

Dear Training Providers,

[SSG Circular/RPD/2021/1]: REVISIONS TO SKILLSFUTURE COURSE FEE FUNDING, ABSENTEE PAYROLL FUNDING AND PHASING OUT OF SKILLSFUTURE QUALIFICATION AWARD

SSG continually reviews our schemes to ensure relevance and effective use of our resources. To provide the best training outcomes for Singaporeans, we will be implementing three key measures from 1 January 2022 onwards:

- a) Revisions to SkillsFuture Course Fee Funding
- b) Revisions to Absentee Payroll Funding
- c) Phasing out of SkillsFuture Qualification Award

2. Please refer to Annexes A, B and C respectively for details on the above changes. These changes are also published on our online channels such as the SkillsFuture website, MySkillsFuture portal, and the Training Partners Gateway.

3. The revised course fee funding and absentee payroll funding will apply to courses commencing on or after 1 January 2022, regardless of when enrolment takes place. Hence, we seek your cooperation on the following:

- a) Ensure that all relevant information in your organisation's publicity materials and websites, including course information and nett fees payable for courses commencing on or after 1 January 2022, are promptly updated;
- b) Ensure that individuals and enterprises signing up for your courses commencing on or after 1 January 2022 are duly informed of the changes, including any updates to the nett fees payable; and
- c) Share the information in the Annexes with your clients (both individuals and enterprises) to keep them informed of the changes, if necessary.

4. For training providers transacting through the Training Partners Gateway, the revised course fee funding and absentee payroll funding will be built in and applied accordingly to course runs that commence on or after 1 January 2022. We will inform you when the system is updated, estimated by mid-October 2021. In the meantime, please do not process any enrolments for course runs that commence on or after 1 January 2022.

5. To provide a transition period for the phase out of the SkillsFuture Qualification Award, eligible Singaporean trainees who wish to apply for the award will have up to 31 December 2022 to complete their WSQ qualifications. SSG takes a serious view on training providers that engage in undesirable marketing behaviours and activities. We would like to remind all training providers to comply with the Marketing Guidelines in Appendix A of SSG's Terms for Training Providers. Specifically, training providers are not permitted to refer to the impending cessation of SkillsFuture Qualification Award to attract the public to sign up for courses.

6. With the above changes, we will also be aligning the transition plans for last-stop full qualifications issuance, which will cease on 31 December 2022¹.

7. SSG will continue to provide support for your organisation, as you build capabilities to support industry transformation and equip the workforce with critical and emerging skills. We look forward to your continuous support in building a competitive and highly-skilled Singapore workforce.

8. Should you require further assistance, please contact SSG at 6785 5785 or submit your enquiries via SSG's feedback portal at <https://portal.ssg-wsg.gov.sg/feedback>.

Thank you.

¹ Cessation date has been extended from 31 May 2022 to 31 December 2022. Please refer to earlier [circular](#) dated 9 July 2020 on Alignment of Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) Training to Skills Framework and Cessation of Last-Stop Qualifications Issuance on TPGateway.

ANNEX A: REVISIONS TO SKILLSFUTURE COURSE FEE FUNDING

REVISIONS TO SKILLSFUTURE COURSE FEE FUNDING

As part of SSG’s on-going review of existing schemes and funding to ensure their relevance and effective use of resources, we have revised the SkillsFuture course fee funding to focus our highest subsidy rates on training that delivers the strongest manpower outcomes, such as training tied to job placements.

2. The revisions to SkillsFuture course fee funding, applicable to SSG-funded courses commencing on or after 1 Jan 2022, are as follows:

- i. Baseline course fee subsidies will be simplified and streamlined across PMET and non-PMET courses, at up to 70% of course fees for courses offered by SSG-appointed CET Centres, and up to 50% of course fees for certifiable courses approved by SSG.
- ii. Enterprises and individuals who qualify for SSG’s enhanced subsidy schemes (SkillsFuture Mid-career Enhanced Subsidy and Enhanced Training Support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)) will receive an enhanced subsidy of up to 20%-points above the baseline course fee subsidies. This means up to 90% course fee subsidies in total, inclusive of enhanced funding for courses with the strongest manpower outcomes.

