



Australasian College of Optical Dispensing

RTO Code 45068

# Student Handbook

## Copyright

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ACOD  
3/43A Ethel Street  
Seaforth NSW 2092

## Development

ACOD ensures that its resources are in line with the training package, according to information provided by the official National Register of Information on [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)

We have procedures in place to ensure all resources are reviewed regularly and remain up to date with the current relevant training package

## Version No 2 December 2018

### RELEASE RECORD

Version No.	Version Date	Description of change
1	30/07/2018	Initial release
2	16/12/2018	Removal of non-applicable policy; edited plagiarism policy to a discipline policy; updates to Recognition of Prior Learning policy; added child policy
3		
4		
5		

ACOD Pty Ltd trading as **ACOD** is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), RTO Code 45068. ACOD is registered in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Training Framework (AQTF) to provide training and qualifications within a defined scope of registration. We operate throughout Australia and are registered the Australia Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

### ***CONTACT INFORMATION***

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For further information on our services please visit our website: [www.acod.edu.au](http://www.acod.edu.au)

### ***IMPORTANT NOTE***

**Please read and keep this document for your reference.**

ACOD policies, procedures and forms are available via our website. You must ensure you are aware of our current policies and procedures by accessing our policy section at [www.acod.edu.au](http://www.acod.edu.au)

ACOD gratefully acknowledges the subsidies by the NSW Department of Industry, skills and Regional development under the NSW Government through the Smart and Skilled Program.

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## Disclaimer

The information contained in the Student Handbook is intended for general student information purposes only. The information is for students participating in subsidised training under the Smart and Skilled Program, funded by the NSW Department of Industry, skills and Regional development.

Students are advised to seek individual advice from ACOD regarding their eligibility, learning needs and the fee structure to undertake an approved qualification under the Smart and Skilled Program subsidised or funded training program.

No liability is assumed for the accuracy of the information within the Student Handbook. ACOD accepts no responsibility for the editorial content of this Handbook although every precaution has been taken to provide accurate, current information. No liability is assumed for damages arising from the use of the information contained within this Handbook.

Due to the specific nature of the Smart and Skilled Program funding guidelines, some sections of the Handbook are taken directly from the following documents:

- *The Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy 2017*
- *The Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines*
- *The Smart and Skilled Consumer Protection Strategy*
- *NSW Recognition Framework*

The sections of this Handbook covered by the above documents include:

- Eligibility criteria
- Fees and Fee categories
- Concessions
- Exemptions
- Fee-Free Scholarships
- Deferral, Withdrawal or Transfer of Training

Information regarding the Unique Student Identifier (USI) is derived from [www.usi.gov.au/](http://www.usi.gov.au/)

Please note: Smart and Skilled Program policies and guidelines and other relevant legislation are subject to change. Please contact an ACOD representative to check regarding the relevant fees payable for the course and your individual circumstances.

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## Welcome to ACOD!

This Student Handbook provides an overview to ACOD's policies and procedures

ACOD (Australasian College of Optical Dispensing) is a registered training organisation (RTO Code: 45068), specialising in the training of Optical Dispensers in Australia, through the successful delivery and assessment of the Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing. Our value proposition is to offer flexible, comprehensive courses to potential optical dispensers in Australia. The course will be offered in a blended delivery mode, with much of the theory being covered with online resources, whilst the practical components of the course will be covered and assessed in the ACOD training room.

### VET Quality Framework

ACOD is involved in the process of delivering nationally recognised training courses. ACOD is registered as an RTO, under the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 to undertake these services, having met and maintaining compliance with the VET Quality Framework standards and requirements.

ACOD is audited by ASQA to these requirements on an ongoing basis. As the Commonwealth Government established regulator, ASQA has the authority to manage, audit and deregister RTOs.

### Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for qualifications in the Australian education and training system. ACOD complies with the AQF as a condition of its the RTO's registration.

The AQF recognises ACOD as an 'authorised issuing organisations', able to issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment to students that have satisfied the relevant competency requirements.

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## AQF Recognition

One of the most important features of the VET Quality Framework is the recognition of training organisations and AQF qualifications, including Statements of Attainment.

ACOD accepts testamurs issued by another registered training organisation and ensures that all Certificates and Statements of Attainment issued by any other registered training organisation are accepted as valid.

A testamur may be a Statement of Attainment for specific topics or units of competency, or it may be a complete Qualification such as certificate or diploma.

## Unique Student Identifier

ACOD ensures that it handles individual's personal information in accordance with the requirements of the Privacy Act 1988 and the Student Identifiers Act 2014.

Please refer to the Privacy section of this manual for further information.

ACOD applies has published on its website information for clients on how to obtain a student Identifier.

Where ACOD applies for a USI on behalf of an individual it ensures it has the authorisation of that individual. ACOD provides the required USI Privacy Notice to all individuals, on whose behalf it is applying for a USI.

ACOD ensures the security of USIs and all related documentation under its control, including information stored in its the RTO' student management systems.

ACOD securely destroys personal information which it collects from individuals solely for the purpose of applying for a USI on their behalf as soon as practicable after it have made the application or the information is no longer needed for that purpose, except in cases where ACOD is required by or under any law to retain it. ACOD applies for or verifies students' USI's at the time of enrolment.

ACOD only issues a qualification or statement of attainment to a student after the student has provided their verified USI or ACOD has applied for a USI on their behalf.

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## Legislative Compliance

ACOD ensures it complies with Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation and regulatory requirements relevant to its operations. ACOD is subject to a variety of legislation related to training and assessment, as well as general business practice.

This includes, but is not limited to, compliance with:

- The National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011, and the legislative instruments it enables;
- Workplace health and safety legislation and regulations;
- Anti-discrimination legislation and regulations; and
- Consumer protection requirements.

ACOD ensures its personnel and clients are informed of any changes to legislative and regulatory requirements that affect the services delivered, through internal communication activities. Please refer to the Communications section of this manual.

All ACOD personnel hold an awareness and understanding of the legislation relevant to their position. If uncertain as to the application of any piece of legislation to a specific action or transaction, relevant personnel must seek clarification from their relevant ACOD manager.

A list of relevant industry legislation involved in each service delivered by ACOD is maintained in the individual Training and Assessment Strategy for each training product. Legislative needs noted in strategies are then implemented throughout all resource materials used in services provision.

All Australian legislation is accessible through the following website:

[www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au)

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## Workplace Health and Safety

The following Policies and Procedures with regard to health, safety and the environment apply to all ACOD training personnel and students engaged in training activities of the designated site.

### Duty of care

Duty of care is a legal responsibility, requiring all training personnel and students to act responsibly and work in accordance with the safety requirements set by regulations and by ACOD. All staff and students must take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others and cooperate with designated site training personnel in their efforts to comply with health and safety requirements. All related accidents and injuries must be reported to the manager or designated site manager immediately.

ACOD's operations and services comply with all legislative requirements and the organisation strives to continuously improve WH & S performance on an ongoing basis. ACOD's responsibility to all training personnel and students is to:

1. Provide a safe and well maintained work area;
2. Implement new WH & S requirements when introduced as well as monitoring and improving existing procedures; and
3. Provide effective support and rehabilitation for staff who are injured whilst at work.

ACOD staff should ensure:

- Work and training areas are clean, tidy and free of obstruction at all times; and
- Centre WH & S Policy is adhered to.

### Policy

ACOD supports and undertakes to comply with relevant Workplace Health and Safety Legislation and as such designated sites must have a Workplace Health and Safety Policy. ACOD management and all training personnel take responsibility for providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work and training environment and will ensure that business is conducted in an environmentally

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sound manner. In implementing the Code of Practice detailed in the Work Health and Safety Act, designated sites will take all reasonable steps to protect the health, safety and welfare of staff and students at each site.

ACOD supports a specific preventive strategy for control of health and safety issues in the workplace comprising:

- Detection and assessment of problems through training personnel and team meetings; and
- Monitoring the effectiveness of changes implemented.

In fulfilling the objectives of this Policy, management is committed to regular consultation with staff and students to ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly along with health and safety issues.

A summary of the relevant Worker's Compensation Act will be displayed in the designated site and will contain the designated site's details, including the name and address of the designated site's insurer and the details of the rehabilitation policy. ACOD training personnel will be made aware of their responsibility to comply with Work Health and Safety Standards, regulations and relevant Codes of Practice through induction and ongoing training.

### **Emergency/Evacuation Procedures**

Students will be made aware of all emergency and evacuation procedures at the first training session.

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## Code of Practice

Thank you for choosing ACOD as your training organisation. Our Code of Practice is an important document, outlining and summarising a range of ACOD policies and procedures. ACOD is committed to providing:

***“quality outcomes to industry and individuals through education and related services”***

To achieve this goal, ACOD is focused on the following goals:

- exceeding customer expectations at every opportunity
- marketing only high quality courses
- linking all services to business systems and individual needs
- investing in people in our, and other businesses
- supporting innovation, originality and efficient use of resources

## Access & Equity Arrangements

ACOD is committed to complying with Commonwealth and State legislation and policies regarding access, equity and cultural diversity. ACOD strives to maximise opportunities for access, participation and outcomes for all clients within the vocational education, training and employment system. ACOD ensures the provision of access and equity services to clients as an integral part of all services and will undertake to identify and, where possible, remove barriers that prevent people from accessing and participating in our courses.

## Enrolment & Induction Arrangements

An enrolment session is conducted with all participants, prior to enrolment, into a course by an ACOD trainer. The purpose of your enrolment session is to deliver a quality client service and ensure that all information and your needs are determined before the commencement of the program. You will receive the following materials in this enrolment session:

- 
- Training and Assessment Plan
  - ACOD Code of Practice
  - Recognition Materials
  - Training Materials
  - Assessment Requirements

The ACOD trainer completing the enrolment process will ensure all paperwork is completed, including the Negotiated Course Arrangements and training and assessment plan.

### ***Guarantee***

As a Registered Training Organisation, ACOD guarantees to complete training and / or assessment once the participant has commenced study in their chosen qualification or course. For any reason if services cannot be completed by ACOD, this guarantee includes the placement of the participant at another suitable RTO for completion.

### ***User Choice Arrangements***

As a Registered Training Organisation, ACOD is required to provide clients with a statement of their rights under User Choice. That is, that you and your Employer are able to negotiate a range of program services, including the:

- selection, content and sequencing of modules and/or units of competency;
- timing, location and mode of delivery;
- trainer/facilitator;
- conduct of assessments; and
- how the training is evaluated.

ACOD clearly outlines to our clients the options that are available, including information on any additional charges for customisation or additional training above that required for qualification outcome. When the training program outline is being prepared for traineeships/apprenticeships, ACOD provides clients with a full list of elective options available for all stages within the course or Training package.

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## Training & Assessment Arrangements

Competency Based Training (CBT) and Assessment is a flexible form of training that aims to produce a workforce with the knowledge and skills which industry requires. Under CBT, we have competency standards. The concept of competency focuses on what is expected of an employee in the workplace rather than on the learning process, and embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments. Competency is a broad concept that includes all aspects of work performance and not only narrow task skills. Each unit of competency describes the work performed in the workplace. Clients undertaking training and assessment receive a competent result when successful workplace performance is demonstrated.

Clients may request access to personal records at any time. Requests to view personal records should be made in writing. ACOD management permit access to records only by clients, on request, and ACOD team.

Our team need to access your records to update planning of your training or assessment program, to record training undertaken and assessment outcomes, qualifications and related data, and to gather information for reporting purposes.

It is an assessment requirement that evidence submitted by participants in any assessment should be *copies only*, and that all participants should retain copies of all work.

ACOD accepts no loss, liability or responsibility for the loss of assessment work. Participants are also advised that ACOD does not return assessment work / portfolios submitted – samples of participant assessment work will be kept on file for audit purposes.

General assessment preference is to receive all assessment work clearly marked, handed to your assessor or via email as the ideal method – if in hard copy in unbound unit batches.



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## **Fees / exemptions / concessions and Refunds Arrangements**

Payment plans are outlined to clients before they enrol and the cancellation / refund arrangements applicable. Participants who are potentially eligible for fee exemptions or concessions are encouraged to apply for these exemptions / concessions during their post registration discussions, before they enroll. *ACOD's Course fees agreement* will then be sent to finalise the fees and payment plan.

ACOD guarantees that no additional charges will be imposed during the period covered by the course being undertaken.

Refunds may also be sought and negotiated on an individual basis with ACOD, where delivery has commenced. In this instance a percentage of client fees will be refunded, dependent on the percentage of the service provided. Enrolment fees paid by clients for any program cover administrative components of service provision and are non-refundable.

All ACOD course fees are designed to minimise the impact of fees and charges on the client, through flexible payment plans.

## **AQF Recognition Arrangements**

ACOD recognises all Certificates and Statements of Attainment issued by any other registered training organisation as valid credentials. Your Qualification or Statement of Attainment issued by ACOD will be recognised Australia wide under these arrangements.

## **Recognition and Credit Transfer Arrangements**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) allows clients to receive recognition and credit for the knowledge and skills they have, no matter how and where they were attained, including overseas.

Credit transfer arrangements allow for clients to receive credit for units of competency they may have already completed. Credit transfer involves qualified trainers aligning units of competency already completed in previous credentials with qualifications currently being undertaken.

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Please refer to our RPL Information Flyer for further information.

## **Client Welfare, Support, Safety and Special Needs**

### ***Arrangements***

ACOD embraces the responsibility of ensuring that all clients are supported in acquiring the knowledge and skills sought through their training and assessment program.

All ACOD trainers are aware of and know how to use available company or external resources, or be able to confidently refer clients to appropriate tutoring and community support services.

All clients with identified Literacy, Language & Numeracy, or other special needs, are encouraged to discuss their needs and customisation requirements with their trainer, who may access extra support and modify course materials as appropriate.

Students under 18 years of age require the co-signature of a parent or guardian on the Training and Assessment plan commencement declaration, and the State Training Contract (if a traineeship).

Students under 18 years of age are encouraged to seek support from their Workplace supervisor, ACOD trainers or support services such as Kids Help Line Ph: 1800 55 1800, Life Line Ph: 131 114, Youth Help Line Ph: 1300 13 17 19, should they, at anytime feel unsafe or uncomfortable in a given situation.

### ***Program Evaluations***

ACOD is committed to ensuring quality delivery and assessment of all training. The formal evaluation process is a major strategy in the continual improvement of all service provision. All program training and assessment services are evaluated on a periodical basis, with all participants receiving opportunities to complete questionnaires and provide feedback on ACOD's services.

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## Complaints Arrangements

At ACOD our clients and employees are the most important asset. Management sets direction and guidelines, yet the running of the company greatly depends on the contribution and feedback from staff and clients. In a positive and open environment, people feel they can contribute and grow, and this is the climate we strive to create at ACOD. Sometimes there are hurdles to overcome, but everything can be resolved as long as an intention exists to solve the matter in a positive fashion. The following problem resolution framework has therefore been implemented for all stakeholders raising a complaint, issue or disciplinary problem, with a desire to resolve matters as positive adults:

All employees and clients are invited to discuss matters with their first point of contact (trainer/supervisor) openly and positively.

If the complaint or issue cannot be resolved efficiently and professionally, the employee or client demonstrating positive intentions to solve the matter may contact ACOD Management directly to discuss options to resolve an issue.

During the course of the resolution, both parties may seek guidance and/or support from a peer, or trade association, union representative, New Apprenticeship Centre or State Training Authority.

All stages of problem resolution process must be documented using an Opportunity/Issue Report and notes provided to all parties involved, including the outcomes of the complaint/issue and reasons for the decisions made.

ACOD confirms its commitment to investigate and act on any complaint or issue raised, and also to take appropriate action in any case where complaints are substantiated.

### Appeals

ACOD also provides clients with a formal appeals process, which draws on a commitment to all parties understanding their rights and responsibilities in the assessment process.

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If you object to actions taken or decisions made by ACOD trainers in conducting assessment services, you have the right to lodge an appeal. You also have the right to lodge an appeal against competency decisions made if:

- you believe that the outcome is invalid
- you feel that the process was invalid, inappropriate or unfair

Before making a formal appeal, you are required to discuss the matter with the relevant trainer in an effort to reach an agreement. Your trainer will undertake to reassess the decision that has been made.

