**Version date: 01/07/2023**



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Account by Administrator (ABA)

Get answers to common questions we receive about completing an Account by Administrator (ABA).

# When can I start an ABA?

Once you receive your VCAT letter in July, use our [online form to submit the ABA.](http://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/aba)

You need to wait until your VCAT letter arrives as it has your new Administrator Reference Number. This reference number changes every year.

You should gather documents containing financial information to help you complete the form. Also see: [What supporting documents do I need?](#_What_supporting_documents)

If you do not receive the letter by the end of July:

* email humanrights@vcat.vic.gov.au
* call 1300 01 8228 (press option 2) from Monday to Friday

Contact us if you are looking to lodge an ABA for any previous financial years.

**What is the due date for the ABA?**

VCAT must receive your ABA and fee payment by 30 September.

Contact us if you cannot complete it by the due date.

You need to write to VCAT to tell us your reasons for seeking a time extension and the date you intend to lodge the ABA.

Email humanrights@vcat.vic.gov.au or

Post VCAT Guardianship List

 GPO BOX 5408

Melbourne VIC 3001

# What if I do not lodge the ABA and/or pay the annual fee?

As an administrator, you are legally required to lodge an ABA each year.

If VCAT does not receive your ABA or fee payment by **30 September**, we may reassess the administration order, revoke it or appoint another administrator.

# What is the Annual Administration Fee?

If the represented person’s **average fortnightly gross income from all sources is $930 or more**, government regulations require you to pay an administration fee each year to VCAT.

The Annual Administration Fee is **$143.10**.

If you represent a person with another administrator, only one fee must be paid. Joint administrators must decide among themselves who will arrange for payment.

The annual fee is paid from the represented person’s funds.

# How do I pay the Annual Administration Fee?

You can pay the fee with any of the following options:

* Securepay – enter your credit card details in the online ABA
* BPAY – via Internet or telephone banking
* POST billpay – pay in person at any post office or outlet

*VCAT does not accept the payment of annual fees by personal cheque and AMEX or Diners Club cards.*

# What if I cannot pay the Annual Administration Fee?

VCAT can waive or reduce the Annual Administration Fee if the fee would cause financial hardship to the represented person.

Apply by completing the fee waiver section in the online ABA.

If we gave you permission to lodge a paper-based ABA, you need to complete the fee waiver section of the form.

Include your reasons and your supporting documents.

# Are there any other fees?

State Trustees Limited (STL) must independently examine ABAs submitted by private administrators. You need to pay a fee directly to STL for this service. VCAT cannot waive this fee.

If we appoint a professional administrator (for example, a trustee company, a lawyer or an accountant), we will specify the remuneration in the orders appointing them as administrator.

# How do I log in to the ABA form?

### First time users

To use the online form, select **Create an account**.

Enter your email address and choose a password.

You will need the VCAT Reference Number and Administrator Reference Number which is printed on your VCAT letter.

### Existing users

You will need the VCAT Reference Number and Administrator Reference Number which is printed on the letter we sent in July and you will need to have access to the email address you used to lodge your previous ABA.

Some fields will be pre-populated based on information submitted last year. Check and update details that are not correct.

# What if I forgot my password?

Select **Reset my password** on the login screen.

You will be sent an email with a link to change your password.

# Can I save my progress on the form?

Yes. On the current screen you are on, select **Save.**

You can then quit at any time and resume later.

Make sure you complete and submit the form by 30 September.

# What is the Administrator Reference Number?

It is a16-digit number that VCAT assigns to your ABA. You need to enter this number at the start of the ABA form.

A **new Administrator Reference Number** is assigned to your ABA each year.

We sent you the newreferencenumber in a VCAT letter sent in July. Make sure you enter the new number.

# What if I do not have my Administrator Reference Number?

You can call us on **1300 01 8228** (press option 2) from Monday to Friday.

Alternatively, you can email humanrights@vcat.vic.gov.au

# What is the accounting period for the ABA?

Usually this is the previous financial year, 1 July to 30 June.

Check the VCAT Administration Order for the accounting period.

# How do I calculate the represented person’s fortnightly income?

The online form automatically calculates this figure for you.

If you have permission to lodge a paper-based ABA, you must calculate the fortnightly income yourself.

Divide the total income amount by the number of fortnights you are reporting. .

**Income ÷ 27 = Fortnightly income**

# What supporting documents do I need?

You must support monetary amounts you enter in the form with evidence. It is better to provide as much documentation as you can.

Documents you could use to support your ABA include:

* bank statements for the whole accounting period – these must include the full name of the account holder, BSB and account number
* Centrelink pension income statement
* receipts for single expenses or purchases over $1,000
* receipts for large combined expenses totalling more than $500 but less than $1,000 (e.g. holidays, education or respite care)
* dividend or trust statements
* Statement of Adjustments (i.e. property settlement for sale or purchase of property)
* invoices or statements for accommodation or nursing home residence
* mortgage statements, loan agreements or credit card statements
* sale or purchase contract notes for shares and investments
* superannuation account summaries or statements.

Do not attach or send receiptsfor small items under $500, such as food, shopping, entertainment, pharmacy or transport receipts.

# How do I provide supporting documents?

Upload your files on the online form under **Supporting documents**.

You must follow these guidelines to upload files correctly:

* use PDF, DOC, DOCX, CSV, XLS, XLSX, JPG or PNG file extensions
* each file must be under 10MB in size.
* do not provide links to cloud-based platforms such as OneDrive, Dropbox and Google Drive
* do not upload documents that are protected with passwords or security codes.

