



Education support—tertiary student accommodation

Defence Community Organisation

Defence Community Organisation can help families with tertiary accommodation costs when their child can't pursue their university studies in their current location.

Defence may reimburse fees for university residential accommodation when your child is studying away from your residential location.

ELIGIBILITY

You may be eligible for education assistance for your child's tertiary accommodation if you meet all of the following criteria:

- your child is under 25 years of age
- your child is studying a full-time undergraduate course at a tertiary institution within Australia
- your child is unable to take their selected course at an institution within your location of residence
- your child is not eligible for Youth Allowance for an independent full-time student living away from home
- you incur the costs of your child's accommodation.

HOW TO APPLY

You are required to provide appropriate supporting evidence when applying for education assistance. These requirements are detailed on the relevant application web form (AD303 – Tertiary students not a member's location of residence).

DEFINITIONS

Tertiary: includes Australian universities and TAFEs. Applicable undergraduate courses include certificates, diplomas and bachelor degrees. However bridging or other enabling courses are not included.

Location of residence: (PACMAN 1.3.35) is the area surrounding a member's residence. It also includes a member's personal location (PACMAN 1.3.55) if they are categorised MWD(U) or posted to a seagoing ship.

PERIOD OF COVER

Education assistance begins on the first day of tertiary education (including orientation week in the first year of study) and ends on the earliest of these events:

- the day the child completes the minimum requirements of the course
- after a total of three years' assistance, or six semesters over a number of years
- if any change of circumstances makes the child ineligible for education assistance (e.g. becomes eligible for Youth Allowance)



- the day the member ceases to be eligible, for any other reason (e.g. child withdraws from the course).

YOUTH ALLOWANCE

While we recognise that the application process can be time-consuming and that Centrelink's response times are also lengthy, the Education Support Programs team must sight official correspondence from Centrelink confirming that the child is not entitled to Youth Allowance, and the reasons for that decision. Results from Centrelink's payment estimator are not considered acceptable evidence.

SEMESTER BREAKS

Department of Defence recognises that some lease agreements require ongoing expenses over semester breaks to retain the tenancy. In these circumstances, it may be possible to provide reimbursement of accommodation expenses incurred over breaks at the end of a semester or academic year. This does not apply to accommodation expenses incurred prior to the start of the first academic year.

UTILITIES

In cases where you have incurred the cost of basic utilities (water, gas or electricity) at your student's residence, and the cost of accommodation is less than the maximum reimbursement, you may be able to claim the cost of the utilities.

REIMBURSEMENT

Education assistance is a reimbursement scheme. When eligibility criteria has been met and your application approved, after you have paid the accommodation costs, you can submit proof of payment for reimbursement.

PACMAN Chapter 8, Part 4, Division 5 sets out the maximum reimbursement amount for education assistance. Please note that this is typically less than the actual cost incurred.

You may seek reimbursement as often as necessary to reduce the financial burden of incurring the cost of accommodation. However, it is normally expected that you will seek reimbursement on a quarterly basis.

PROOF OF PAYMENT

In order to streamline your request for reimbursement, please ensure you submit proof of payment that meets both PACMAN and financial regulations. The following documents are required for reimbursement:

- a covering statement that clearly articulates the dates for which you are seeking reimbursement
- the rental agreement or fee schedule covering the dates requested
- the tenant ledger, showing the dates of accommodation to which the payments relate
- proof of payment, in the form of matching receipts in your name, or bank statements showing the movement of funds from your account to the accommodation provider's (note that this may require multiple people's bank statements if you do not pay the accommodation expenses directly)
- the tertiary institution's academic calendar.

REUNION TRAVEL

Your child may be eligible for two return journeys each year if you are entitled to education assistance, or would be, but are not incurring costs for the student's accommodation.

Your education assistance approval minute will provide the cost centre and account codes for claiming reunion travel. All requests for reunion travel are to be made through your administration unit. The Education Assistance Programs team are unable to process these applications.

Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services to ADF members and their families.

For more information on this factsheet email education.supportprograms@defence.gov.au.

For more information on Defence Community Organisation support services visit www.defence.gov.au/dco or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