If you are still unhappy, you must lodge a formal appeal in writing to ACOD management.

Upon receiving a formal appeal, ACOD will appoint a third party trainer to try to resolve the issue. Any decision recommended by the third party is not binding to either party.

If you are still unhappy, ACOD will appoint another registered training organisation to review the appeal. This registered training organisation will:

- uphold the appeal
- reject the appeal
- recommend further evidence gathering by either party

If you are still unhappy, you have a right of appeal to your relevant State Training Authority (STA) in each state and territory. All stages of the appeals process must be documented using an Opportunity/Issue Report and notes provided to all parties involved, including the outcomes of the appeal and reasons for the decisions made.

ACOD confirms its commitment to investigate and act on any appeal raised, and also to take appropriate action in any case where appeals are substantiated.

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## ACOD Alcohol and other Drug Awareness

ACOD is committed to supporting the prevention and minimisation of drug and alcohol problems in the community.

In line with this commitment, ACOD provides awareness through information and training to its employees and to participants on:

- provision of key contacts for information and advice on the above
- the impact on health, workplaces, resources, families and communities of drug and alcohol abuse
- strategies to assist people in minimisation of harm from drug and alcohol use and abuse
- provision of key contacts for information and advice on the above.

Comprehensive awareness and other information is also available at the Australia Government website:

[www.australia.gov.au/drugs](http://www.australia.gov.au/drugs)

## ACOD Participant Privacy and Confidentiality

ACOD undertakes to comply with the Privacy Act 1998 and all information privacy principles in the provision of all services to clients.

Private and confidential information includes company documentation and operations, financial and payroll information and all client and company records.

All ACOD staff members undergo Privacy training as a component of the ACOD induction training and sign a declaration that they will keep and maintain all information private and confidential as appropriate within and external to ACOD premises. ACOD Privacy Protection Principles are:

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### ***Principle 1 - Collection***

ACOD will only collect personal information that is necessary for one or more of its functions or activities. ACOD will only collect personal information by lawful and fair means and not in an unreasonably intrusive way.

ACOD Client Handbook will be used to disseminate information about Personal Information and Privacy to all clients.

### ***Principle 2 - Use & Disclosure***

ACOD will only use or disclose personal information about an individual when the individual has consented to the use or disclosure

### ***Principle 3 - Data Quality***

ACOD will take reasonable steps to make sure that the personal information it collects, uses or discloses is accurate, complete and up-to-date.

### ***Principle 4 - Data Security***

ACOD will take reasonable steps to protect the personal information it holds from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

ACOD will take reasonable steps to destroy or permanently de-identify personal information if it is no longer needed for any purpose for which the information may be used.

### ***Principle 5 - Openness***

ACOD, through its client handbook, clearly expresses information to clients on its management of personal information. On request by an individual, ACOD will take reasonable steps to let the individual know, generally, what sort of personal information it holds, for what purposes, and how it collects, uses, and discloses that information.

### ***Principle 6 - Access and Correction***

Personal information held by ACOD about an individual, will be provided to the individual on request by the individual, in a form or manner suitable to the individual's reasonable needs.

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***Principle 7 - Identifiers***

ACOD will not adopt as its own identifier of an individual, an identifier of the individual that has been assigned by any other organisation or service provider.

***Principle 8 – Anonymity***

It is not legal or practicable for ACOD to provide any type of program or services without requiring client identification.

***Principle 9 - Transborder Data Flows***

ACOD will not transfer personal information about an individual to any other location other than ACOD company offices.

***Principle 10 - Sensitive Information***

ACOD will not collect Sensitive Information about an individual unless:

- i. the individual has consented; or
- ii. the collection is required by law.

***Principle 11 - Privacy of Network Communications***

When installing, operating, or maintaining its computer network, ACOD will take whatever measures are practicable, or are required by law, to ensure the privacy of communications passing over its network.

***Principle 12 - New Services and Developments***

ACOD will consider the privacy impact of new business processes and services before they are introduced.

***Principle 13 - Compliance Audit***

As part of its continuous improvement process, ACOD will maintain an internal audit program to ensure its Privacy Protection Principles and policies remain appropriate and that ACOD operates in compliance with those Principles and policies.

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## Client Evidence Collection – Privacy

As a registered training organisation, ACOD needs to sight and collect a range of evidence in order to deem candidates competent in their courses. In some cases, this requires the sighting of confidential client information / details / records / processes in order to confirm competency.

While ACOD is bound by the Privacy Act, and all records are secure and confidential, wherever possible, ACOD will utilise non confidential forms of evidence for assessment purposes, or will request ‘mock’ or ‘example’ documentation, rather than actual client information.

If there are Privacy concerns for your client’s information or records, you should discuss these concerns with your ACOD trainer and identify alternative sources of evidence to complete your course program.

## Employability Skills Summaries

ACOD students and employers should be advised that *Employability Skills Summaries* for training package qualifications delivered by ACOD can be downloaded from <http://employabilityskills.training.com.au>

### Further Information

ACOD: 0416 095 263

ASQA 1300 701 801

[www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)

[www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)



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## Quality

Quality means meeting or exceeding conformance with the VET Quality Framework standards and also customer expectations and requirements. Continuous improvement is defined as the progressive step-by-step improvement of every aspect of work. Steps may often be small, achieving impact by the sheer weight of accumulation. Improvements should be cost efficient and any improvement should not transfer work to another area. The major focus of continuous improvement is to improve quality.

The primary focus of continuous improvement at ACOD is on the prevention of errors before they occur, rather than their correction afterwards. The risk management process examines tasks and work processes with the aim of eliminating errors, waste and inconsistency. The basis for implementation of ACOD's continuous improvement process includes;

- Prevention of errors rather than correction
- Identification elimination of waste
- Identifying the need to improve inputs
- Focus on improvement at every step in the process
- Understanding of inconsistency
- Importance of small step improvements
- Involvement of all staff
- Empowerment of staff and employee participation

### Importance of measurement

The process of continuous improvement involves ACOD team members at all levels and provides employees with an 'ownership' of the activity, whether this be at an operational, supervisory or managerial level.

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## Internal Audits

ACOD management undertakes monthly internal audits of all operations, based on an Internal Audit Schedule, aligning relevant program and operational areas to relevant times throughout the year for audits to occur.

## Continuous Improvement Process

ACOD promotes the feedback and improvement process through the use of a range of strategies, including:

- Open communication lines and meeting structure to facilitate the raising and resolving of suggestions and issues.
- Web based continuous improvement system, including the raising of suggestions, issues and improvements, review, action and close off of items.

ACOD maintains a 'Continuous Improvement Register' for recording the receipt of suggestions and issues and associated actions. ACOD management meet on a monthly basis to:

- Conduct audits to review policies, procedures and work performance
- Monitor compliance with defined standards
- Reviews suggestions, improvements and solutions proposed by staff
- Report to staff on improvements made

## Preventative Actions

ACOD undertakes a range of measures for preventative actions, including a complaint risk management approach and strategies, and regular audit functions to determine possible and actual performance.

These activities determine potential issues and their causes, evaluate possible preventative actions, implement appropriate preventative risk strategies, record results of actions undertaken and review these actions on an appropriate basis.

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## Corrective Actions

ACOD undertakes a range of measures to eliminate or resolve issues and actions to prevent reoccurrence, including a complaint risk management approach and strategies, opportunity issue reports and corrective actions as above, and regular audit functions to determine possible and actual performance.

These activities review issues and complaints, and their causes, evaluate corrective actions to resolve the issue and prevent reoccurrence, implement appropriate actions, record results of actions undertaken and reviewing these actions on an appropriate basis.

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## Access, Equity, Student Support & Welfare

ACOD is committed to maintaining an inclusive and diverse workforce and student services.

*Access and equity* means policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that VET is responsive to the individual needs of all students including those whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes.

Access and Equity principles include:

- Equity for all people through the fair and appropriate allocation of resources;
- Equality of opportunity for all people without discrimination;
- Access for all people to appropriate quality training and assessment services;
- Increased opportunity for people to participate in training.

Disadvantaged groups include the following groups who traditionally have been under-represented in Vocational Education and Training:

- People with a disability;
- Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders;
- Women;
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- People in rural and remote areas; and
- Long term unemployed.

### ***Inclusive Learning***

Inclusive learning is about a fair go for everyone. Everyone has a right to learn, everyone can learn, but many people do not get fair access to learning opportunities.

#### **Everyone learns differently**

Everyone can learn. Good trainers partner with Students to empower them to achieve to their potential. ACOD trainers ensure students feel connected, supported and valued as individuals and as part of a community of students.

#### **Students bring existing knowledge and skills**

ACOD trainers ensure teaching and learning activities have contextual application and relevance. Learning is productive, meaningful and engaging, and builds on the student's existing capabilities.

**Five core skills underpin all learning**

The skills of oral communication, reading, writing, numeracy and learning need special attention. ACOD trainers actively recognise the need for students to continually update and build core skills for new contexts and are supported to identify and action student skills gaps.

**Being inclusive is everyone's responsibility**

ACOD trainers use a variety of training methods, encourage respectful interaction, seek feedback from Students, collaborate with specialists when they need extra help and continually update their skills.

**Key Inclusive Learning Actions****Understand differences in the Student cohort**

ACOD ensures it understands the vocational aspirations and support needs of students prior to enrolment to ensure they are enrolled in the right level course and have the right mix of supports available to help them succeed.

This includes the use of pre-enrolment reviews and guidance to students.

All ACOD trainers have access to information on student diversity.

**Access skills and expertise in addressing difference**

Introductory inclusive learning skills are embedded in ACOD personnel induction programs and ongoing professional development on inclusive learning is supported.

**Listen to the Student**

ACOD ensures it is collecting the perspectives of students, considering student views in the way courses are organised and support is provided.

**Help students choose an appropriate learning pathway**

ACOD provides students with flexible options, advice and guidance on the best pathway towards their vocational outcome, and allows a diverse range of students to access the training.

All Students are provided with information and guidance on course requirements and outcomes prior to enrolment.

**Develop the core skills of students**

All ACOD trainers have the basic knowledge they need to identify and respond to language, literacy and numeracy needs.

All trainers are encouraged and supported to complete the TAELLN411 Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills unit of competency.

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## Support for Students with Specific Needs

ACOD is committed to complying with Commonwealth and State legislation and policies regarding access, equity and cultural diversity. This legislation includes the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* and the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Cth)*.

ACOD also maintains compliance with the *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)* including processes relating to:

- Enrolment;
- Participation;
- Curriculum development, accreditation and delivery;
- Student support services; and
- Elimination of harassment and victimisation.

ACOD strives to maximise opportunities for access, participation and outcomes for all Students within the vocational education, training and employment system. ACOD undertakes to identify and, where possible, remove barriers that prevent individuals from accessing and participating in our services. ACOD is committed to treating all prospective and actual students on the same basis.

### **On the same basis**

A person with a disability is able to seek admission to, or apply for enrolment in, an institution on the same basis as a prospective student without a disability if the person has opportunities and choices in admission or enrolment that are comparable with those offered to other prospective student without disabilities. ACOD ensures it treats prospective students with a disability on the same basis as prospective Students without a disability as it makes any decisions about admission or enrolment on the basis that reasonable adjustments will be provided.

An adjustment is a measure or action (or a group of measures or actions) taken by ACOD that has the effect of assisting a student with a disability:

- In relation to an admission or enrolment — to apply for the admission or enrolment;
  - In relation to a course or program — to participate in the course or program;
- and

- In relation to facilities or services — to use the facilities or services;
- On the same basis as a Student without a disability, and includes an aid, a facility, or a service that the Student requires because of his or her disability.

**Reasonable adjustments**

An adjustment is reasonable in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected. In assessing whether a particular adjustment for a student is reasonable, ACOD has regard to all the relevant circumstances and interests, including the following:

- The student’s disability;
- The views of the student or the student’s associate;
- The effect of the adjustment on the student, including the effect on the student’s:
  - Ability to achieve learning outcomes; and
  - Ability to participate in courses or programs; and
  - Independence;
- The effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including ACOD, personnel and other students; and
- The costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

**Student Rights and ACOD Responsibilities**

Students’ Rights	ACOD Responsibilities
<b>Enrolment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Right to seek admission and enrol on the same basis as prospective Students without disability including the right to reasonable adjustments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take reasonable steps to ensure that the enrolment process is accessible.</li> <li>○ Consider Students with disability in the same way as Students without disability when deciding to offer a place.</li> <li>○ Consult with the prospective Students or their associates about the effect of the disability on their ability to seek enrolment; and any reasonable adjustments necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>Participation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Right to access courses and programs; use services and facilities; and have reasonable adjustments, to ensure Students with disability are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take reasonable steps to ensure participation.</li> <li>○ Consult with the Student or their associate about the effect of the disability on their ability to participate.</li> </ul>

able to participate in education and training on the same basis as Students without disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make a reasonable adjustment if necessary.</li> <li>○ Repeating this process over time as necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum Development, Accreditation and Delivery</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Right to participate in courses and relevant supplementary programs that are designed to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, on the same basis as Students without disability and to have reasonable adjustments to ensure they are able to participate in education and training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enable Students with disability to participate in learning experiences (including assessment and certification).</li> <li>○ Consult with the Student or their associate.</li> <li>○ Take into consideration whether the disability affects the Student's ability to participate in the learning experiences.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Support Services</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Right to access Student support services provided by education institutions, on the same basis as Students without disability. Students with disability have the right to specialised services needed to participate in the educational activities they are enrolled in.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure that Students with disability are able to use general support services.</li> <li>○ Ensure that Students have access to specialised support services.</li> <li>○ Facilitate the provision of specialised support services.</li> </ul>

<b>Students' Rights</b>	<b>ACOD Responsibilities</b>
<b>Harassment &amp; Victimisation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Right to education and training in an environment that is free from discrimination caused by harassment and victimisation on the basis of their disability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implement strategies to prevent harassment or victimisation.</li> <li>○ Take reasonable steps to ensure that personnel and Students are informed about their obligation not to harass or victimise Students with disability.</li> <li>○ Take appropriate action if harassment or victimisation occurs.</li> <li>○ Ensure complaint mechanisms are available to Students.</li> </ul>

### ***Process for Considering Adjustments***

ACOD provides equitable access to all required educational and support services, so that no Student is disadvantaged regardless of their mode of study or location.

Where there may be limitations regarding access to these resources, ACOD



provides clear advice in pre-enrolment information so all clients can make an informed choice about which RTO and course of study best meets their needs. ACOD embraces the responsibility of ensuring that all personnel acquire the knowledge and skills to relate to Students without direct or indirect discrimination. All personnel are aware of and know how to use available ACOD or external resources or be able to confidently refer Students to appropriate tutoring and community support services.

All personnel continue to expand their knowledge or access and equity issues through induction processes when joining ACOD, and in structured professional development on a regular basis (at least annually) in access and equity issues and resources.

ACOD personnel have access to a range of access and equity materials designed to assist Students in undertaking and completing courses and qualifications.

In assessing whether an adjustment to the course of the course or program in which the Student is enrolled, or proposes to be enrolled, is reasonable, ACOD is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course or program, and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature.

### ***Consulting the Student***

Before ACOD makes an adjustment for the Student, the Student or their associate is consulted about:

- Whether the adjustment is reasonable; and
- The extent to which the adjustment would achieve the aims in relation to the Student; and
- Whether there is any other reasonable adjustment that would be less disruptive and intrusive and no less beneficial for the Student.

### ***Deciding on an adjustment to be made***

In deciding whether to make a particular reasonable adjustment for a Student, ACOD:

- Assesses whether there is any other reasonable adjustment that would be less disruptive and intrusive and no less beneficial for the Student; and
- Assesses whether the adjustment may need to be changed over the period of a Student's education or training.

