English classes for eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants in Australia

ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAM

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) was established in 1948 and is the Australian Government’s largest English language program, available to eligible new migrants and humanitarian entrants, who also have less than functional English.

The AMEP helps new migrants learn basic English skills that will assist them to successfully and confidently participate socially and economically in Australian society. 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 program 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-PROGRAMS

Special Preparatory Program

The Special Preparatory Program is demand driven and provides additional hours of tailored English classes to all 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 capped program. This program provides up to 200 additional hours of vocation-specific English language tuition, including up to 80 hours of a work experience placement in a diverse range of fields, to help clients gain familiarity with Australian workplace culture and practices.

AMEP Extend

AMEP Extend is a capped program that will offer up to 490 hours of additional tuition to eligible clients who have almost exhausted their 510 hour entitlement without achieving their English language proficiency goals.

AMEP Extend can be used in either the Pre-employment English or Social English tuition streams for students participating in general tuition either in the classroom or via distance learning.
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)
- Partner (Provisional) (Class UF)
- Partner (Temporary) (Class UK)
- Resolution of Status (Temporary) (Class UH)
- Safe Haven Enterprise (Class XE)
- Skilled—Designated Area-sponsored (Provisional) (Class UZ)
- Skilled—Independent Regional (Provisional) (Class UX)
- Skilled—Regional Sponsored (subclass 475)
- Skilled—Regional Sponsored (subclass 487)
- Skilled—Regional Sponsored (subclass 489)
- Temporary (Humanitarian Concern) (Class UO); and
- Temporary Protection (Class XD).

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 program.

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 program, 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.

Extensions
Extensions to all time limits are available under prescribed circumstances. AMEP service providers apply for extensions to timeframes on behalf of prospective clients.

Functional English
In addition to the legislative timeframes, eligible visa holders must also be assessed (by qualified personnel) as having less than a functional level of English as defined in the legislative instrument Immigration (Education) (Functional English) Specification 2017.

TUITION STREAMS
In order to better meet individual needs, AMEP clients will be able to choose from two streams of tuition:

- Pre-employment English stream
- Social English stream

The Pre-employment English stream is for clients who wish to gain functional English to participate in the workplace, or further training which may lead to sustainable employment.

The Social English stream is for clients wanting to improve their competence in conversational English to help them participate socially and to gain the confidence to live independently within their local community.

Clients receiving income support payments with mutual obligation requirements will not be eligible for the Social English stream.

Clients may use their legislated 510 hour entitlement in either stream or a combination of both.
AMEP service providers are able to select which curriculum they use to best meet clients’ needs. Depending on the tuition stream, the curriculum may be accredited or non-accredited.

**Pre-employment English stream:** Units of competency or modules from approved Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses or any Australian English language curricula that is made up of certificates from VET courses, including the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE), may be used.

**Social English stream:** In addition to the courses described for the Pre-employment English stream, any equivalent English language tuition may be used which includes unaccredited material or resources appropriate for teaching clients Social English.

**PROGRAM DELIVERY**

The AMEP is delivered at 58 contract regions across Australia, and is designed to accommodate clients’ 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
- tutoring outside of class by a trained volunteer.

**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.

**Volunteer Tutor Scheme**

The AMEP Volunteer Tutor Scheme (formerly known as the Home Tutor Scheme) provides English language assistance through trained volunteers, generally on a one-on-one basis. 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.

**SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Pathway Guidance**

AMEP providers offer pathway guidance support to assist clients to set goals, understand their options and to make decisions in relation to their tuition, further education and employment opportunities.

AMEP providers interview clients when they enter the program 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.

AMEP providers 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.

**Child care**

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

Child care placements are generally secured in time to coincide with the client’s commencement of the program; however, due to high demand this is not always possible.
All child care 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 child care.

**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 programs with both a social and educational focus, which target 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 focus**

AMEP plays an important role in enabling clients to confidently participate in Australia, whether at the workplace, or with services and individuals in the community. AMEP service providers also integrate settlement skills into course curricula, 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 Program 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.