# How do I get advice about my role as an administrator?

Contact us by email or by post for advice about:

* sale of property
* purchase of a car
* gifts or loans or
* any other major purchase or expense.

We must get your questions in writing. Email us at humanrights@vcat.vic.gov.au or mail to VCAT Guardianship List, PO Box 5408 Melbourne VIC 3001.

Do not lodge your request for advice as part of lodging your ABA.

# How do I get legal advice?

VCAT cannot give you legal advice. Seek legal help if you are unsure about your legal options. The following information and services may be able to help you:

* [free or low-cost and paid legal services](https://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/steps-to-resolve-your-case/when-applying-to-start-a-case/free-or-low-cost-legal-services)
* [find a private lawyer](https://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/steps-to-resolve-your-case/when-applying-to-start-a-case/can-i-use-a-lawyer-or-professional#find-lawyer)
* [customer support at VCAT](https://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/customer-support-at-vcat)
* [Office of the Public Advocate](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/guardianship-administration)

What if I do not have a computer to submit the ABA online?

Public computers or tablets are available at local libraries and community centres.

# What if I want to complete an ABA on paper?

We recommend using the online form because they are processed faster and works out if you need to pay the Annual Administration Fee.

If you want to submit a hard copy (paper-based) ABA form, you need to ask VCAT for permission.

Email humanrights@vcat.vic.gov.au or call 1300 01 8228(press option 2) Monday to Friday.

If VCAT allows you to lodge a paper-based ABA you will need to calculate the fortnightly income of the represented person. This figure will be the represented person's annual income (excluding proceeds from the sale of property or assets) divided by 26.

If the represented person's **fortnightly income from all sources is** **less than $930**, you must complete the payment slip on the back of the VCAT letter (sent to you in July ) and return this with the ABA to confirm no fee is payable.

Do not send the payment slip without the ABA.

When completing the form, you will need to manually calculate the represented person's total pensions. Add each pension payment for the financial year as they appear on the represented person's bank statements. The figure stated on Centrelink PAYG statements is understated for ABA purposes.

# What if a represented person has more than one administrator?

Details of all appointed administrators must be provided.

But only one ABA must be submitted and one fee to be paid.

Joint administrators must discuss among themselves who will arrange for payment.

If we give you permission to lodge a paper-based ABA form, all administrators must sign the Acknowledgement section.

# What if my financial summary information does not balance?

A 5% margin applies if the ABA doesn’t balance.

If the margin is over 5%, go back and check all financial information you have entered.

If the ABA still does not balance, you must explain why in the form.

# Should I keep a copy of the ABA?

Yes, keep a copy of the ABA and all supporting documents for a period of five years.

If you use our online form, you can save or print a copy of the ABA before submitting it.

# Do I need to give a copy of the ABA to anyone else?

Only if the VCAT Administration Order directs you to provide a copy of the ABA to someone else.

If you use our online form, you can save or print a copy of the ABA before submitting it.

# What if I need to change my details but already submitted by ABA?

Notify VCAT of changes in writing by either:

* email –humanrights@vcat.vic.gov.au
* Post VCAT Guardianship List

GPO BOX 5408

Melbourne VIC 3001

# What happens to my ABA?

1. VCAT checks your ABA. If there is missing information or documents, we contact you.
2. We forward your ABA to State Trustees Limited (STL) to examine. It may take up to six months after you submit for STL to complete their examination. Every year they examine thousands of ABAs.
3. Once STL completes their examination, they advise VCAT that the ABA is accepted for the accounting period or they need further information to finalise your ABA. We notify you of the outcome in writing.
4. If further information or documents are required to finalise the ABA, we send you a copy of the STL report together with a letter outlining the steps you need to take by a due date.
5. We can also schedule a VCAT hearing where we discuss the examination report with you. A VCAT member will decide if the ABA can be accepted and finalised based on further information or evidence you provide. VCAT will notify you of the member’s decision in writing.

# What if I have already lodged my ABA and need to provide more supporting documents?

 Return to your submitted application from the [online dashboard](https://vcat-aba.iapply.com.au/#/dashboard). Select the application that requires more supporting documentation and navigate to the ‘Lodge additional documentation’ tab.

You will be asked to upload more documents and submit.

Enter the same login details you used to submit your ABA, including the Administrator Reference Number in your VCAT letter from July.

# Does State Trustees Limited (STL) charge an examination fee?

Yes, pay the fee directly to STL.

STL are legally appointed by VCAT to conduct independent examinations of ABAs submitted by private administrators.

STL examination fees are mentioned in the VCAT Administration Order. This fee must be paid from the represented person’s funds.

The examination fee depends on the value of the estate of the represented person. STL will let you know the exact fee in writing.

VCAT cannot waive an STL fee. If you need help to pay the STL fee contact STL directly.

# Do professional administrators charge fees?

If we appoint a **professional administrator** (e.g. trustee company, lawyer or accountant), the administrator will charge a fee for the services they provide. This is stated in the VCAT Administration Order.

Most private administrators do not receive payment for being an administrator. If there are exceptional circumstances, we can order payment.

# What if the represented person has passed away?

Administrators are legally required to advise VCAT in writing.

We need proof of the represented person’s death, such as a copy of the death certificate.

We will advise you if you still need to submit the ABA.

Keep a copy of the ABA and all supporting documents for a period of five years.

Email humanrights@vcat.vic.gov.au or post to VCAT Guardianship List, GPO Box 5408, Melbourne VIC 3001.