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A detailed assessment, which might include an independent expert assessment, may be required in order to determine what adjustments are necessary for a Student. The type and extent of the adjustments may vary depending on the individual requirements of the Student and other relevant circumstances. Multiple adjustments may be required and may include multiple activities.

### *Assessing reasonable adjustments*

In assessing whether a particular adjustment is reasonable for the student with a disability, ACOD takes into account:

- The nature of the student's disability;
- The information provided by, or on behalf of, the student about how the disability affects the Student's ability to participate;
- Views of the student, or an associate of the student, about whether a proposed adjustment is reasonable and will enable the student with a disability to access and participate in education and training opportunities on the same basis as Students without disabilities;
- Information provided by, or on behalf of, the student about his or her preferred adjustments;
- The effect of the proposed adjustment on the student, including the student's ability to participate in courses or programmes and achieve learning outcomes;
- The effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including ACOD operations, personnel and other students; and
- The costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

In making a reasonable adjustment, ACOD ensures that the integrity of the course or program and assessment requirements and processes are maintained.

ACOD acts upon information about an adjustment in a timely way that optimises the student's participation in education or training.

In meeting its obligations to provide reasonable adjustments, ACOD may provide an alternative adjustment to the Student's preferred form of adjustment, if the alternative is effective in achieving the desired purpose.

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### *Unjustifiable Hardship*

Once a reasonable adjustment has been determined, ACOD adjustment may consider if the adjustment would impose unjustifiable hardship on its operations. In determining what constitutes unjustifiable hardship, all relevant circumstances of the particular case are taken into account including:

- The nature of the benefit or detriment likely to accrue or be suffered by any persons concerned; and
- The effect of the disability of a person concerned; and
- The financial circumstances and the estimated amount of expenditure required to be made by the person claiming unjustifiable hardship.

In determining whether unjustifiable hardship applies, ACOD:

- Takes into account information about the nature of the student's disability, his or her preferred adjustment, any adjustments that have been provided previously and any recommended or alternative adjustments. This information may be provided by the student, an associate of the student or independent experts (or a combination of those persons);
- Ensures that timely information is available to the student, or an associate of the student about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship; and
- Ensures that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

Where a claim of unjustifiable hardship is made, ACOD has taken into account all the financial and other resources that are reasonably available for the purpose of making any necessary adjustments for the student, and the impact of those adjustments on its capacity to provide education of high quality to all students while remaining financially viable.

ACOD considers all costs and benefits both direct and indirect that are likely to result, the student and any associates of the Student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- Costs associated with additional personnel, the provision of special resources or modification of the curriculum;

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- Costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and trainers; and
  - Benefits deriving from the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and trainers, and any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to ACOD as a result of the student's participation.

Where ACOD decides to rely on unjustifiable hardship, it ensures that a notice stating the decision and the reasons for the decision is given to the student, or an associate of the student, as soon as practicable after the decision is made.

### ***Implementing Reasonable Adjustments***

ACOD takes reasonable steps to ensure that any adjustment required to be made is made within a reasonable time. Whether the time is reasonable depends, in particular, on whether and when the student, or his or her associate, has provided:

- In a timely way, any relevant information in the possession of the Student or associate about how the disability affects the Student in relation to education or training; and
- The Student's or the associate's opinion about the matters.

Where reasonable adjustments are implemented, a detailed training and assessment plan including timetables, notes regarding the required adjustments, and any related communications regarding the adjustments is maintained in the Student's file.

Reasonable Adjustments	
Student has difficulty with	Example reasonable adjustments
Concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Breaking the assessment into appropriate components that can be undertaken separately;</li> <li>○ Providing rest breaks during lengthy assessment sessions;</li> <li>○ Providing a separate assessment venue if the Student is distracted by others' movements or noise;</li> <li>○ Providing additional time;</li> <li>○ Providing alternative assessment methods, such as recording devices for oral testing, or telephone assessments; and</li> <li>○ Allowing the Student to provide evidence of having completed the assessment task at another venue; for example, an employer could verify satisfactory demonstration of competence.</li> </ul>
Expressing knowledge in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allowing oral assessment;</li> <li>○ Providing a digital recorder, scribe;</li> <li>○ Providing a sign language interpreter; and</li> <li>○ Providing additional time.</li> </ul>
Spelling and/or grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allowing oral assessment;</li> <li>○ Providing a digital recorder, scribe;</li> <li>○ Providing a sign language interpreter;</li> <li>○ Providing additional time;</li> <li>○ Providing a computer with a generic spelling and grammar checker, dictionary and thesaurus (such as those included in Microsoft® Word) or specialised literacy software (such as Spell Master or Read and Write Gold);</li> <li>○ Providing models and practical examples for the Student to demonstrate what they mean; and</li> <li>○ Providing alternative assessment methods, such as recorded interviews, slide presentations, photographic essays or models.</li> </ul>
Numbers and numerical concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allowing additional time;</li> <li>○ Allowing the Student to use a calculator; and</li> <li>○ Providing other assistive technology, such as a talking calculator.</li> </ul>

Reasonable Adjustments	
Student has difficulty with	Example reasonable adjustments
Understanding spoken information or instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allowing additional time;</li> <li>○ Providing written information or instructions to complement the spoken version;</li> <li>○ Providing a sign language interpreter;</li> <li>○ Allowing rest breaks or split sessions;</li> <li>○ Using simple, direct language (plain English);</li> <li>○ Providing step-by-step instructions;</li> <li>○ Repeating information given;</li> <li>○ Paraphrasing to check for understanding, and asking the Student to repeat what they are required to do; and</li> <li>○ Demonstrating what is required.</li> </ul>
Maintaining writing posture for any length of time, or writing quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing a digital recorder or similar;</li> <li>○ Allowing oral assessment;</li> <li>○ Providing a personal computer (if using a keyboard is more comfortable than writing);</li> <li>○ Allowing rest breaks;</li> <li>○ Providing a scribe;</li> <li>○ Providing other assistive technology or equipment; and</li> <li>○ Allowing additional time.</li> </ul>
Reading standard-sized print or handwriting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing technology such as magnifying devices to enlarge print, or screen readers;</li> <li>○ Providing Braille examination papers (with tactile diagrams, maps etc);</li> <li>○ Providing specialised writing pens;</li> <li>○ Providing oral assessment or recorded questions;</li> <li>○ Providing a reader;</li> <li>○ Allowing additional time;</li> <li>○ Providing models, graphics or practical examples to illustrate questions; and</li> <li>○ Providing heavily lined paper.</li> </ul>
Physical tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allowing alternative methods of competence demonstration, such as oral assessment or third-party evidence;</li> <li>○ Providing assistive technology or equipment; and</li> <li>○ Allowing additional time.</li> </ul>
Certain physical environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing appropriate lighting and eliminating glare (for Students with low vision or epilepsy);</li> <li>○ Providing suitable furniture;</li> <li>○ Providing adequate space for equipment and support personnel;</li> <li>○ Providing access to PowerPoints for equipment; and</li> <li>○ Using a separate venue to eliminate distractions by others (and by others using equipment/support personnel).</li> </ul>

### ***Student Support Services***

The following support services are available and accessible for all students studying with ACOD. ACOD will provide students with contact details to refer any matters that require further follow up with relevant professionals.

<b>Referral Service Available</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
<b>Lifeline</b> Lifeline provides all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to online, phone and face-to-face crisis support and suicide prevention services. Find out how these services can help you, a friend or loved one.	Phone: 13 11 14
<b>Kids Helpline</b> If you're between 5 and 25 and you're feeling depressed, worried, sad, angry or confused about things like your studies personal relationships, Kids Helpline offers free 24 hour, 7 day telephone counselling support (anonymous if you prefer).	Phone: 1800 551 800
<b>Drug Info</b> DrugInfo is a service provided by the Australian Drug Foundation that offers information about alcohol and other drugs and prevention of related harms	Phone: 1300 85 85 84 <a href="http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au/contact-numbers/help-and-support">www.druginfo.adf.org.au/contact-numbers/help-and-support</a>
<b>Reading and Writing Hotline</b> For the price of a local call anywhere in Australia, the Hotline can provide you with advice and a referral to one of 1200 providers of courses in adult literacy and numeracy.	Phone: 1300 655 506 <a href="http://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au">www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au</a>
<b>Centrelink</b>	Phone: 1800 057 111 <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink">www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink</a>
<b>Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN)</b> Australian Apprenticeship Centres handle all matters related to traineeships and apprenticeships. If you are a trainee or apprentice, some language, literacy and numeracy courses attract government subsidies. Talk to your AASN provider about this now.	Phone 13 38 73 <a href="http://australianapprenticeships.gov.au">australianapprenticeships.gov.au</a>

### ***Providing Student Support***

ACOD embraces the responsibility of ensuring all students are supported in acquiring the knowledge and skills sought through their training and assessment program. ACOD determines the support needs of individual students prior to enrolment and ensures access is provided to the educational and support

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services necessary for the individual student to meet the requirements of the training product as specified in training packages or VET accredited courses. All ACOD personnel are aware of available internal or external resources, or are able to confidently refer students to appropriate tutoring and community support services.

ACOD ensures support provided is reasonable and accessible.



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## Consumer Protection

### Australian Consumer Law

ACOD maintains compliance with the national *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* and associated *Australian Consumer Law (ACL)* requirements as specified in the Act and enacted in various state legislation across Australia. The ACL protects clients and ensures fair trading in Australia. Under the ACL clients have the same protections, and businesses have the same obligations and responsibilities, across Australia.

ACOD has implemented this *Consumer Protection Policy* and aligned *Consumer Protection Strategy* to protect the needs and interests of all clients. A designated *Consumer Protection Officer* has also been implemented:

Chedy Kalach, CEO, 0416 095 263

### Guarantee

As a course services provider, ACOD supplies services and guarantees that these services will be:

- Provided with due care and skill;
- Fit for the specified purpose; and
- Provided within a reasonable time.

ACOD ensures it uses an acceptable level of skill or technical knowledge and takes all necessary care to avoid loss or damage when providing course services.

### Consumer Protection Strategy

#### *ACOD Obligations*

ACOD ensures it:

- Provides the training and support necessary to allow students to achieve competency;
- Provides a quality training and assessment experience for all students;
- Provides a clear and accessible feedback and consumer protection system, including a designated and identified consumer protection officer;
- Maintains procedures for protecting consumers' personal information please refer to the *Privacy* section of this manual for further information;

- Has established, documented and accessible consumer feedback and complaints handling policies and procedures; and
- Provides clients with details of these pathways for resolving or escalating complaints.

### ***Clients Rights and Obligations***

ACOD clients have the right to:

- Expect that the quality of your training meets the standards, regulations and requirement set down by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and relevant government subsidy body (where applicable);
- Be informed about the collection of personal information and be able to review and correct that information; and
- Access ACOD's consumer protection complaints process.

Clients' obligations include:

- Providing accurate information to ACOD; and
- Behaving in a responsible and ethical manner.

### ***Cessation of Delivery***

If ACOD, closes or ceases to deliver any part of the training product that a student is enrolled in, a number of options will be available to the student including:

- Refund of course fees paid; and/or
- Continued delivery of services with alternate ACOD services delivery personnel (where applicable); and/or
- Supported transfer of the student enrolment to an alternate RTO for completion of services delivery (where applicable).

Clients' obligations include:

- Providing accurate information to ACOD; and
- Behaving in a responsible and ethical manner.

## **NSW Smart & Skilled**

ACOD includes the Smart and Skilled website details and 1300 number on all NSW relevant public information, enrolment forms and client induction material so that all students are aware of their rights and options for making a complaint or providing feedback about their training.

[www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au](http://www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 77 21 04

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## Publicly Available

All ACOD consumer protection information and approaches is made available to all clients by being publicly published on the ACOD website and included within the relevant handbook for each stakeholder group.

## Unsolicited Consumer Agreements

ACOD may from time to time, engage in marketing promotions that result in *unsolicited consumer agreements*. Such promotions may include telephoning prospective students for course service offerings or approaching prospective students in public areas outside of ACOD premises.

ACOD representatives who make unsolicited contact with potential students in order to sell them course services comply with:

- Limited hours for contact;
- Disclosure requirements when making an agreement;
- Criteria for the agreement, including that it must be in writing; and
- Restrictions on supplying services above a certain value, and on requesting payment during the cooling-off period.

## Permitted Contact Hours

ACOD representatives maintain compliance with the permitted hours for telemarketing, regulated under the *Do Not Call Register Act 2006* and associated telemarketing standards. ACOD representatives do not undertake telephone or fax marketing to clients:

- On a Sunday or a public holiday;
- Before 9am or after 8pm on a weekday; or
- Before 9am or after 5pm on a Saturday.

## Cooling Off Period

Specifically for unsolicited consumer agreements, clients have 10 business days to change their mind and cancel the Course Fees Agreement. During the cooling-off period ACOD does not provide any services or accept any payment.

For agreements negotiated by telephone, the cooling-off period begins on the first business day after the client receives the agreement document. For other

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agreements, the cooling-off period begins on the first business day after the agreement was made.

A client may terminate an agreement verbally or in writing. The termination date is when the client gives or sends the notice.

### **Course Fees Agreement**

ACOD's *Course Fees Agreement* is transparent expressed in plain language, legible and clear and clearly states:

- The client's cooling-off and termination rights;
- The full terms of the agreement;
- The total fees payable, including fees for all additional items;
- ACOD's
  - 3/43A Ethel Street, Seaforth NSW 2092
  - Australian Business Number (ABN): 78 607 401 285; and
  - [admin@acod.edu.au](mailto:admin@acod.edu.au).

### **Consumer Protection Complaints**

If an individual feels that ACOD has breached its obligations in the undertaking of marketing and sales activities, they may raise a complaint. We encourage individuals to discuss the situation with their ACOD representative in the first instance, before making a complaint.

The complaints handling process is as follows:

- The individual should make the complaint including as much detail about the issue as possible, in writing to ACOD:  
**ACOD Consumer Protection Officer**  
Chedy Kalach, [chedy@acod.edu.au](mailto:chedy@acod.edu.au)
- ACOD will investigate the circumstances included in the complaint and respond to the individual as soon as possible (and within 30 calendar days) regarding its findings and actions following this investigation.
- After considering this response, if the individual is still not satisfied they may escalate their complaint directly to the Consumer Protection Agency in the relevant jurisdiction for investigation:

Jurisdiction	Contact Details
Australian Capital Territory	ACT Office of Regulatory Services 02 62073000 <a href="mailto:fair.trading@act.gov.au">fair.trading@act.gov.au</a>
New South Wales	NSW Office of Fair Trading 13 32 20 <a href="http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au">www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au</a> <i>Smart &amp; Skilled students</i> Smart & Skilled students can also contact the Smart and Skilled customer support centre to seek assistance, ask for advice, make a complaint or provide feedback. 13 28 11 or 1300 77 21 04 <a href="mailto:enquiries@smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au">enquiries@smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au</a> Support is also available in person at a State Training Services Centre: <a href="http://www.training.nsw.gov.au/about_us/sts_contacts.html">www.training.nsw.gov.au/about_us/sts_contacts.html</a>
Northern Territory	NT Consumer Affairs 1800 01 93 19 <a href="mailto:consumer@nt.gov.au">consumer@nt.gov.au</a>
Queensland	QLD Office of Fair Trading 13 74 68 <a href="http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au/lodge-your-complaint">www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au/lodge-your-complaint</a>
South Australia	SA Office of Business and Consumer Services 13 18 82 <a href="http://www.cbs.sa.gov.au">www.cbs.sa.gov.au</a>
Tasmania	TAS Consumer Affairs & Fair Trading 1300 65 44 99 <a href="http://www.consumer.tas.gov.au/fair_trading">www.consumer.tas.gov.au/fair_trading</a>
Victoria	Consumer Affairs Victoria 1300 55 81 81 <a href="http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au">www.consumer.vic.gov.au</a>
Western Australia	WA Department of Commerce 1300 30 40 54 <a href="http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au">www.commerce.wa.gov.au</a>

- Alternatively, a complaint may also be lodged with the ASQA complaints handling service for complaints against RTOs:  
Australian Skills Quality Authority

[www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 701 801



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## Child Safety

### Our Commitment to Child Safety

ACOD is committed to child safety.