3. Table 1 summarises the revisions to SSG’s course fee funding.

Table 1: Revisions to SSG’s Course Fee Funding

	Course level	Courses starting before 1 Jan 2022	Courses starting on or after 1 Jan 2022
Courses offered by SSG-appointed CET Centres			
Singapore Citizens (SCs) and Permanent Residents (PRs)	PMET	Up to 70% of course fees	Up to 70% of course fees
	Non-PMET	Up to 90% of course fees	
SCs aged ≥ 40 years old <i>(SkillsFuture Mid-career Enhanced Subsidy)</i>	PMET and non-PMET	Up to 90% of course fees	Up to 90% of course fees [No Change]
Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) <i>(Enhanced Training Support for SMEs)</i>			
Certifiable courses approved by SSG			
Courses conducted by external training providers			
SCs and PRs ¹	PMET	Up to 50% of course fees, capped at \$15 per hour	Up to 50% of course fees
	Non-PMET	Up to 80% of course fees, capped at \$17 per hour	

	Course level	Courses starting before 1 Jan 2022	Courses starting on or after 1 Jan 2022
SCs aged ≥ 40 years old (SkillsFuture Mid-career Enhanced Subsidy)	PMET	Up to 90% of course fees, capped at \$50 per hour	Up to 70% of course fees
	Non-PMET	Up to 90% of course fees, capped at \$25 per hour	
SMEs (Enhanced Training Support for SMEs)	PMET	Up to 90% of course fees, capped at \$50 per hour	
	Non-PMET	Up to 90% of course fees, capped at \$25 per hour	
Courses conducted by in-house instructors			
SCs and PRs	PMET	\$15 per hour	\$7 per hour
	Non-PMET	\$7 per hour	
SMEs (Enhanced Training Support for SMEs)	PMET and Non-PMET	\$15 per hour	\$15 per hour [No Change]
Non-certifiable courses approved by SSG			
All SCs and PRs	PMET and non-PMET	\$2 per hour	\$2 per hour [No Change]

¹ Self-sponsored individuals must be at least 21 years old.

4. Singaporeans will continue to benefit from training subsidies as they acquire up-to-date skills to keep pace with industry transformation. For instance, Singaporeans can tap on their SkillsFuture Credit to offset out-of-pocket expenses for their training. In 2020, the Government has also enhanced support for individuals to pursue lifelong learning, through the SkillsFuture Credit top-up for all Singaporeans aged 25 and above as at 31 December 2020, and the Additional SkillsFuture Credit (Mid-Career Support) for mid-career workers aged 40 to 60 as at 31 December 2020.

5. The Government will also continue to support enterprises to train their employees as part of business transformation, through various schemes such as Enhanced Training Support for SMEs and SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit.

6. Should you require further assistance, please contact SSG at 6785 5785 or submit your enquiries via SSG's feedback portal at <https://portal.ssg-wsg.gov.sg/feedback>.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I have enrolled for a course commencing after 1 January 2022, and have paid for the course already. Will the new course fee subsidy rates apply to me?

Yes, the new course fee subsidy rates apply to courses that commence on or after 1 January 2022, regardless of when the enrolment is done. This is to

ensure parity across the trainees taking the same course run. Your training provider will get in touch with you should there be any changes to the nett fee payable.

2. I am not eligible for SSG’s enhanced subsidy schemes. With the changes in SSG’s baseline subsidies from 1 January 2022, what are the other funding support available for me?

Companies can offset the additional out-of-pocket expenses with the SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit. Under the SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit, eligible companies received a one-off \$10,000 credit to cover up to 90% of out-of-pocket expenses on qualifying costs for supportable initiatives, including sending their workers for curated training programmes by SkillsFuture Singapore and Workforce Singapore. Please refer to <https://www.enterprisejobskills.gov.sg/content/upgrade-skills/sfec.html> for more information.

Individuals can offset the additional out-of-pocket expenses with the SkillsFuture Credit. In 2020, SSG has also enhanced the support for individuals through the SkillsFuture Credit top-up for Singaporeans who are aged 25 and above as at 31 Dec 2020, and the Additional SkillsFuture Credit (Mid-Career Support) for mid-career Singaporeans who are aged 40 to 60 as at 31 Dec 2020. These are on top of the opening SkillsFuture Credit of \$500. Please refer to <https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/credit> for more information.

3. Will the changes in course fee subsidies impact the SkillsFuture for Digital Workplace (SFDW) courses, and courses under the SGUnited Skills Programme and SGUnited Mid-Career Pathways Programme - Company Training?

For SFDW courses and courses under the SGUnited Skills Programme and SGUnited Mid-Career Pathways Programme - Company Training, the nett fees payable are fixed and will not be impacted by these changes.

