

Lived Experience Peer Cadet Program

Frequently Asked Questions

OFFICIAL

What are the eligibility criteria for the program?

Applicants must:

- i. already be undertaking the **Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work** or enrolled to begin the course at the start of the cadetship period
- ii. meet the selection criteria defined by participating organisations.

Peer cadets will be selected by the participating organisations.

Please note, **Eating Disorders Victoria** has the following additional eligibility criteria:

Eating Disorders Victoria recognises that individuals experience recovery differently, and this is not linear, however given the nature of our work, we require peer cadets to align within the following milestones:

Recovered: a person who identifies as having engaged in a recovery journey from an eating disorder and can manage their own wellbeing in alignment with the below indicators:

- *Can reflect and learn from their experience and has achieved emotional distance from their experience.*
- *Is open to, and able to consider a wide range of different eating disorder experiences.*
- *Can manage their own mental health and can recognise and seek help when at risk.*

I am doing my Certificate IV – Mental Health. Am I still eligible?

Unfortunately you need to be undertaking the **Certificate IV - Mental Health Peer Work** to be eligible for this program.

If your registered training organisation (RTO) of choice provides the Certificate IV – Mental Health Peer Work, you can transfer to that certificate (if your RTO has availability to do this).

If you do not wish to change to the Certificate IV – Mental Health Peer Work course, there is an opportunity to undertake the Earn & Learn traineeship program offered by the Department of Health when it is available.

I have finished my Certificate IV – Mental Health Peer Work course. Am I still eligible?

Unfortunately not. This program is designed to complement the study being undertaken with your RTO.

I am currently studying another course in another discipline (e.g., psychology, social work, etc.). Am I eligible to apply for the program?

Students currently studying in other courses or disciplines are not eligible for this program.

I already have a qualification in another discipline. Am I eligible to apply for the program?

Individuals with prior qualifications who are genuinely interested in a career change into peer work are eligible to apply. Applications will be considered on an individual basis by the participating organisations. Intentional unlearning may be required for individuals with prior experience in other mental health-related disciplines.

Is there a fee to participate in this program?

There are no fees to apply or undertake this program.

General course costs related to the Certificate IV – Mental Health Peer Work may be incurred, including any preliminary checks required by the participating organisations before undertaking placement, such as a Working with Children Check, Police Check and NDIS Worker Screening Check.

What can I do to prepare to apply for the upcoming program intake?

If you are not already undertaking study in the Certificate IV – Mental Health Peer Work, you can:

- research RTOs that offer the course and start the enrolment process
- ensure you have funds available to pay for any safety checks and clearances needed (organisation dependent – e.g. if Working with Children Check is required, the cost is \$128)
- research the participating organisations and learn about their work in the Lived Experience space.

These steps will allow a more efficient start to the program if your application is successful.

If you wait to see if you are selected and then try to get into a Certificate IV – Mental Health Peer Work course, you may not be eligible for consideration.

Can I choose the organisation I want to work with?

You can apply to as many participating organisations as you like, but there is no way to register your preference. Applicants will be selected at the organisation's discretion.

What is the time commitment per week?

The program consists of two days per week of paid placement and one day per week of paid study time. It is important to ensure that you have enough time in your week to continue your studies alongside the placement.

What should I expect in my cadetship and what is expected from me?

- Mentoring, supervision and support will be offered to you as part of your learning environment created by the participating organisations.
- Cadets do **not** undertake individual client sessions. Cadets will undertake a secondary or observer role to best learn and understand the work. You can act as 'sponges' during your cadetship to take in all the information around a peer worker role. There is no need to rush into the work.
- You will also need to understand that this is a professional environment. You will need to adhere to all the rules and regulations of your organisation even though you are in a cadetship. You will be supported to understand your host organisation's requirements and ways of working.
- You will need to commit to the times and days assigned to you to undertake the work and have professional respect for start and finish times which are within usual business hours.

If my placement is successful, will this program roll into an ongoing job with the organisation I work with?

It is **not** a requirement for the organisations to continue employing the cadets at the end of the program.

To receive this document in another format, [email the Lived Experience Workforce team at the Department of Health](mailto:livedexperienceworkforce@health.vic.gov.au) <livedexperienceworkforce@health.vic.gov.au>.

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