All students under eighteen (18) years of age who are supported by ACOD have a right to feel and be safe. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We promote diversity and tolerance, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children;
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

ACOD is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. We have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all personnel and committed to regularly training and education our personnel on child abuse risks.

### Legislative Framework

Providing services nationally, ACOD has implemented a Child Safe framework aligned to national legislative requirements including, but is not limited to:

- *Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)*;
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*;
- *Care and Protection of Children Act 2014 (NT)*;

- *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (QLD);*
- *Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA);*
- *Working with Children Act 2005 (VIC);*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (VIC);*
- *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (TAS); and*
- *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA).*

ACOD is committed to establishing and maintaining child safe environments and has designed services with a particular focus on:

- *The Keep Them Safe: A Shared Approach to Child Wellbeing framework (NSW)*

As a child safe organisation, ACOD:

- Has a visible culture of child safety that is part of everyday practice;
- Has strong leadership driving a culture of child safety;
- Has the safety of children as its prime consideration;
- Has well-articulated policies and procedures to implement its child safe approach;
- Actively encourages participation, empowerment and serves to protect children;
- Has actively considered risks of abuse within the organisation;
- Engages with children to create a child safe environment and empowers children to speak up if something is wrong; and
- Has inclusive approaches for children with a disability, Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## Child Abuse

Reporting child abuse is a community-wide responsibility. Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- Physical violence;
- Sexual offences;
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse; and
- Serious neglect.

**Call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety.**



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All ACOD personnel are required to report to police if they know or reasonably believe that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16. *It is a criminal offence (failure to disclose) to fail to comply with this obligation across jurisdictions.*

**What is a 'reasonable belief'?**

A 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- A child states that they have been sexually abused;
- A child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- Someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused;
- Observations of the child's behaviour or development leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused; or
- Signs of sexual abuse lead to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

If a person 16 years or older provided you with the information and they do not have an intellectual disability and they do not want the information reported to the police, an individual is then not required to report to police.

ACOD will not tolerate incidents of child abuse. All personnel understand their obligation to notify relevant authorities as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a minor has been, or is being, abused or neglected by a member of their family or any other individual:

- Australian Capital Territory Child Protection Line 1300 556 728
- New South Wales Child Protection Line 13 21 11
- Northern Territory Child Protection Line 1800 700 250
- Queensland Child Safety Line 1800 177 135
- South Australia Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 78
- Tasmania Child Protection Line 1300 737 639
- Victoria Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78
- Western Australia Child Protection Line 13 14 44

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## Child Safety Officer

ACOD has appointed a child safety officer for its RTO operations, being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel.

### **Child Safety Officer ACOD**

James Gibbins, james@acod.edu.au

Our designated child safety officer provides a single contact for children, parents and personnel to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children.

## Code of Conduct

All ACOD personnel are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Adhering to ACOD's child safe policy at all times upholding ACOD's statement of commitment to child safety at all times.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability.
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Child Safety Officer & ACOD management, and ensure any allegation to reported to the police or child protection.

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- Reporting any child safety concerns to the Child Safety Officer & ACOD management.
  - If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.
  - Encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Personnel must not:

- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism.
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical.
- Put children at risk of abuse.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
- Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Have organised contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent.
- Have any inappropriate online contact with a child or their family.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards all personnel acknowledge individual responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Child Safety Officer & ACOD management.

## Risk Management

ACOD ensures the protection of children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to children.

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We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

### ***Training and supervision***

ACOD culture aims for all individuals to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

ACOD has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team and personnel to achieve these commitments. We support personnel through ongoing supervision to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

### ***Regular review***

ACOD reviews this policy regularly and following any significant incidents should it occur. Where possible we do our best to work with families, children, local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

## **Procedures Allegations, Concerns & Complaints**

ACOD takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Personnel are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families and personnel know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour. We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place.

### ***Fair procedures for personnel***

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions made by ACOD when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

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We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

### ***Privacy***

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be personnel, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. ACOD has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

### ***If a child discloses an incident of abuse***

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to the Child Safety Officer and ACOD management as well as police or child protection as relevant.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

### ***If a parent/carer says their child has been abused or raises a concern***

- Explain that ACOD has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.

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- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
  - Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
  - Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
  - Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the ACOD management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
  - Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
  - Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
  - Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
  - Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.
  - Be aware that:
    - Individuals from Aboriginal, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse.
    - Individuals with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident.You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet individuals' needs where possible.

Personnel must follow the Critical Actions below every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

If personnel believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing they must still act.

**YOU MUST TAKE ACTION**

Personnel play a critical role in protecting children in our care.

You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions below, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.

You must act if you form a suspicion/reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).

You must use an incident reporting form to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

**ACTION 1: Responding to an emergency**

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to ACTION 2.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- Separating alleged victims and others involved.
- Administering first aid.
- Calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns.
- Identifying a contact person in your organisation for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

**Action 2: Reporting to authorities**

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

You must report all instances of suspected child abuse or suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Police.

You must also report internally to the Child Safety Officer and ACOD management.

If the source of suspected abuse is from within the family or community, you must report the suspected abuse to the relevant Child Protection Authority in the State or Territory jurisdiction.

This includes if a child is considered to be:

- In need of protection from child abuse
- At risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

**Action 3: Contacting parents carers**

The Child Safety Officer and ACOD management must consult with Child Protection and or Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- Not to contact the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parents/carers to be contacted); or
- To contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

**Action 4: Providing ongoing support**

ACOD must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This includes the development of a Student Support Plan developed in consultation with wellbeing professional and/or counselling staff.

Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

### ***Additional support mandatory reporting***

ACOD management uses appropriate tools to inform decision making, such as the online *Mandatory Reporter Guide*, professional judgment or specialist advice, where there are concerns about risk of harm.

The mandatory reporter guide is available at:

<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>

### **Working with Children Checks**

All ACOD personnel are required to undertake, as a component of the recruitment process, a National Criminal Check to ensure suitability in meeting ACOD's legislative and contractual obligations. National criminal checks are valid for, and must be renewed annually. <https://cvcheck.com/national-police-check>

### ***State and Territory Requirements***

In addition to the above national check, the following state jurisdictional checks also apply to ACOD personnel provided services in these jurisdictions. Personnel must have completed and provide an appropriate check prior to commencing employment for NSW only. ACOD only accepts students under 18 in NSW.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Requirements</b>
Australian Capital Territory	All personnel providing services in the Australian Capital Territory must undertake registration with the Statutory Screening Unit in line with the <i>Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)</i> . Checks are valid for three years.  <a href="https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1804/kw/working%20with%20children%20check&amp;#!tabs-1">https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1804/kw/working%20with%20children%20check&amp;#!tabs-1</a>
New South Wales	All personnel providing services in New South Wales must undertake screening in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)</i> . Checks are valid for five years.  <a href="http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check">http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check</a>
Northern Territory	All personnel providing services in Northern Territory must undertake a Working with Children Check know as a 'Clearance Notice' as per the <i>Care and Protection of Children Act 2014 (NT)</i> . Checks are valid for two years.  <a href="https://nt.gov.au/emergency/community-safety/apply-for-a-working-with-children-clearance">https://nt.gov.au/emergency/community-safety/apply-for-a-working-with-children-clearance</a>



Queensland	All personnel providing services in Queensland must obtain a Suitability Card or blue card in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (QLD)</i> . Checks are valid for two years. <a href="http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/">http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/</a>
South Australia	All personnel providing services in South Australia must undertake screening in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)</i> . Checks are valid for three years. <a href="http://screening.dcsi.sa.gov.au/">http://screening.dcsi.sa.gov.au/</a>
Tasmania	All personnel providing services in Tasmania must undertake screening in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (TAS)</i> . Checks are valid for three years. <a href="http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working_with_children">http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working_with_children</a>
Victoria	All personnel providing services in Victoria must undertake a Victorian "Working with Children" check as a component of the recruitment process, in line with the <i>Working with Children Act 2005 (VIC)</i> . Checks are valid for five years. <a href="http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/">http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/</a>
Western Australia	All personnel providing services in Western Australia must undertake a Working with Children Check by the Working with Children Screening Unit of the Western Australian Department of Community Development in accordance with the <i>Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)</i> . Checks are valid for three years. <a href="https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/">https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/</a>

It is the responsibility of each individual to register for and obtain the required check(s). Potential personnel with adverse findings in these checks undertaken at the time of recruitment will not be employed by within a student service role.

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## Marketing and Advertising

ACOD enables informed choice for clients and students by providing clear and factual information. ACOD is responsible for all marketing or other material disseminated on its behalf, regardless of the channel or method used.

ACOD is conscious of the national requirements for the marketing of nationally recognised training and ensures that the information used is accurate, clear and managed ethically. ACOD is subject to all relevant consumer protection law that applies in any jurisdiction where it operates and ensures it honours all commitments it makes.

ACOD's marketing or advertising material is consistent with its training and assessment strategies.

ACOD ensures its marketing of AQF qualifications to prospective students is ethical, factual and accurately represents the services it provides and the training products on its scope of registration.

### No Guarantee

ACOD does not provide any guarantee that:

- A student will successfully complete a training product on its scope of registration; or
- A training product can be completed in a manner which does not meet the requirements of the *Standards for RTOs 2015 (Cth)*; or
- A student will obtain a particular employment outcome where this is outside the control of ACOD.

### Testimonials and other References

Where ACOD makes reference to another person or organisation (such as testimonials or photos) in marketing or advertising material, it has gained consent from the person or organisation for the use of that reference. This includes references via text, statements, logos and photos. ACOD ensures all testimonials are true and correct before using them to endorse products.

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All ACOD students provide consent to the use of photos and other images that are taken at ACOD learning activities and events, through the relevant release clause in the *ACOD Enrolment Application Form*. Usage in these instances is generally one off, group images for general operational and promotional purposes.

Students are able to 'opt out' of this release if they wish, with all 'opt-outs' recorded in the *VETtrak Student Management System*.

Various ACOD contractual arrangements with government stakeholders, enterprise clients may routinely include consent for the use of information and images in marketing collateral, including the use of organisational logos and other trademarks.

For more specific advertising and marketing purposes, client consent is obtained and recorded using the *Marketing Consent Form*.

## **Government Funding, Subsidy or other Support**

Where students would be accessing any government subsidy, ACOD provides details of these arrangements. Details include:

- Any costs associated;
- Any debt that will be incurred; and
- Any loss of entitlement from the student undertaking a course at ACOD.

This includes, in the cases of limited entitlement schemes, where students are only able to access one course or there are restrictions on what courses may be subsidised after completing their study at ACOD.

## **Jurisdictional Specific Marketing Requirements**

The following jurisdictional specific marketing requirements also apply.

### ***Australian Capital Territory***

All information and services provided by ACOD is fully disclosed so the student and/or employer can determine if the services advertised match what is being sought. The material is suitable for the target group. It must also contain accurate information about ACOD. Where subcontracting arrangements are in place, these are made clear.

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### **Promotion and publications**

All information and services provided by ACOD should be fully disclosed so the student and/or employer can determine if the services advertised match what is being sought. The published material must contain accurate information about ACOD.

ACOD ensures all publicity relating to training initiatives, including publications, promotional and advertising materials, public announcements and activities or any products or processes developed, is ethical, accurate and consistent.

Publications and promotion of training initiatives:

- Identify ACOD's legal entity and/or trading name and RTO National Code;
- Include the indicative fees for each course/qualification it offers under the specific training initiative; and
- Include an acknowledgement of any government funding as required under the specific training initiative.

Where ACOD subcontracts any part of its training services to an RTO or other organisation that does not hold an agreement with the Territory, ACOD applies for subcontracting arrangement approval and has a written agreement with the subcontracted party outlining the mandatory terms and conditions of the arrangement.

### **Fees and charges**

ACOD publishes all fees and charges. ACOD details its fees and charges including, but not limited to:

- Compulsory fees;
- Additional charges or co-contributions;
- Application process for exemptions and concessions;
- Methods of collection; and
- Refund information.

ACOD ensures students, and where applicable the employer, are provided with information relating to fees and charges prior to enrolment.

ACOD ensures students are provided with information regarding eligibility for the completion payment prior to enrolment.

### **Australian Apprenticeships**

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All information and services provided by ACOD is fully disclosed so the student and/or employer can determine if the services advertised match what is being sought. The material is suitable for the target group. It must also contain accurate information about ACOD.

### **Promotion and publications**

ACOD supplies promotional information to Apprenticeship Network Providers (ANPs), brokers and employers in industry areas covered by the qualifications ACOD is approved to deliver on the ACT Qualifications Register.

ACOD ensures its published tuition fees for each delivery mode match the fees published on the ACT Qualifications Register. Where changes to tuition fees have occurred, evidence of historical fees is retained.

Where an RTO subcontracts the delivery of units of competency to another RTO, the student and employer is provided with information outlining the subcontracting arrangements prior to the finalisation of enrolment.

New South Wales

### ***NSW Smart & Skilled Program***

ACOD:

- Only markets, publicises or otherwise communicates its connection to Smart and Skilled in accordance with the Smart & Skilled Contract and Operating Guidelines.
- Publishes and makes available readily accessible information on all of its approved qualifications.
- Acts in good faith and does not act in any way that could be seen to be unethical, reckless, illegal or dishonest conduct, in relation to any matter.
- Does not do anything that may bring into disrepute or be detrimental to the Department, any Government Agency, Smart and Skilled or vocational education and training.
- Notifies the Department if ACOD becomes aware of any unethical, reckless, illegal or dishonest conduct in relation to vocational education and training, including fraud or misconduct.

*Marketing Smart and Skilled*

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All marketing, promotional, communication and information materials used by ACOD related to Smart and Skilled (including ACOD's approved qualifications) displays ACOD's legal name and code as displayed on the national register, [training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au).

ACOD develops and implements strategies for the effective marketing and promotion of Smart and Skilled including all of its approved qualifications. These strategies do not rely solely on activities undertaken by the Department and via the Smart and Skilled website for promotion. ACOD retains copies of these strategies and all marketing and promotion materials to demonstrate implementation of the strategies.

ACOD takes steps to ensure that any prospective student, who may be reasonably considered to be eligible to receive subsidised training, is properly informed about the availability of subsidised training under Smart and Skilled. This is done as soon as practicable after the prospective student contacts ACOD.

ACOD has no obligation however to market or promote any approved qualifications where its Smart & Skilled Financial Cap has been or is likely to be exceeded.

#### *Department intellectual property*

ACOD does not use any logo, product names, icons, trademarks or other intellectual property of the Department, or the NSW Government, including in connection with Smart and Skilled without written permission from the Department or the NSW Government and subject to any guidelines that are issued from time to time.

#### *Acknowledgement of source of subsidies and restrictions on promotion*

ACOD explicitly acknowledges in marketing and information for Prospective Students the availability of subsidies from the NSW Government. In any communications about Smart and Skilled (including regarding approved qualifications) ACOD uses the statement:

*'This training is subsidised by the NSW Government.'*

ACOD does not suggest, or allow there to be any misunderstanding, that the subsidised training is 'free of charge', discounted or subsidised by ACOD.

ACOD does not, and ensures that its agents and contractors do not, market, publicise or otherwise communicate information about the training or engage in

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any other conduct that may have the effect of encouraging students to choose a Provider based on price or other inducements (including any financial or other benefit).

To be clear, this includes the following types of inducements (including any gift, financial or other benefit):

- The provision of an electronic device (e.g. tablet or an iPad) that is not specifically required to receive the subsidised training;
- An inducement to enrol by a particular date; or
- An inducement to refer any students to ACOD.

#### *Website*

ACOD maintains a current and accurate website. The homepage of ACOD's website contains a direct link to the Smart and Skilled website so that any person accessing ACOD's website should be able to easily and directly navigate to the Smart and Skilled website.

ACOD's website includes the following:

- The details of all of ACOD's approved qualifications;
- Details of the Notification of Enrolment Process and ACOD's enrolment process including the information and evidence that the student must provide (such as, all consents and declarations the student must make) together with details of when such information and evidence is required; and
- The process for obtaining a Unique Student Identifier.