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ANNEX B: REVISIONS TO ABSENTEE PAYROLL FUNDING

REVISIONS TO ABSENTEE PAYROLL FUNDING

As announced by the Ministry of Education at the Committee of Supply 2021, the Enhanced Training Support Package (ETSP) has been extended to 31 December 2021, to allow companies to send more workers for industry-relevant training and help their workforce emerge stronger post-COVID-19. Under the ETSP, companies are eligible for enhanced absentee payroll (AP) funding at 80% of hourly basic salary, capped at \$7.50 per hour, when they send their employees for courses eligible for AP.

2. After the ETSP ends, SSG will be revising the AP funding to a more sustainable rate, in view of other support for enterprises such as the SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit. With effect from 1 January 2022, we will introduce a fixed AP rate at \$4.50 per hour. We will also set a \$100,000 cap on the maximum AP funding each company can claim each calendar year to ensure that the benefits are more evenly distributed across companies (see Table 1):

Table 1: Revisions to AP Funding Rates¹

<u>Current (Under ETSP)</u> Eligible courses starting between 1 Jan 2021 to 31 Dec 2021	<u>Revised</u> Eligible courses starting on or after 1 Jan 2022
80% of hourly basic salary, capped at \$7.50 per hour	\$4.50 per hour ² , capped at \$100,000 per enterprise per calendar year

¹ AP funding is not applicable to on-the-job training (OJT) hours.

² AP funding will be computed based on the actual number of training hours attended by the trainee.

3. The Government will continue to support enterprises to train their employees as part of business transformation, through various schemes such as Enhanced Training Support for SMEs and SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit. We also encourage employers to take ownership of and invest in the upskilling and reskilling of their employees, which will in turn benefit the company.

4. Should you require further assistance, please contact SSG at 6785 5785 or submit your enquiries via SSG's feedback portal at <https://portal.ssg-wsg.gov.sg/feedback>.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I have enrolled my employee for a course and paid for the course which commences after 1 January 2022. Am I subject to the new AP funding rate?

Yes, the new AP funding rate applies to courses that commence on or after 1 January 2022, i.e. AP funding will be at \$4.50 per hour, capped at \$100,000 per enterprise per calendar year.

2. How is per enterprise defined for the enterprise-level cap? Will a company's different branches or subsidiaries be included under the \$100,000 cap?

The enterprise-level cap will be implemented based on per unique entity number (UEN).

3. What other support can employers tap on to train and upskill their staff?

Companies can tap on the SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit, where eligible companies received a one-off \$10,000 credit to cover up to 90% of out-of-pocket expenses on qualifying costs for supportable initiatives, including sending their workers for curated training programmes by SkillsFuture Singapore and Workforce Singapore. Please refer to <https://www.enterprisejobskills.gov.sg/content/upgrade-skills/sfec.html> for more information.

Companies can also tap on the consultancy services provided by the National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning – or NACE. NACE was established in 2018 with the centre of excellence at Nanyang Polytechnic to strengthen the capabilities of companies to enable learning at the workplace and there are five other NACE centres as of 24 Mar 2021. For more information, please refer to <https://www.enterprisejobskills.gov.sg/content/learn-at-the-workplace/national-centre-of-excellence-for-workplace-learning.html>.

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ANNEX C: PHASING OUT OF SKILLSFUTURE QUALIFICATION AWARD

PHASING OUT OF SKILLSFUTURE QUALIFICATION AWARD

SSG will phase out the SkillsFuture Qualification Award, which was first introduced in 2011, as it has met its objective of encouraging take up of Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) full qualifications.

2. This is in line with the SkillsFuture messages for individuals to take up continual training to meet evolving industry needs and navigate their career pathways. Beyond WSQ full qualifications, there is a growing range of modular, bite-sized training that meet industry and individual needs. To this end, we have introduced the SkillsFuture Credit and provided top-ups to the Credit last year that will empower Singaporeans to take up such modular courses.

3. To provide a transition period for the phase out, eligible Singaporean trainees who wish to apply for the SkillsFuture Qualification Award will have up to **31 December 2022** to complete their WSQ qualifications. The date of completion is based on the date of passing the assessment of the last module that completes the requirement of the WSQ full qualification, inclusive of any re-assessments.

4. Trainees who have attained the eligible WSQ qualifications will have up to **31 March 2023** to submit their SkillsFuture Qualification Award applications via the MySkillsFuture portal at <https://programmes.myskillsfuture.gov.sg/QualificationAward/ProgrammeDetails.aspx>. No applications nor appeals will be accepted thereafter.

