# Amendments to requirements for qualified educators in Outside School Hours Care Services (children over preschool age)

Frequently Asked Questions

## What are the amendments?

* The amendments are:
	+ to introduce a distinction between the first and all ‘other’ qualified educators by requiring a higher level of qualification for the first qualified educator than the other qualified educators
	+ to provide that some (mainly the ‘other’ qualified educators) are able to be ‘actively working towards’ qualification rather than having to hold a completed qualification.
* There is no change to the educator to child ratios in the Table in regulation 369.

## To what services do the amendments apply?

* The changes apply to Outside School Hours Care services that provide education and care to children over preschool age.

## I am an Outside School Hours Care service provider: how will the changes affect me?

* The changes will provide greater flexibility for employing qualified educators in the following two ways (subject at all times to the considerations in FAQs 4 and 6 below).
* Firstly, a distinction is being made between the ‘first’ and all ‘other’ qualified educators to allow there to be a difference in the qualification requirements for these positions, with some of the educators needing only to be ‘actively working towards’ a qualification instead of needing to have fully completed the approved qualification.
* The ‘actively working towards’ principle applies generally to all qualified educators other than the ‘first’ qualified educator.
* The ‘first’ qualified educator needs to have achieved (fully completed) their approved qualification and it is not sufficient to be ‘working towards’ the qualification. There is an exception to this where that ‘first’ qualified educator:
	+ has completed 50% of one of the following:
		- Degree or diploma in children’s studies covering the age range of 4-14 years under the Australian Qualifications Framework;
		- Diploma of Children’s Services (Outside School Hours Care); or
		- Diploma of School Age Education and Care,

and

* + that educator is enrolled for, and continuing to progress towards, completion of their qualification.
	+ In addition to providing for some educators to be able to be working towards their qualification, the range of approved qualifications for all qualified educators is being expanded to include Allied Health qualifications [see FAQ 5 below].

## I am an Outside School Hours Care service provider: are there any requirements that apply in addition to the minimum qualification requirements for the qualified educators?

* Yes. Meeting the minimum number of qualified educators may not necessarily satisfy all the regulatory requirements.
* Approved providers have an overriding obligation to ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
* Additionally, an approved provider or a nominated supervisor of a service must not place a person in day-to-day charge of the service unless they have taken reasonable steps to ensure the person has adequate knowledge, history (such as practical experience) and understanding to effectively supervise and manage the service.

## What are Allied Health qualifications?

* + Allied Health qualifications relate to a diverse range of professions that work with clients to identify and assess issues, provide treatment and support the acquisition of skills for ongoing recovery, self-management and reablement. These qualifications have the potential to provide added depth and richness to the education and care of children over preschool age by a service.
	+ The recognised allied health qualifications are defined by Allied Health Professions Australia and examples include art/music therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, audiology, dietetics, optometry and psychology. Further information may be viewed at: [https://ahpa.com.au/allied-health-professions/](https://ahpa.com.au/allied-health-professions/%20) .

## I am an Outside School Hours Care service provider: how do changes in circumstances affect the requirements that apply in addition to the minimum qualification requirements for the qualified educators?

* The circumstances in which education and care services are provided are dynamic (that is, constantly changing) and not static. Therefore, in addition to ensuring that minimum qualification requirements are met at the time educators are employed, approved providers and nominated supervisors will be required to continuously consider changing circumstances including the following:
	+ The overall (aggregate) capability of all the qualified educators together, having regard to each of their knowledge, abilities and experience.
	+ The overall (aggregate) needs of all the children being educated and cared for at any time. This means giving thought to the diversity of the needs of children at significantly differing stages of development and with variable and changing behavioural, emotional and social needs.
	+ The nature and circumstances of the physical environment including factors like the size and layout of the service’s facilities, and any changes to that environment.
* A core consideration for approved providers in employing qualified educators will be to ensure that the overall capability of those educators is at least adequate to meet the needs of the children in education and care at any point in time. For this reason, simply meeting the minimum qualified educator requirements may not necessarily be sufficient to meet all the regulatory requirements on an ongoing basis.

## I am currently enrolled in, but have not completed, a course that is approved for Outside School Hours Care educators: how will this affect me?

This situation applies mostly to qualify a person who is the second or a subsequent (not the first) qualified educator at a service. By meeting the ‘actively working towards’ qualification, the qualification requirements will be satisfied to be eligible to be employed in a service as an ‘other’ qualified educator. In the very specific cases referred to in FAQ 3 above, the qualification requirements for a ‘first’ qualified educator may be satisfied.

## Is there any change to the ratio of total number of educators (both qualified and unqualified together) to the number of children?

* No. The ratio is not changed.

## Is there any change to the ratio of the number of qualified educators to the number of children?

* No. The ratio is not changed.

## Why are there three exceptions to the principle that the ‘first’ qualified educator must be fully qualified?

* The completion of the Certificate III in the following two courses will qualify a person as a fully qualified educator:
	+ 1. Early Childhood Education and Care
		2. School Based Education Support.

Having given regard to the content of these courses, and the content of the Degree and Diplomas for which the exceptions are being made, the Regulatory Authority considers that completion of 50% of the Degree or Diploma may be regarded as equivalent to completion of the two Certificate III courses referred to above, and it is consistent to allow these exceptions to be considered fully qualified as a ‘first’ educator.

* The needs of the children over preschool age in OSHC differ from the needs of children in very early childhood education and care, because OSHC is before and/or after the main form of education (school) on any day, with children transitioning from or to home. Accordingly the socialisation and self-management aspects require greater focus by educators. The three exceptions referred to above (and in FAQ 3) are for qualifications that include knowledge and skills to be able to effectively manage an OSHC service to meet the children’s needs.

## Why are the changes being made?

* As a result of persisting workforce shortage issues in the sector exacerbated by the impacts of Covid-19, OSHC sector representatives approached Communities to discuss making changes to the requirements that would provide a broader range of people to be considered to be qualified.
* Following consultation with sector representatives and consideration of the education and care requirements of children in OSHC the amendments were developed and approved by the Hon Sabine Winton MLA, Minister for Early Childhood Education for implementation.

## Are any further changes being considered?

* At this time no further changes are being considered by WA.
* As there is considerable variation of requirements for qualified educators in OSHC across the jurisdictions, a national review is currently in progress as part of the National Workforce Strategy. This will allow for a review of the impacts of the current changes to determine whether any further changes should be considered. Further information on the review may be viewed at: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/review-nqf-staffing-and-qualification-regulations>

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