#### *Consumer Protection Information*

ACOD makes the following information available to students:

- ACOD Consumer Protection Policy (including the contact details of the consumer protection officer)
- The Consumer Protection Strategy; and
- The contact details for the Department's Customer Support Centre (as provided by the Department from time to time).

[www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au](http://www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au)

1300 77 21 04

#### *Student Information*

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ACOD ensures that all students considering enrolling in subsidised training receive, or are aware of how to access, certain information, either electronically or in hard copy form before enrolment which is designed to make these students aware of policies relating to their training, including their rights and responsibilities and avenues for complaint.

This Student Information includes:

- The Fee Information;
- Information regarding Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Transfer, deferring or discontinuing subsidised training (including any implication on fees);
- What the enrolled student should do if they want to defer or discontinue their Training;
- How to access support and assistance during the training; and
- Contact details for various support services within ACOD, e.g. interpreter services.



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## Anti-discrimination Policy

ACOD strives to abide by all Commonwealth and State legislation regarding Harassment, Anti-discrimination, Victimization and bullying in the workplace, including the Disability Education Standards (2005). Harassment consists of any unwanted and unsolicited words or actions, which cause any form of offence, embarrassment or discomfort to others, and also include implications or threats of embarrassing offensive words or actions. Harassment may be physical, sexual, emotional, intellectual or financial, but whatever its nature or origin and no matter who the perpetrators/s or victim/s may be, it will not under any circumstances be tolerated within ACOD.

ACOD fully and actively supports the rights of all personnel and students to work and train in an environment free from harassment. All forms of discrimination and sexual harassment are considered to be totally unacceptable.

ACOD is committed to the principles and requirements of the Equal Opportunity Act and the Sex Discrimination Act (Commonwealth) and to ensuring that any and all matters relating to harassment are dealt with speedily, sensitively, equitably, confidentially and according to proper process. ACOD affirms the importance and contribution of a harassment free environment to effective work and training. It also acknowledges the detrimental effect such harassment can have on a person's physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing.

### Physical Harassment

Physical harassment may be defined as any form of touching, cuddling, fondling, kissing, pushing, tugging, hitting, kicking or any other form of physical contact which is unwanted, unwelcome, unsolicited and causes any form of pain, discomfort or embarrassment to the person receiving the physical contact.

Whilst some people may welcome some such forms of attention, it should be realized that not all people do so and to impose your desire to touch or be touched upon others is wrong. No matter how innocent or well intended your

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physical contact with others may be, if it is unwelcome then it is harassment. It may also be interpreted as sexual harassment or assault and the victim would be entitled to take appropriate legal action. The golden rule is, if in doubt, DON'T.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment may be defined as any form of contact of a sexually explicit or suggestive nature, especially where such contact occurs in the regions of genital, buttocks, thighs, breasts or anywhere considered to be a 'private area'. It also includes exhibitionism, (such as 'flashing' or displaying oneself) requests for sexually explicit or suggestive acts or favours and displays of sexually explicit or suggestive material, (such as 'pin-ups' – any or all which may cause any form of discomfort or embarrassment to any other person or people). It also includes sexually explicit or implicit language and jokes, and displays of sexually explicit or implicit photographs and /or writings.

It is totally irrelevant whether or not the perpetrator/s of such harassment is/are of the same sex as the victim/s and is especially objectionable if performed accompanied by threats, bribes or inducements.

The administration of alcohol or any other drug accompanied by any other form of duress including offers or advancement or promotion or threats being excluded from advancement of promotions.

## **Emotional Harassment**

Emotional harassment may possibly also be broadly defined or referred to as 'Emotional Blackmail'. It usually takes the form of statements such as "if you really liked me you wouldn't..." or "If you really cared you'd...". These issues have no place within the work environment.

## **Intellectual Harassment**

Intellectual harassment is probably the least easy to define, yet is probably one of the most prevalent forms of harassment in force. Broadly speaking it occurs

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whenever anyone says something like “You Idiot” or “ You fool, don’t you know anything?” etc. It is also prevalent among people who wish to justify an action or a mode of dress with “...but everyone’s... (wearing it or doing it)”. It also occurs in its most insidious form when people challenge other people’s religious convictions and lure, cajole or coerce them into joining religious groups which are far removed from whatever established principles are already in force. In common terminology, it’s ‘the put down’, but however it is regarded, it is a challenge to one self-esteem or self worth.

### **Financial Harassment**

Financial harassment occurs when someone has pressure put upon them to feel obliged to commit themselves to part with money when they cannot afford to, or do not wish to do so. It can take the form of pressure to join a club, buy a raffle ticket to support a cause or an organization, join a religious group, commit a percentage of ones income to something, make a bet or any number of other things. It is usually accompanied by some other form of harassment such as emotional or intellectual harassment and is probably all the more insidious for this. Everyone has the right to control their own finances as much as any other aspect of their lives, and this form of harassment will be tolerated no more than any other.

### **Discrimination, Victimisation and Bullying**

Discrimination consists of any form of bestowing or withholding of any form of employment, service or favours on the grounds of a person’s gender, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, family commitments, (such as caring for children who are ill or have form of disability etc.), age, social status, sexual orientation or preferences, race, colour, religion, stature, (e.g. Unusually tall, short, obese, thin, stooped etc.) or any form of disability, except where such difference would constitute a normal part of their employment. For example, it could include people in wheelchairs not being able to perform rescue or firefighting tasks, or profoundly deaf people not being able to answer phones etc. Victimization and bullying includes any of the harassment or abusive situations as

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described above. ACOD will not tolerate discrimination, victimization or bullying in any form.

## Problem Resolution

Disciplinary action will be taken against any person who displays sexual harassment against any individual. Discipline may involve a warning, counseling, demotion or dismissal depending on the circumstances.

ACOD recognises that:

- It is the responsibility of the CEO, in cooperation with Management and personnel, to take all reasonable steps to ensure personnel and students are not subject to harassment;
- A safe and respectful environment encompasses principles and practices of both mutual care and a taking of responsibility for supporting individuals within the organisation;
- For policies on harassment to be effective, they must be properly made known to all members of the organisation together with the processes and procedures involved in implementation of policies;
- It is the right of personnel and Students to utilise diverse structures including, for example, Equal Opportunities, Commission, Unions, etc.

Even though the CEO, Management and personnel will make every effort to prevent harassment, incidents may occur which require action in accordance with the principles and procedures set out in this document.

Principles in dealing with cases of harassment:

- Rapid response;
- Assurance of confidentiality for all parties;
- Encouragement of and assistance in a self-help approach to resolution while ensuring that all avenues of action are made accessible;
- Empowerment of a person who has been subject to harassment;
- Respectful dealing of both complainant and respondent;
- An emphasis on an educative, non-punitive approach;
- Provision of information to all parties in relation to their rights and obligations;

- 
- Established processes for resolving the incident;
  - Monitoring of any resolution agreement to ensure that: the complainant is not further disadvantaged; and
  - Assurance that the respondent has been respectfully and justly dealt with.
  - Both parties have civil rights of appeal to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

In the case of dismissal personnel or students may choose to utilise wrongful dismissal proceedings.

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## Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Privacy relates to many areas including the right not to be observed, listened to or reported upon without consent and not to be the focus of uninvited public attention. Privacy can be applied to the physical environment and possessions, physical and bodily needs, personal relationships and personal information and needs.

Confidential information is collected as part of the assessment process. In assessing customer needs and agreeing on services, information is gained about health, families and other social relationships, personal interests, skills and behaviour patterns and financial affairs.

Information relating to staff including their skills, work history, and police record is collected.

Confidentiality relates specifically to the protection of information concerning customers, staff and the organisation.

- Management will ensure that processes are in place to ensure that customer; staff and organisation information remains confidential and secure.
- Management will, as part of the induction process, ensure that staff are trained appropriately.
- Customers and staff have the right to request access to their records.
- An individual has the right to request their health information be made available to another health service provider.
- Staff will follow the protocols relating to the disclosure and distribution of personal information and accessing of personal records.
- Staff who infringe this policy will proceed to disciplinary procedures.
- Personal information is maintained accurately and is up-to-date.

### Procedure

- Customers and staff are informed of their right to confidentiality and how confidentiality is observed.

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- Customers are requested to sign a Consent Form, which specifies that they understand that information is to be shared with other service providers.
  - The Privacy and Confidentiality policy of the organisation, including access to health information will be made available to anyone who may request it.
  - Information is not released to any third party without the consent of the customer. Any information regarding customers is released only to those who have a legitimate interest or need for the information as part of their role in service provision.
  - Only information relevant to service provision will be sought.

### **Security**

- Customer and staff records are stored in a locked secure cabinet with restricted access.
- Access to electronic records relating to customers and staff is controlled and restricted by password and the IT systems manager. Authorisation is granted on a 'needs to know basis'.
- All working notes pertaining to customers that do not need to be kept permanently are shredded.
- Notes recorded on the computer are protected by a password and are subject to the same requirements as written notes. Screens in public access areas are turned away so they are difficult to read and screen savers are implemented.
- Internet access is restricted to organisation business only. No organisation, customer or staff information is to be released without the express permission of the Chief Executive Officer.
- The transference of data via email or fax is secured by minimising the data communicated. The data will be accompanied by identification of the communication source and its authenticity, and a clear confidentiality statement to the recipient in relation to the data and its source.
- Records taken out of the organisation for workplace visits, will at all times be secured in a locked bag, and kept from public view.
- Archiving of electronic and hard copy files will be facilitated in accordance with the Health Privacy Principles

### **Responsibilities**

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Staff will ensure that confidentiality is observed in work practice at all times. All staff who handle files are responsible for ensuring that the files are properly stored and that no file containing confidential information is left where there is unrestricted access. The Privacy Officer will ensure that the organisation complies with National Privacy Principles and Guidelines.

**References**

The Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)

Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)

Commonwealth Privacy Act 1998

Freedom of Information Act 1082



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## Customer Services Standards

ACOD training and assessment services will meet strict customer service standards to maintain compliance with VET Quality Framework requirements and to maintain an exceptional standard of customer service. The following customer service standards will be followed in the delivery and assessment of both accredited and non-accredited training programs:

### *Australian Apprenticeship Centre (ACC) Liaison*

ACOD will advise selected ACC's within ten (10) working days of first contact with an employer that a training contract needs to be completed.

### Training Plan

1. ACOD will contact the employer and participant customers within ten (10) working days of receiving notice of a training contract being in place.
2. A training plan will be devised for each customer and qualification being undertaken, prior to the commencement of the delivery of structured training and assessment.
3. When the training plan is being prepared, customers will be provided with a full list of elective options available for all stages of the qualification.
4. The training plan will be reviewed with the participant periodically to ensure its continuing relevance to the needs of the participant.
5. In the first month of the program, jointly with the employer if applicable, trainers will develop and record on the training plan a preliminary training and assessment schedule.
6. Trainers will facilitate increased customer (& employer) responsibility for quality outcomes by developing and documenting an initial training and assessment plan with the customer (& employers).

### Training and Assessment Delivery

- Provide the participant with initial course materials and documentation within ten (10) working days of signing the training plan.

- Deliver the training and assessment services in accordance with the training plan through the appropriate mode as identified in that plan.
- Where applicable, assist employers to access appropriate materials to record achievements of the participant in the workplace.
- Monitor the programs of the participant throughout the program including assessing the needs of the participant for additional support. For example, the need for any additional literacy, numeracy, or study skills support, and how this will be provided.
- Review progress of the participant at regular intervals, including at commencement and at least once more before completion of any program or calendar year.
- Provide additional support or apply for tutorial support funding if necessary.
- All ACOD training and assessment services will be conducted in a safe and accessible environment.
- If at any stage prior to commencing delivery of the structural training and assessment, ACOD is unable to deliver the structured training and assessment identified in the training plan, it will;
- Assist the customer to identify an alternative RTO
- Manage the transfer of that customer to the new RTO with all appropriate records
- In accordance with the fees and charges policy, refund any fees paid
- In the case of customers under a training contract, notify the relevant STA that it will no longer be providing training relating to that particular qualification outcome and provide information showing which customers have been transferred to other RTO's.
- Ensure that trainees are provided with access to structured training and assessment for a minimum of three (3) hours per week averaged over three (3) months, where applicable.

### **Amendments to the Training Plan**

- ACOD routinely negotiates amendments to the Training and Assessment Plan approach with all customers. Where major amendments occur (e.g. delivery mode / change of unit selection):

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- An amended training plan is prepared in negotiation with the customer and
  - All parties' sign off a new declaration on the amended training plan to confirm agreement.

## Distance and Online Delivery Methods

ACOD provides a structured framework and learning pathways for participants involved in distance, self-paced and online delivery methods. A turn-a-round policy of 'within 24 hours' is in place for all customer queries, whether verbal or written format, will all staff striving to meet this target.

An assessment turn-a-round policy of 'within 14 days' is also in place for the assessment and return of assignments, recognition portfolios and other client documentation, to ensure that customers receive accurate and timely information and feedback as they complete their course. All ACOD distance learners have access to email and phone contact with facilitators, and structured discussion board areas, with which to meet and discuss course materials and issues with trainers and other customers.

## Communications with State Training Authorities and ASQA

ACOD management maintains communications with ASQA on an ongoing basis for all RTO changes including key management changes. ACOD management in each region maintain communication with state training authorities to maintain accurate management contact and other details. ACOD maintains appropriate contact and advice to state training authorities in various jurisdictions on all traineeship and apprenticeship information. This includes;

- Use of STA website data systems and reporting,
- Submission of training plans and other documentation as required in particular jurisdictions,
- Advice and reporting on traineeship issues and employer issues as these arise, and
- Immediate notification of critical events, including notification of the death of a trainee.

ACOD CEO ensures that ACOD complies with the VET quality framework and ASQA standards. This applies to all of the operations within ACOD's scope of registration, as listed on the national register. ACOD co-operates with the national VET regulator:

- In the conduct of audits and monitoring of its operations,
- By providing accurate and timely data relevant to measures of performance;
- By providing information about significant changes by its operations
- By providing information about significant changes to its ownership, and
- In the retention, archiving, retrieval and transfer of records consistent with ASQA requirements.

### Reporting of Traineeship / Employer Issues

Each state jurisdiction has a requirement for the reporting of traineeship / trainee employer issues in cases where issues are hampering the effective implementation of the traineeship program. Minimum compliance requirements include availability for onsite visits at least quarterly, provision of release time for study and support for on-the-job training. Where an employer/traineeship process is in danger of breach of a minimum compliance requirement, ACOD staff;

1. Must support the trainee and employer to understand their obligations,
2. Must undertake and document numerous support actions as appropriate to ensure that the compliance requirement is met, and
3. Must communicate with ACOD management any issues and concerns

Immediately once an employer / traineeship process has experienced a breach of a minimum compliance requirement, ACOD staff,

- Must advise the trainee and employer that the compliance requirements are not being met; and
- Must communicate with ACOD management of the compliance breach, for immediate reporting to the relevant state training authority for action as per the relevant process in each jurisdiction.

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## Pre-Enrolment Information

### Course Services Information

Once a course information request, client expression of interest or course registration and application for enrolment has been received, ACOD provides further current and accurate information to prospective students to enable them to decide if ACOD as a training organisation and the relevant course service of interest is suitable for them, taking into account their existing skills and knowledge and any specific individual needs.

ACOD ensures information provision for all course services is accurate and conforms to the planned training and assessment described in ACOD's training and assessment strategies.

Prior to enrolment, ACOD provides clear information to prospective clients via the *Course Guide* including the following:

- Full course code and title of the training product(s) of interest;
- Any relevant currency information, such as whether a qualification has been superseded or removed from a training package;
- Where the training and/or assessment will be undertaken, how long it will take and mode/s involved;
- Information regarding any entry requirements and/or specific requirements they need to meet to successfully complete the course program of interest;
- Any requirements of the client to provide any materials and/or equipment;
- Information about educational and support services available to students and any cost associated with them;
- Any limitations regarding access to educational and support services and resources;
- Whether the training includes mandatory work placements. If mandatory work placements are part of the training, clients are provided with clear information on who will arrange this, the duration and schedule applicable and what outcomes are expected of the work placement;
- ACOD is responsible for the quality of the training and assessment during all course services in compliance with the *VET Quality Framework* and the *Standards for RTOs 2015*; and
- ACOD is responsible for the issuance of AQF certification documentation the student is entitled to as course services are undertaken.