5. The key cut-off dates for the phase out of the SkillsFuture Qualification Award are summarised in Table 1. The existing eligibility criteria for SkillsFuture Qualification Award applies.

Table 1: Cut-off dates for eligibility for SkillsFuture Qualification Award

WSQ Full Qualification Attainment Date <i>(Based on date of passing the assessment of last module to make up the qualification, inclusive of any re-assessments)</i>	By 31 December 2022 (inclusive)
SkillsFuture Qualification Award Application Date	By 31 March 2023 (inclusive)

6. With the above changes, we will also be aligning our transition plans for the cessation of last-stop full qualifications issuance and extending the cessation date to 31 December 2022. This extension will allow more trainees to complete their WSQ qualifications and for training providers to transit to the Skills Frameworks.

Cessation of Last-Stop Full Qualifications Issuance

7. Since the implementation of the Skills Frameworks in 2016, SSG has shifted from pre-defined WSQ qualification constructs to a more demand-centric approach to qualification design. This shift enables CET partners to propose and bundle WSQ

modules flexibly to form WSQ qualification constructs customised to industry training needs.

8. Effective from 27 July 2020, all newly submitted courses must reference the Skills Frameworks. Qualifications referencing Skills Frameworks can only be issued by training providers that have been approved by SSG to deliver the qualification.

9. Courses which reference the WSQ frameworks will expire after 31 December 2022. The cessation of last-stop full qualification issuance after 31 December 2022 streamlines the qualification issuance process, ensuring trainees state their intentions to acquire full qualifications upfront, by signing up for the requisite courses with the same training provider.

10. During this transition period, training providers should note that WSQ qualifications referencing WSQ frameworks can continue to be issued on a last-stop basis until 31 December 2022. For full qualifications referencing the Leadership and People Management and Service Excellence WSQ frameworks, or where the full qualifications are not automatically generated, manual requests should be sent to SSG_WSQ_Admin@ssg.gov.sg for the WSQ qualification to be processed after the upload of all relevant assessment results.

11. After 31 December 2022, trainees will be eligible to obtain WSQ full qualifications only from training providers that have obtained SSG’s prior approval to offer WSQ full qualifications. Training providers are required to provide clear and accurate information to trainees signing up for the course(s).

12. A summary of the measures for the cessation of last-stop full qualifications issuance is in [Table 2](#).

Table 2: Summary of measures for cessation of last-stop full qualifications issuance

	Qualifications referencing WSQ Competency Standards	Qualifications referencing Skills Framework Technical Skills and Competencies
Issuance of qualifications	Qualifications may be issued by training providers, including on a last-stop basis, until 31 December 2022.	From 27 July 2020, qualifications may only be issued by training providers who have sought prior approval on the WSQ qualification constructs from SSG.
Generation of qualifications	For full qualifications referencing the Leadership and People Management and Service Excellence WSQ frameworks, or where the full qualifications are not automatically generated, manual requests should be sent to SSG_WSQ_Admin@ssg.gov.sg for the WSQ qualification to be processed after the upload of all relevant assessment results.	Qualifications will be auto-generated after the upload of all relevant assessment results for WSQ qualification constructs which have been approved by SSG.

13. Should you require further assistance, please contact SSG at 6785 5785 or submit your enquiries via SSG's feedback portal at <https://portal.ssg-wsg.gov.sg/feedback>.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When am I considered to have completed and attained a WSQ full qualification?

Trainees are considered to have completed and attained a WSQ full qualification upon successful completion of the training and assessments. The date of completion is based on the date of passing the assessment of the last module that completes the requirement of the WSQ full qualification, inclusive of any re-assessments.

2. I have enrolled for/am in the midst of taking my WSQ full qualification, and will only complete the qualification after 31 December 2022. Can I appeal for more time to complete the full qualification and be eligible for the SkillsFuture Qualification Award?

We are unable to accede to your appeal as advance notice of more than 18 months has been provided before the discontinuation of the SkillsFuture Qualification Award. You may also wish to check with your training provider whether the course schedule allows you to complete the qualification by 31 December 2022. Alternatively, you may explore whether the required modules are offered by other training providers at an earlier date. Nonetheless, we encourage learners to complete the course modules from the perspective of how it contributes to their learning and development, instead of the quantum of the SkillsFuture Qualification Award provided upon completion.

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