

Volunteer Tutor Scheme – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Melbourne Adult Migrant English Program and the VTS?

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) provides a range of courses specifically for migrants and refugees in Australia with permanent visas. Our team of dedicated teachers and volunteer tutors work very closely with students. They not only help them to learn English, but to also work with them to learn about life in Australia, to become independent and valuable contributors to our society with access to pathways for employment, training or further education. The Volunteer Tutor Scheme (VTS) supports students who either request additional support with English or who cannot attend classes due to issues such as illness, caring responsibilities or limited transport options.

What do tutors do?

Many newly arrived refugees and migrants settle in Victoria each year. Many register in the Melbourne AMEP and the Volunteer Tutor Scheme (VTS) receives many requests for tutors each week. Volunteer tutors respond to this growing need in the community by tutoring an AMEP student.

This could be in their home, on campus, in a public space or using a digital platform (Skype, Zoom or WhatsApp) for 1 or 2 hours each week. The volunteer tutor offers the opportunity for a student to practise English language skills, learn about life in Australia and gain confidence to participate and contribute in their local community through everyday life experiences such as shopping, finding housing, going to the doctor, catching public transport, communicating with schools, and completing paper work.

What do I need to become a tutor?

You do not need any qualifications for this program. You do need to be available and committed to the role. All tutors must complete training modules. The training includes learning about the refugee experience and communicating effectively in a cross-cultural context. Assisted by useful resources you will learn strategies to assist adults to practise English language skills. You will be required to provide a Police Check and Working with Children Check (WWCC) before you can start tutoring. You will not be required to pay for either of these checks.

Do I have to attend all the training?

The training is very informative and engaging. Since March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 all training is on-line. It involves online modules and teacher led sessions via Zoom.

If you have had prior experience in teaching or in a similar volunteering position you may be considered for an exemption for some or all of the modules. If you wish to apply for an *Exemption of Training* – contact the VTS team by email: amepvts@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au or phone: 03 9269 1514

What happens after I finish training?

You will be matched with a student and you can begin tutor lessons. If you have some free time, you are welcome to apply for more than one student.

Will my student live near me?

This depends on where you live. Many students live in the outer suburbs of Melbourne where housing is more affordable. The program has no capacity to reimburse for travel. Since March 2020 – tutoring is conducted by Phone or a digitally platform. Therefore your student maybe live in another part of Melbourne.

Since VTS activity is done remotely via digital platforms, location is no longer such a barrier to engagement.

Do I need to visit my student each week?

It is important to commit to a regular tutoring routine. Many students have experienced much disruption to their lives and appreciate stability and predictability in their new routine in Australia. All students who are part of the Volunteer Tutor Scheme expect 1-2 hours of English tuition a week. Some tutors who travel long distances offer their student 2 hours of tuition a fortnight to minimise the travel but uphold this commitment.

What if I need support for my tutoring?

On-going support from the VTS team is available through-out your tutoring experience. Tutoring resources, online links and ideas will be available to you upon request and are included in the monthly newsletter.

How do I communicate with the VTS?

Your Volunteer Tutor Support officer is always available to assist you. Please contact them directly or via this email amepvts@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au or phone number 92691514

Is the reporting process difficult?

EACH time you meet with your student, you MUST report this activity. Reporting is done through the Tutor Activity Record (TARS). This is a very simple online form that records the date and duration of your visits. During the training you will learn how to complete this form and when you are matched with your student you will receive the online TAR link. You will be sent a reminder via an SMS text message at the end of each month. The SMS message will include the link to the online form. It can be completed on your phone.

How do I stay connected with the VTS?

Each month you will receive our newsletter. Opportunities to meet with other tutors and learn more about settlement and tutoring English language will be offered to you each term. We also provide social gatherings to celebrate particular events such as refugee week and volunteer week culminating with a larger event at the end of the year.

What if I need to take a break?

You need to inform your VTS Officer each time you decide to take a break and note this break in tuition in your monthly TAR. If you are going away for an extended period we may be able to arrange for a substitute tutor for that period.

How will this volunteer opportunity help me to in my future goals?

Volunteering is a good step into work. Many volunteers gain skills and confidence through the VTS. A reference from the VTS can be obtained upon request.