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## Fee Information

ACOD provides fee information to clients prior to enrolment, via the *Course Fees Agreement*. Please refer to the *Fees, Charges and Refunds* section of this manual for further information.

## Third Party Arrangements

ACOD has no third party arrangements.

## Consumer Rights

ACOD informs prospective clients about their rights as a consumer in accordance with relevant state and territory laws. This includes information on cooling-off periods where relevant. Please refer to the *Consumer Protection* section of this manual for further information.

ACOD informs prospective clients about its complaints and appeals processes that may be relevant for course services and other business activities.

ACOD notifies clients as soon as practical after any change occurs that may affect the course services being provided. This includes changes of significant impact including:

- Any changes to, or new third party arrangements ACOD puts in place, for the delivery of services to specific clients; and
- A change in ownership should that occur.

Notification occurs in writing, via letter, email or an amended *Course Fees Agreement* in cases where this is relevant.

## Withdrawal without Penalty

A withdrawal without penalty day or census day is a date by which a student's enrolment in the course or part of the course can be cancelled without the student incurring tuition fees for the course or part of the course. ACOD census day to accommodate rolling intakes or flexible enrolments is 20 per cent of the way through the course.

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## NSW Smart & Skilled Student Information

ACOD ensures that all students considering enrolling in NSW Smart & Skilled subsidised training receive, or are aware of how to access, certain information, either electronically or in hard copy form before enrolment which is designed to make these students aware of policies relating to their training, including their rights and responsibilities and avenues for complaint.

The Student Information provided prior to enrolment includes:

- Fee information;
- Information regarding Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Transfer, deferring or discontinuing subsidised training (including any implication on fees);
- Consumer protection information;
- What the enrolled student should do if they want to defer or discontinue their training;
- How to access support and assistance during the training; and
- Contact details for various support services within ACOD.

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## Student Advice & Selection

ACOD has implemented this documented policy and process for assessing whether student applicant's English language proficiency, educational qualifications or work experience is sufficient to enable them to enter the course for which enrolment is sought.

### Student Entry Procedure

On application for enrolment, ACOD ensures that all Students are able to seek admission to a course program on the same basis. Where Students have particular needs, these are discussed in open consultation with the Student, and where appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be made in order to facilitate the Student's enrolment.

ACOD provides high quality course services, including training and assessment that is suitable and appropriate for each Student.

*Suitable* means the training and assessment meets the individual's needs, links to likely job and/or participation outcomes and minimises duplication of the individual's existing competencies.

*Appropriate* means the training and assessment is delivered to regulatory and industry standards, uses delivery modes and durations optimised for the individual's needs and includes reasonable support to facilitate the individual's participation and attainment.

ACOD focuses on supporting a prospective student to understand how their options may affect their future and, ultimately, helping them to choose the right training. This includes being prepared to suggest, in some instances, that none of its offerings are right for an individual. Where this is the case, ACOD refers prospective Students to relevant government websites in their jurisdiction as a good place to start to determine more suitable course options. Some example sites include:



Jurisdiction	Course Gateways
Australian Government	Australian Training Directory <a href="https://www.myskills.gov.au/">https://www.myskills.gov.au/</a>
Australian Capital Territory	Skilled Capital <a href="https://www.skills.act.gov.au/">https://www.skills.act.gov.au/</a>
New South Wales	Smart & Skilled <a href="https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au">https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au</a>
Northern Territory	VET NT <a href="http://www.vet.nt.gov.au/">http://www.vet.nt.gov.au/</a>
Queensland	QLD Skills Gateway <a href="http://www.skillsgateway.training.qld.gov.au">http://www.skillsgateway.training.qld.gov.au</a>
South Australia	WorkReady Gateway <a href="http://www.skills.sa.gov.au">http://www.skills.sa.gov.au</a>
Tasmania	Skills Tasmania <a href="http://www.skills.tas.gov.au/learners">http://www.skills.tas.gov.au/learners</a>
Victoria	Victorian Skills Gateway <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/victorianskillsgateway">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/victorianskillsgateway</a>
Western Australia	Future Skills <a href="http://www.dtwd.wa.gov.au/future-skills-wa">http://www.dtwd.wa.gov.au/future-skills-wa</a>

### ***Academically Suited***

ACOD has implemented this student entry procedure to ensure that students are confirmed to be academically suited to undertake the particular course they wish to study.

To ensure students are academically suited, ACOD's student application and enrolment processes include the requirements that:

1. The student satisfies minimum academic admission requirements; and
2. The student satisfies any other specified entry requirements for the particular course; and

3. ACOD reasonably believes that the student is academically suited to undertake the course.

## Process and procedures relating to student entry

These ACOD's student entry procedures:

- Specify the requirements a student must meet to be determined to be academically suited to undertake a particular approved course;
- Specify that the results of assessing a student's competence in reading and numeracy under the procedure must be reported to:
  - the student as soon as practicable after the assessment; and
  - the Secretary in the form, manner and by the time requested by the Secretary; and
- Describe the process (including the tools) for validly and reliably assessing a student's competence in reading and numeracy against the Australian Core Skills Framework.

### *When is a student academically suited?*

A student is academically suited to a course when:

- ACOD reasonably believes the student is academically suited; and
- The student satisfies any entry requirements for the course; and
- The student satisfies one of the following requirements:
  - ACOD obtains a copy of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education that has been awarded to the student by an agency or authority of a State or Territory for the student's completion of year 12; or
  - the student is assessed using the ACER Core Skills Profile for Adults (CSPA), as displaying competence at or above Exit Level 3 in the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) in both reading and numeracy and ACOD reasonably believes that the student displays that competence; or
  - ACOD obtains a copy of a certificate that a qualification at level 4 or above in the Australian Qualifications Framework has been awarded to the student by a body registered to award the qualification in the AQF in Australia and the course was delivered in English.

### *Assessing competency in reading and numeracy*

ACOD ensures the LLN assessment process is conducted with honesty and integrity.

The results of assessing a student's competence in reading and numeracy under the procedure are reported:

- To the student as soon as practicable after the assessment; and
- To the Secretary in the form, manner and by the time requested by the Secretary.

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ACOD retains these results for at least 3 years.

If a student fails to achieve the required standard of language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) on sitting, the student may re-sit based on ACOD's assessment of readiness. The Australian Council for Educational Research's (ACER's) recommendation is that at least 3 months between assessments should provide enough time for progress to be made and improvement to be able to be demonstrated. This would allow time for the learner and ACOD to implement any targeted LLN support and to have sufficient time for the learner to improve their LLN skills to the required level. Re-sit within 3 months will be a risk indicator.

### ***Pre-Enrolment Review***

ACOD conducts a *Pre-Enrolment Review* of current competencies including literacy and numeracy skills prior to commencement in training for each student.

The Pre-Enrolment Review is designed to:

- Ensure students have the ability to communicate effectively in English at suitable level for the course;
- Ensure students understand employment pathways or opportunities the course can lead to, employer expectations and working conditions in this field of employment;
- Ensure students understand industry or regulatory requirements, such as minimum age or police checks, and hold these as relevant;
- Confirm students' aptitude for learning;
- Identify any competencies previously acquired Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Credit Transfer;
- Ascertain a suitable, and the most suitable qualification for the Student to enrol in, based on:
  - the individual's existing educational attainment, capabilities, aspirations and interests;
  - due consideration of the likely job outcomes, participation and/or further study opportunities from the development of new competencies and skills;
  - being vocationally relevant and reflecting industry requirements and the workplace setting;
  - minimising duplication of the individual's existing competencies; and
  - meeting the individual's needs;
- Ascertain that the proposed learning strategies and materials are appropriate for that individual, based on:
  - providing reasonable and accessible support to facilitate the individual's participation in training and attainment of skills; and
  - the Volume of Learning, Amount of Training, duration, delivery modes, materials, facilities and equipment are sufficient:
    - to meet the individual's needs; and
    - for the individual to consolidate skills and produce job-ready competencies;

- Where the proposed learning includes portions delivered online, identify the individual's digital capability, including access to necessary technology, and where necessary identify steps to overcome any barriers in this regard; and
- Ensure students understand course expectations, methods of delivery, cost of the course, additional expenses such as personal protective equipment, location of the course, recognition of prior learning, work placement requirements and attendance requirements.

Course Services are designed to build on a student's existing abilities and develop new ones. Students are not encouraged to undertake training where there is not a reasonable prospect of completion. The individual's existing educational and vocational attainment, other demonstrated capabilities, career aspirations and general interests are considered in course selections and services planning.

ACOD does not enrol a student in a course or qualification that is not suitable or inappropriate for that Student. The Pre-Enrolment Review is completed, and the outcomes known and documented, prior to acceptance of the Student's enrolment application.

The Pre-Enrolment Review is a comprehensive assessment where ACOD genuinely seeks to understand a Student's training needs. It's a conversation that encourages Students to reflect on their own aspirations and guides their selection of suitable training.

The Pre-Enrolment Review is undertaken by skilled ACOD personnel who provide impartial advice and translate a Student's ideas about their future into tangible and suitable choices.

The Pre-Enrolment Review process encompasses:

- Student identification confirmation;
- Course information & requirements;
- Identifying Students' existing educational attainment, capabilities, aspirations and interests and individual needs;
- Language, Literacy & Numeracy assessment;
- Where the proposed learning includes portions delivered online, identify the individual's digital capability, including access to necessary technology;
- Previous competencies, Credit Transfer application (if relevant) and Recognition of Prior Learning application (if relevant);
- Employer engagement (if relevant);
- Government support eligibility (if relevant); and
- Final planning, course confirmation and enrolment decision.

Each of these components is outlined below.

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### ***Student Identification Requirements***

A number of ACOD projects require identification to be confirmed and verified identification evidence to be retained on file on admission to any nationally recognised course program. This may include:

- Evidence of student identity (for example, photo identification);
- Evidence of student eligibility to participate (for example, citizenship); and
- Evidence of pre-requisites being met (for example, previous qualifications/study).

Student identity is confirmed as an initial step in the Pre-Enrolment Review process.

### ***Course Information***

During the *Pre-Enrolment Review* process, general and course specific pre-enrolment information, including the relevant *Course Guide* is explained in further detail and student queries answered. This generally includes:

- Explanation of course content, competency standards, timelines and stakeholders;
- Outline of entry requirements and admission requirements;
- Duration of course and the delivery mode of course;
- Identification of specific resource requirements for the course;
- Explanation of assessment procedures relevant to course;
- ACOD's procedures and processes; and
- Fees, charges and refunds information.

### ***Identifying Individual Student's Needs***

Prior to enrolment ACOD provides advice to the prospective client about the training product(s) appropriate to meeting the student's needs, taking into account the individual's existing skills and competencies.

As a part of this process, ACOD ascertains and consider the individual's existing educational and vocational attainment, other demonstrated capabilities, career aspirations and general interests.

To maximise the chance of students successfully completing their training, ACOD:

- Identifies any support individual students need prior to their enrolment; and
- Provides access to that support throughout their training.

### ***Student Enrolment Information Collection***

All prospective students must complete and provide relevant enrolment information and personal data as a part of their enrolment application. This includes relevant

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AVETMISS data collection information and relevant student identifiers including the USI.

Prospective students have the option of commencing their enrolment information process online, by completing an online registration form for their initial course of interest. This online registration form once received is printed out and forms the basis of the student's enrolment information.

For prospective students that do not start the enrolment information process online, a hard-copy *Enrolment Application Form* will be completed by the prospective student as a part of the Pre-Enrolment Review.

In either case, once provided the enrolment information provided is used by ACOD representatives as a component of the re-Enrolment Review, as it provides significant information on the student's background, prior skills and qualifications, current employment status and particular special needs.

Either online print out or hard copy version of the *Enrolment Application Form* is signed by the student as a part of the Pre-Training Review process, to confirm that the information being provided is a true and accurate record relating to their individual situation. This confirms the application process, but does not constitute formal acceptance of the student's enrolment into the course.

### ***Students' Needs***

As a component of this process, ACOD determines the amount of training it will provide to each student with regard to:

- The existing skills, knowledge and the experience of the student;
- The academic suitability of the student;
- The mode of delivery; and
- Where a full qualification is not being delivered, the number of units and/or modules being delivered as a proportion of the full qualification.

ACOD provides a range of educational and support services to its students that include, but are not limited to:

- Pre-enrolment materials;
- Study support and study skills programs;
- Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) programs or referrals to these programs;
- Equipment, resources and/or programs to increase access for students with disabilities and other students in accordance with access and equity;
- Learning resource centres;
- Mediation services or referrals to these services;
- Flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment;

- Counselling services or referrals to these services;
- Information and communications technology (ICT) support;
- Learning materials in alternative formats, for example, in large print;
- Learning and assessment programs contextualised to the workplace; and
- Any other services that ACOD considers necessary to support students to achieve competency.

Support services are made available;

ACOD's individual needs process includes:

- Identifying particular requirements such as literacy, numeracy, English language or physical capabilities students would need to complete each course;
- student learning styles and identification of any special learning needs; and
- Developing strategies to make support available where gaps are identified.

### ***Academic Suitability Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (LLN) Assessment***

As a component of the Pre-Enrolment Review process, ACOD reviews all enrolment applications to ensure course admission requirements relating to the student's academic suitability are being met prior to acceptance of a student into a course.

Where a course has specific academic suitability admission requirements, as part of the Pre-Enrolment Review students are required to complete an *Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) aligned Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (LLN) Assessment* to ensure that the student has the ability to complete the course.

For all students in all course application processes, ACOD requires the assessment process to be conducted with honesty and integrity.

### **General VET Courses Academic Suitability**

General arrangements for students wishing to enrol in a VET course require the student to complete an ACOD designed LLN Quiz relevant to their course application.

That is, students are required to complete a LLN Quiz mapped directly to ACSF Level 1, 2 or 3 requirements, at the ACSF level that has been confirmed relevant to the specific ACSF level of the course to which the application relates.

For students undertaking the ACOD designed LLN Quiz as part of the Pre-Enrolment Review, this assessment will be undertaken:

- Via paper-based or online quiz depending on the student's application preference;
- Individually by the student after identification has been confirmed; and

- Under the direct supervision of an ACOD representative to ensure the authenticity of the assessment results.

### **Results of Assessments**

For all assessment undertaken as outlined above, the results of the assessment are reported to the student as soon as practicable after the assessment has occurred.

If the student is unable to complete the LLN Assessment satisfactorily, the relevant ACOD representative will complete a further *LLN Assessment Report*, making recommendations on required actions that may include:

- Refusal to process the student's application for enrolment, on the basis that the student has not met the entry requirements to support their successful completion of the course; or
- The required strategies and actions to be taken to assist the student to be able to complete the course, if this option is possible under course admission requirements.

The *LLN Assessment Report* is provided as soon as practicable to the *Chief Executive Officer*, who will make a final determination on the report's recommendations within five working days.

If the student's application for enrolment is rejected, reasons for this rejection will be provided in writing, with information including instructions on how to provide a further complaint regarding this decision.

Regardless of the outcome of the assessment result or outcome of the student's application for enrolment, ACOD retains all records of assessments undertaken and their results for a minimum of 5 years after the completion of the process.

### **Reasonable Adjustment**

There may be times and situations in which a student may require 'reasonable adjustment' of the training and assessment methods implemented by ACOD to meet their specific individual needs. Please refer to the *Access and Equity* section for further information.

### **Credit Transfer**

As a component of the *Pre-Training Review* process, ACOD ensures students are not required to repeat any unit or module in which they have already been assessed as competent, unless a regulatory requirement or license condition (including industry licensing schemes) requires this.



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*Credit transfer* is a process that provides students with credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes from previous studies.

