their community. Clients learn a range of settlement skills, including how to access government and community services, banking, medical assistance and emergency services, as well as understanding Australian law and their rights.

Bilingual support

AMEP service providers provide bilingual support to clients who have little to no English language proficiency in the early stages of study, including at the client’s interview with the pathway advisor.

Bilingual support in Special Preparatory Programme classes is provided where possible, such as during the initial weeks of tuition to assist with explaining the teaching methodology and identifying learning and settlement needs.

For more information about the AMEP, please contact us on 13 38 73 from anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local call, or visit www.education.gov.au/amep