Where a student provides suitable evidence they have successfully completed a unit or module at any RTO, ACOD provides credit for that unit or module. In some cases, licensing or regulatory requirements may prevent a unit or module being awarded through a credit process.

ACOD is not obliged however to issue a qualification or statement of attainment that is achieved wholly through recognition of units and/or modules completed at another RTO or RTOs.

Note that providing credit for previous studies is not a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. RPL is a form of assessment of the competence of a person, while providing credit is recognising the equivalence of studies previously undertaken and completed successfully.

#### **Verification of Documentation**

ACOD recognises verified testamurs from other Registered Training Organisations. This applies to all cases, including students seeking credit transfer for previous study, and personnel documentation.

Before providing credit on the basis of a qualification, statement of attainment or record of results, ACOD verifies the information in the document. When verifying testamurs of nationally recognised qualifications or statements of attainment from other RTOs, ACOD personnel are required to:

1. Sight the *original* certificate/statement of attainment from which credit transfer is being sought;
2. Confirm the validity of the document with the relevant issuing registered training organisation;
3. Ensure the unit codes on the previous certificate/statement of attainment are highlighted as the unit codes being sought for credit transfer;
4. Take a copy of the certificate/statement of attainment and certify this document by signing and dating that the certificate/statement of attainment has been verified, with the statement “*I confirm that this document is a true and accurate copy of the original*”; and

5. Where units are deemed equivalent, attach the relevant mapping page from the official training package curriculum list where equivalency has been noted.

### **Student Request for Credit Transfer**

If a student wishes to apply for Credit Transfer it is *mandatory* that they complete the refer to the *ACOD RPL Assessment Tool Kit AU/NZ* and include appropriate evidence to support the Credit Transfer application.

All Credit Transfer applications must be supported by the appropriate evidence. This may be in the form of Nationally Recognised Qualification or Statement of Attainment indicating exactly the same code and title as those included in the student application, or other documents of equivalence.

Where appropriate evidence is provided with the Credit Transfer application ACOD must grant the Credit Transfer. Where Credit Transfer is granted, the student will be advised within five working days of completion of the assessment and the training program adjusted accordingly.

Where Credit Transfer is not granted, the student will be notified in writing of the outcome within five working days of completion of the assessment. The written communication to the student includes a reason for refusal, and information on how to lodge a complaint or appeal if desired.

In all cases, a copy of the credit transfer application and verified copies of the relevant documentation evidence is retained in the student's file.

### ***Recognition of Prior Learning***

*Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* means an assessment process that assesses the competency/s of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in the training package or VET accredited courses.

- *Formal learning* refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree);
- *Non-formal learning* refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction, but does not lead to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business); and

○ *Informal learning* refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative). RPL assesses this prior learning against the requirements of a qualification, in respect of both entry requirements and outcomes to be achieved. RPL encourages an individual to continue upgrading their skills and knowledge through structured education and training towards formal qualifications and improved employment outcomes. RPL keeps the system of qualifications open to recognition of the value of learning achieved outside the formal system, as part of everyday living in a continuum of learning throughout one's life.

In order to recognise prior learning it is necessary to:

- Compare the informal or non-formal learning the individual has achieved against the learning outcomes or performance criteria of the course or qualification for which the student is using as a basis for seeking entry or the award of credit; and
- Determine appropriate evidence to support the claim of prior learning.

The processes used to assess RPL applications may take several (not mutually exclusive) forms, for example:

- Participation in exactly the same or modified versions of the assessment the student would be required to complete as part of the full course;
- Assessment based on a portfolio of evidence;
- Direct observation of demonstration of skill or competence;
- Reflective papers, journals or portfolios that relate past learning to the learning or competency outcomes of the current course or qualification;
- Provision of examples of the student's work drawn from the workplace, social, community or other setting in which the student applies their learning, skill or competence;
- Testimonials of learning, skill or competence; and
- Combinations of any of the above.

ACOD ensures that trainers and assessors remain current in their professional development and in their knowledge and understanding of issues related to recognition.

### **RPL Process**

As a component of the *Pre-Training Review* process, ACOD implements a robust RPL process to ensure that:

- The uptake of RPL is encouraged and RPL processes are reviewed to streamline the RPL application process;
- Where possible, the student is able to complete the qualification in less time;
- RPL information is provided to students prior to enrolment and prior to commencement of formal training delivery in a course program;

- RPL processes offered provide adequate information, support and opportunities for students to engage in the RPL process;
- RPL decisions are made prior to the commencement of the course, subject or unit for which the RPL is being claimed; and
- RPL assessment processes and procedures meet the same delivery and quality assurance requirements as all other assessment arrangements.

### **RPL Requirements**

To achieve RPL, students must:

- Apply for RPL;
- Provide appropriate RPL evidence (including documents, demonstrations and interviews as may be relevant); and
- Have this evidence assessed as meeting all of the requirements of the entire Unit of Competency.

Where students have gaps, or require additional mentoring and support, RPL is not applicable. In these cases *learning* is occurring, and a '*Competent*' result is achieved on completion of assessment.

### **RPL Applications**

It is *mandatory* that students wishing to achieve RPL with ACOD refer to the *ACOD RPL Assessment Tool Kit AU/NZ* and provide this and include their evidence submission for assessment. This application ensures:

- The Application for RPL is recorded effectively;
- The start date for each Unit of Competency is correctly identified; and
- The appropriate declarations of authenticity of prior work are recorded.

### **Start Dates**

The official start date for a Unit of Competency through RPL is determined (by NCVET) as the date that the student submitted their evidence portfolio for assessment. This is the start date that all ACOD personnel are to record on the student's training and assessment plan (actual start date section for each unit). This date is critical for compliance in cases where financial subsidies are being received for the student's course.

The RPL result date is the final date that the student provided all evidence required and was deemed to have achieved the unit '*RPL-Granted*' result.

### **Financial Regulatory Implications**

All ACOD personnel must ensure they are aware of RPL implications with regard to financial regulatory impacts in their region and projects. RPL in some jurisdictions is:

- Fully subsidised;
- Partially subsidised; or

- Not subsidised.

Depending on the region, when students are applying for RPL, it is critical that ACOD personnel understand any financial implications that may apply and discuss correct fees and charges with the student concerned.

### ***Employer Engagement***

As a component of the *Pre-Enrolment Review* process, ACOD ensures that employers or other parties who contribute to each student's course services and outcome are informed and engaged in the training and assessment on the development, delivery and monitoring of training and assessment. This may include course services involving work placements, employer sponsored courses and apprenticeship or traineeship arrangements.

- All employers involved in ACOD course services receive the *Student Handbook* that provides a range of important information for employer involvement including:
  - Employer and RTO responsibilities;
  - student attendance and behaviour expectations;
  - Equity commitment;
  - Work health and safety requirements;
  - Privacy arrangements;
  - Language, literacy and numeracy arrangements;
  - student support services;
  - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer;
  - Competency-based training and assessment process;
  - Complaints and appeals processes;
  - Evaluation and feedback arrangements;
  - Further information contact details; and
  - Any relevant required release from work or study.

ACOD ensures all students involved in workplace delivery have a range of processes and mechanisms implemented to engage the employer in the training and assessment process. This includes but is not limited to:

- Consultation prior to and during enrolment, and subsequent training and assessment sessions to gain input from the employer in areas such as the development of the training plan;
- Providing employer guidance on how to assist students to achieve competency through undertaking specific workplace tasks. This is undertaken through various contact and employer specific information and documents;
- Ensuring the assessment process is supported with supplementary evidence from the employer to contribute to the assessment outcome (such as *Workplace Supervisors Reports*);
- Regular contact with the employer to confirm the student's progress; and
- Formal evaluation processes to gain further feedback on the training and assessment processes provided.

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## NSW Smart & Skilled Notification of Enrolment Process

The following process applies to the notification to the Department of the enrolment in subsidised training of eligible prospective students.

*Note: This process does not apply to the School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship Program.*

ACOD adheres to the eligibility criteria for students, as outlined in the NSW Smart & Skilled Contract and covered above. ACOD only carries out notifications of enrolment via the Department portal in accordance with the following process: ACOD firstly obtains the consent of prospective students to the Department's use of the prospective students' information by:

- The prospective student signing or electronically accepting (including by ticking a check box) a NSW Consent Form; or
- The prospective student verbally providing their consent provided that a consent statement is recited to the prospective student or is made available for the prospective student to read.

To be clear, if the prospective student does not provide their consent, ACOD does not proceed with the Notification of Enrolment Process.

If ACOD has approval from the Department for any part of an approved qualification to be delivered by a subcontractor, ACOD notifies the prospective student (and any relevant employer) of the subcontracting arrangement.

ACOD uses ACOD Calculator to validate eligibility, input details of any Credit Transfers or Recognition of Prior Learning and generate details of the fee chargeable and the applicable subsidy together with any loadings (if applicable).

ACOD provides all prospective students with details of the fee chargeable.

ACOD generates and maintains a hard copy or electronic copy of the Notification of Enrolment Report Provider Copy that can be referred to where the fee and subsidy is adjusted after the Commitment ID is issued.

ACOD confirms that each prospective student has signed or electronically accepted a declaration confirming:

- All information provided by the prospective student to ACOD, in connection with the Notification of Enrolment Process is true, accurate, complete and not misleading in any way;
- The prospective student is aware of any subcontracting arrangements (if applicable); and

- The prospective student had been provided with the details of the fee chargeable and other required student information.

Successful completion of the Notification of Enrolment Process results in the issue of a Commitment ID. The Notification of Enrolment Process is carried out simultaneously with ACOD's enrolment process and is completed before ACOD delivers any training to the student.

### **Planned Start Date**

ACOD ensures the planned start date:

- Prior to the commencement of the Activity Period, may not be later than 4 months from the commencement of the Activity Period; or
- After the commencement of the Activity Period, may not be later than 4 months after the date of issue of the Commitment ID.

A prospective student is only able to become a student once the notification of enrolment process has been completed, a Commitment ID has been issued and the prospective student has enrolled in the relevant course.

If a Commitment ID has been issued for a prospective student and the prospective student does not enrol, or cancels their enrolment, ACOD cancels the Commitment ID immediately.

## **Finalising the Pre-Enrolment Review**

As a Pre-Enrolment Review is conducted, ACOD representatives complete the Pre-Enrolment Review Record to confirm that all components of the process are completed effectively.

As all Pre-Enrolment Review activities above are completed, the ACOD representative clearly documents:

- Details of which of the key learning objective(s) the proposed course aligns with as follows:
  - enable the individual to obtain the required skills to make them job-ready;
  - assist the individual to undertake further education; and/or
  - promote/enable access to training for a disadvantaged individual; and
- How the proposed course aligns with the stated key learning objective(s); and
- The rationale for how the selected course is being both suitable for the individual, and the most suitable course option for the individual; and
- The overall Pre-Enrolment Review decision.

On conclusion of this process, a *Course Fees Agreement* (including *Statement of Fees*) is then prepared by ACOD in order to make a formal enrolment offer to the prospective student and/or relevant supporting employer.

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## Non-Acceptance of Enrolment Application

Should the prospective student not be accepted into the course program they have applied for, the individual will be provided with formal notice of this non-acceptance:

In writing;

- With reasons provided for this non-acceptance;
- With any alternate options or actions recommended by ACOD; and
- With relevant information on how the prospective student may raise a complaint or seek to have the decision reviewed.



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## Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Evidence must be matched with the performance criteria outlined in each element within a unit of competency in a Training Package or the module learning outcomes of a Training Program.

Some examples of evidence may include:

- Current Certificates or Academic Transcripts;
- Current peer assessment/outline of skills;
- Documentation of training courses or seminars attended;
- A Video demonstration of competency;
- A lesson/ session plan;
- Course or training program developed;
- Peer evaluations or statements;
- Examples of material produced relevant to competencies;
- Examples of material produced as a part of life experience; and
- Completed appropriate RPL assessment tool.

### Steps involved with RPL

Group or Individual session - Confirm the requirements for addressing the performance criteria or meeting learning outcomes. Students will be informed of:

- Application procedures;
- Process;
- Time lines;
- Support available; and
- Complaints & Appeals Procedure.

Students must compile a portfolio of materials (self-assessment) that contains written evidence which must be:

- Valid;
- Authentic;
- Sufficient;
- Current; and
- Reliable.

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Verbal evidence will also be sought. Interviews - The Assessor will evaluate the Portfolio of Evidence supplied by the student. An interview will then be held to further evaluate the student's level of competency through their demonstrated skills. Following are the possible outcomes resulting from an evaluation of the Student's Portfolio of Evidence:

- Status granted;
- Attend selected and/or agreed training sessions as defined by a Skills Development Strategy designed in accordance with the Student's specific needs;
- Unit of Competency achieved; or
- Issuance of Qualifications or Statements of Attainment.

Feedback will be provided to the student in a timely manner concerning the outcome of the assessment of their application for RPL.

Certificates - When a student has successfully demonstrated competence the student will be deemed competent in the required Units of Competency.

Certification includes:

- A Statement of Attainment – Formal certification in the VET sector by an RTO that a person has achieved part of an AQF qualification; or one or more units of competency from a nationally endorsed Training Package; or
- A Qualification – Formal certification in the VET sector by an RTO that a person has satisfied all requirements of the units of competency that comprise an AQF qualification.

Once a Student has been recognised as competent, the trainer must submit:

- A signed copy of their Record of Competency; and
- A Notification of Eligibility for a Qualification Form.

## **Fees, Charges and Refunds**

ACOD appropriate students may have previous qualifications and will like recognition for these units as a reduction in their workload and a financial reduction. Full fee for service paying students are entitled to a 10% discount if they can demonstrate RPL for a quarter or more of their course or RPL for a quarter or more of the workshop attendance, if applicable. This discount will be

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applied only when students apply for their RPL within the first 3 months of their enrolment.

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## Fees, Charges & Refunds

ACOD undertakes to provide course services as outlined in the *Course Fees Agreement*.

### Fees and Charges

Prior to enrolment, ACOD notifies clients of a range of fee information in a *Course Fees Agreement*. This fee information includes:

- All fees payable to ACOD, clearly describing all costs involved with the course;
- How and when fees must be paid;
- How to request a refund;
- The conditions under which a refund would be provided; and
- The student's rights as a consumer, including but not limited to any statutory cooling-off period, if one applies.

ACOD publishes all fees and charges. ACOD details its fees and charges including, but not limited to:

- Compulsory fees;
- Additional charges or co-contributions;
- Application process for exemptions and concessions;
- Methods of collection; and
- Refund information.

Where a student is being enrolled under any loan or delayed payment arrangement, the terms of the arrangement are clearly stated, including:

- Any debt that may be incurred;
- When repayment is required;
- Under what conditions; and
- Any associated fees, indexation or interest.

This information forms part of the *Course Fees Agreement*. Information provided to clients is consistent with ACOD course services arrangements. ACOD ensures all fees and charges related to the provision of training services are outlined to all parties prior to enrolment. Information provided is clear, accurate and sufficient to enable an informed choice.

ACOD fees are designed to minimise the impact of fees and charges, through flexible payment plans, dependent on service type. ACOD is committed to cost efficiency for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) applications, and will at all times seek to complete RPL applications at the same cost or lower than normal course delivery costs.

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### **Course Tuition Fees**

All fees are published and available on the ACOD website. Published fees information includes fee rates for each training product, including full fee for service, subsidised, concession and exemption fee rates for each course and relevant government jurisdiction.

ACOD charges students (and/or their employer or school) the mandatory or at least the minimum course tuition fee in accordance with the relevant specific jurisdictional training initiative requirements.

### **Student Support Services Fees**

If any specific student support options available attract an additional cost, ACOD makes this clear in pre-enrolment information and as a part of the Course Fees Agreement. Similarly, if there are limitations to the support ACOD is able to provide to particular Student cohorts, these limitations are also made clear in information provided to potential Students.

ACOD ensures support provided is reasonable and accessible, with clear and accurate information on these items is included in the ACOD's *Student Handbook*.

### **Incidental Expenses Resource Other Fees**

There may be some instances of a personal cost to a Student over and above the general course fees. These costs include:

- *Essential equipment and other items* that the student has the choice of acquiring from ACOD, or from a supplier other, that become the physical property of the student, are retained by the student on completion of training, and are not consumed during the training. Example: tool kit.
- An optional charge for *an item that is not essential* for the Student to complete the training.
- An optional charge for an *alternative form of access* to an item or service that is an essential component of the training, but is otherwise made readily available at no additional fee by ACOD.
- *Field trips and food, transport and accommodation costs* associated with the provision of field trips that form part of the training.
- *Any textbook* the Student requires for their course that is retained by the Student after completion of the qualification.

Other fees may be charged for alternate forms of access to essential goods or services that are otherwise made available by ACOD at no additional cost, such as course reading material that is available free of charge through another source.

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These fees do not exceed cost recovery. Any increases to the resource fee must not exceed a Perth consumer price index (CPI) increase of 1%. Where appropriate, accountable officers may apply a resource fee to new or existing courses where they have not previously applied.

Trainees and apprentices are not exempt from these fees. However, ACOD provides Trainee Record Books to trainees and apprentices free of charge. For each qualification, ACOD publishes on its website any additional costs that a Student will or may incur and ensure that Students are aware of these costs prior to enrolment.

ACOD provides the student or employer (where relevant) with receipts for any monies collected by ACOD for incidental expenses. ACOD retains copies of receipts issued.

### ***Services Not Incurring Fees***

ACOD does not charge Students separate fees for goods and services that are considered an RTO's responsibility.

For example, ACOD does not charge fees for costs associated with goods and services such as enrolment, records archiving, the purchase or depreciation of equipment or general infrastructure, IT support, and access to general learning and personal support services such as mentoring, study skills programs and career guidance. Separate fees may not be charged for negotiating training plans or determining employers' capacity to train.

Fees are not charged for any items that will be retained by the student as their own personal property, such as tools, protective clothing or textbooks. Such items are purchased separately by the student.

### ***Embedded Qualifications***

In some cases, a qualification may include all the units of competency required to complete a lower level qualification, an 'embedded' qualification. The student may wish to be issued with a testamur for the lower level qualification in addition to the higher one they enrolled in.

In this case the student has paid the fee for the higher level qualification. ACOD does not charge an administrative fee to produce the additional testamur.

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### ***Repeated Assessment***

Students are able to attempt assessment to complete a unit of competency on three (3) occasions within their initial course fee. ACOD does not levy additional fees for these attempts.

### **Government Funding, Subsidy & Support Entitlements**

ACOD ensures each student is made aware of how undertaking training and assessment will impact their access to further government funded training. This includes ensuring that students are aware of any government funding entitlement that may reduce their ability to access such funding in the future (such as arrangements that limit funding to one qualification for a person), ACOD also provides advice on these arrangements prior to enrolment, via the Course Fees Agreement.

The total course fee for a government subsidised course is divided into two components:

- The Fee (to the Student employer employee); and
- The Subsidy (paid by the relevant government body).

In cases of government funding or subsidy, the Course Fees Agreement also includes the approximate value of the contribution from government towards the qualification(s) in which the student is considering enrolment.

The following government contractual jurisdictional arrangements apply to ACOD fees and charges.

#### ***Australian Capital Territory***

##### ***Australian Apprenticeships***

ACOD charges a tuition fee except where the student is exempt, or eligible for a concession and the RTO chooses to waive the remaining tuition fee.

ACOD may determine the fee per delivery mode; however it must be equal to or higher than the published mandatory minimum tuition fee for each qualification.

The mandatory minimum tuition fee is \$350 per qualification.

Additional fees charged may include, but are not limited to the supply of goods the Student needs to purchase for use at work (e.g. tools, work clothing, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)).

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ACOD does not insist that the goods are purchased from the RTO.

### ***New South Wales***

#### ***Smart and Skilled Student fees***

Under Smart and Skilled, a student contributes towards the cost of training through the payment of a student fee. The payment to ACOD is made up of the student fee and the subsidy from the government. Student fees are:

- Set for the whole qualification, not annual or semester fees as some training providers did previously to Smart and Skilled;
- Lower for students doing their first post-school qualification; and
- Set for the student and the qualification and will be the same regardless of ACOD chosen.

#### ***Charging fees***

There are different categories of student fees, based on the qualification and the characteristics of the student. The schedule of fees for each qualification on the NSW Skills List can be accessed at:

[www.training.nsw.gov.au/smartandskilled/prices\\_fees.html](http://www.training.nsw.gov.au/smartandskilled/prices_fees.html).

ACOD must charge the student the relevant fee set by the NSW Government.

The relevant fee will be determined when ACOD enters the student data into the Smart and Skilled Provider Calculator.

#### ***Fee categories***

The student fee categories are:

- Standard Student—First Qualification
- Standard Student—Subsequent Qualification
- Traineeship (for qualifications offered as part of a traineeship pathway)
- Concession
- Exemption

#### ***Standard Student fees***

The Standard Student fee applies to students who are not doing an apprenticeship or traineeship or who do not qualify for a concession or an exemption.

***The Standard Student—First Qualification fee*** applies to students who do not already hold a post-school qualification from any tertiary sector. Qualifications include vocational and higher education qualifications achieved in Australia or overseas at any time previously. Qualifications not deemed to be post-school



qualifications are qualifications achieved while at school as part of an individual's secondary education or prior to turning 17.

The following qualifications have been determined not to be post-school qualifications:

- Certificate I qualifications;
- Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills qualifications;
- Any other foundation skills qualification that is aimed at developing foundation skills as identified in the “National Foundation Skills Strategy” (up to and including Certificate III), including:
  - English language, literacy and numeracy (such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, digital literacy and use of mathematical ideas);
  - Employability skills (such as collaboration, problem solving, self-management, learning and information and communication technology skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life); or
  - Certificate IV NSW Tertiary Preparation Certificate.

Students who hold these qualifications will pay the First Qualification fee. The First Qualification fee also applies to fees for 15 to 17 year old, regardless of any previous qualification.

**The Standard Student—Subsequent Qualification Fee** applies to students who already hold a previous post- school qualification from any tertiary sector. This category includes vocational and higher education qualifications achieved in Australia or overseas at any time previously.

The Standard Student—Subsequent Qualification fee is the higher of the two Standard Student fees because individuals undertaking a second or subsequent post- school qualification have already benefitted from training.

Where a student completes a Smart and Skilled qualification and enrolls in another Smart and Skilled qualification (except an apprenticeship or traineeship), students are charged the Standard Student— Subsequent Qualification fee for the subsequent qualification.

Note: There is no limit to the number of previous post- school qualifications a student can hold.

### **Traineeship fees**

The fee for a qualification delivered under a traineeship is lower than for a non-traineeship pathway. This means that the fee for a trainee is lower than the fee for a student that is not a trainee.

Traineeship qualification fees are capped at \$1,000.

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***Recognition of prior learning***

Where an eligible student is granted recognition of prior learning (RPL) for one or more units of competency, the qualification price will be adjusted and a new student fee determined.

The qualification price is based on both fixed and variable costs. The fixed cost of the qualification will be reduced by 50 per cent of the proportion of units of competency granted RPL. The variable cost will be reduced by 50 per cent of the total cost of the units of competency granted RPL.

Once the adjusted qualification price is calculated the new student fee will be determined at the same percentage of the price as the original student fee for that course (i.e. Adjusted Price x fee percentage).

Where RPL for a unit (or units) of competency is assessed by ACOD and only partially granted and some training delivery is still required, there is no reduction in the student fee and is not be entered in above calculations or reported as RPL granted.

***Credit transfer***

Where an eligible student is granted a credit transfer (CT) for one or more units of competency, the qualification price will be adjusted and a new student fee determined.

The fixed cost of the qualification will be reduced by the proportion of units of competency given credit transfer. The variable cost will be reduced by the total cost of each unit of competency granted credit transfer.

Once the adjusted qualification price is calculated the new student fee will be determined at the same percentage of the price as the original student fee for that course (i.e. Adjusted Price x fee percentage).

***Calculating and adjusting fees for recognition of prior learning and credit transfer***

Where RPL and/or CT are granted at enrolment, ACOD uses the Smart and Skilled Provider Calculator to determine the applicable student fee.

Where RPL and/or CT is granted after enrolment, or after a student commences a qualification, ACOD reports the outcome for the relevant unit(s) of competency in their next Smart and Skilled training activity data file submitted to the Department. The Department will make adjustments to the subsidy payment and advise ACOD of the new student fee. ACOD takes all necessary steps to advise affected

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students of adjusted fee and to adjust the fee levied, including adjustments to subsequent fee payment schedules.

ACOD sights appropriate evidence, such as a testamur or a Unique Student Identifier (USI) transcript to grant credit transfer.

### ***Fees for continuing students***

#### *Smart and Skilled continuing students*

Student fees under Smart and Skilled are for the whole qualification and should be determined at enrolment, and therefore apply until the student has completed training in that qualification. Students who have paid the full fee within the activity period, will not be charged an additional fee to continue their training even if the fee for the qualification increases from one activity period or year to the next.

#### *Student fees for programs outside Smart and Skilled*

Where training is part of fee for service arrangements made between an organisation and a training provider, student fees would be covered through these arrangements. These arrangements are outside Smart and Skilled.

Students who subsequently wish to apply for Smart and Skilled subsidised training will be subject to the same eligibility requirements as for all other Smart and Skilled students.

#### *Proof of eligibility for fee status*

ACOD ensures that individuals declare that information provided with regard to eligibility is true, accurate, complete and not misleading.

Additionally, for some fee types an individual may be required to provide evidence to support their eligibility for the Smart and Skilled fee type. ACOD sights or maintain certain evidence as required.

#### *Proof of eligibility for First or Subsequent Qualification fee*

A student is required to declare any post-school qualifications to assess eligibility for a First or Subsequent Qualification Standard Student fee.

Smart and Skilled data and data from the Unique Student Identifier may also be used as evidence of a student's previous post-school qualifications, to assess the appropriate Standard Student fee.

### ***Validation of student eligibility and fee***

ACOD uses ACOD Calculator to confirm an individual's Smart and Skilled eligibility for a qualification. ACOD charges the student the relevant fee set by the NSW Government which has been validated by ACOD Calculator.

ACOD cannot charge students a fee other than what is calculated by the NSW Government through ACOD Calculator. This means ACOD does not discount the fee, charge a higher fee or exempt students from paying the fee determined by ACOD Calculator.

### ***Additional costs to students***

#### *Incidental expenses*

The price of a qualification, which is made up of the government subsidy and student fee, will cover the total costs incurred by ACOD to deliver the training, including assessment. However, there may be some instances of a personal cost to a student over and above the student fee.

These costs include:

- Essential equipment and other items that the student has the choice of acquiring from ACOD, or from a supplier other than ACOD, that become the physical property of the student, are retained by the student on completion of training, and are not consumed during the training;
- An optional charge for an item that is not essential for the student to complete the training;
- An optional charge for an alternative form of access to an item or service that is an essential component of the training, but is otherwise made readily available at no additional fee by ACOD;
- Field trips and food, transport and accommodation costs associated with the provision of field trips that form part of the training; or
- Any textbook the student requires to undertake their qualification that is retained by the student after completion of the qualification.

For each qualification, ACOD publishes on its website any additional costs that a student will or may incur and ensure that students are aware of these costs prior to enrolment.

ACOD provides all students (or employers where relevant) with receipts for any monies collected by ACOD for incidental expenses. ACOD retains copies of receipts issued.

#### *Charges for issuing embedded qualifications*

In some cases a qualification may include all the units of competency required to complete a lower level qualification, an 'embedded' qualification. The student may wish to be issued with a testamur for the lower level qualification in addition to the

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higher one they enrolled in. In this case the student has paid the fee for the higher level qualification. ACOD may charge an administrative fee to produce the additional testamur but the student will not be required to pay additional student fees for the lower level qualification.

### ***Paying fees***

#### *Levying of student fees*

ACOD determines the payment arrangements for student fees, publishes information and informs students of these arrangements before the student enrolls.

ACOD ensures it collects all fees to be paid by the student by the time they complete their subsidised training.

ACOD ensures it retains student fees that it collects or evidence that either of the two conditions above were met.

#### *Arrangements for payment of fees for apprentices and trainees*

Some Modern Awards include provisions that require the employer to pay the fee on behalf of their apprentice or trainee. Where this is the case the employer will pay the student fee.

### ***Co-enrolments***

ACOD charges a fee for each Smart and Skilled qualification that a student enrolls in. For example, if a student enrolls in both a traineeship qualification and a foundation skills qualification with another RTO, the student must pay the student fee applicable for both qualifications.

### ***Changes to Student Fees***

The student will pay the fee for the qualification that applies in the year when they commence training. The student will not be affected by any subsequent changes to Smart and Skilled fees.

### ***Discontinuing students***

#### *Withdrawal without penalty*

ACOD advises the student, prior to any fees being paid, of the 'withdrawal with no penalty' cut-off date, i.e. the date by which the student can withdraw and be refunded any fees paid at enrolment. This date is 30 days from enrolment.

#### *Withdrawal after the cut-off date without penalty*

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Where a student withdraws from training, ACOD gives the exiting student a statement of fees that includes all fees applied and any fees refunded, if applicable.

*Fees for student repeat attempts to complete units of competency*

ACOD allows a student to attempt each assessment task for each unit of competency on at least three occasions (initial attempt plus two re-submissions) as a part of their student fee. Further assessment attempts beyond the first three attempts may incur additional fees. ACOD ensures students are aware of this policy prior to enrolment.

***Transferring students***

A student undertaking a Smart and Skilled qualification may withdraw from a qualification with a Smart and Skilled Provider and transfer to another Smart and Skilled Provider to complete their qualification because:

- They chose to of their own accord;
- Their initial Provider closes; or
- Their initial Provider's Smart and Skilled Contract has been terminated.

*Students who transfer of their own accord*

Where a student transfers of their own accord from their initial Smart and Skilled Provider to another Smart and Skilled Provider to complete their training, standard credit transfer rules will apply when calculating the student fee. To do this, the student's subsequent Provider must obtain a statement of attainment from the student (issued by the initial Provider) to determine what credit should be granted. The subsequent Provider must use the Smart and Skilled Provider Calculator to determine the student fee.

In this situation, the student may end up contributing more towards the cost of their training.

*Students who transfer due to Provider closure or contract termination*

The following rules apply to a student who transfers due to a Provider's closure or the termination of a Provider's Smart and Skilled Contract:

- The fees charged in total by the two Smart and Skilled Providers cannot exceed the student fee quoted by the initial Provider.
- Where the combined fee exceeds the original fee quoted, the subsequent Provider must contact the Department to confirm fee to be charged, before enrolling the student and charging any fees. Any fee gap will be paid to ACOD by the Department.

Therefore where a student transfers from their initial Smart and Skilled Provider to another Smart and Skilled Provider to complete their training, and the transfer is not of the student's own accord, the subsequent Provider must obtain from the student:

- A statement of attainment issued by the previous Smart and Skilled Provider;
- An up-to-date training plan (issued by the initial Smart and Skilled Provider) that lists all units of competency achieved, commenced but not completed, and/or not started; and
- A statement of fees issued by the previous Smart and Skilled Provider.

The subsequent Provider can then enter the details into the Smart and Skilled Provider Calculator to determine the student's fee.

Obtaining the above documentation may not be possible where the initial provider closes. In these instances, ACOD seeks assistance from the Department to determine the student's fee.

### ***Students transitioning from superseded qualifications***

Where a student is enrolled in a qualification that is superseded and the student is required to transition to the new qualification to continue training and complete, and the price of the new qualification is different to that of the superseded qualification:

- ACOD continues to be paid the applicable subsidy for the superseded qualification; and
- The student fee remains the same.

### ***Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy***

ACOD ensures each student is given access to the Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy before or at the time of enrolment. This is available at:

<https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/for-training-providers>

ACOD makes students aware of its policies or processes on:

- Evidence required for student eligibility for Smart and Skilled, Smart and Skilled programs and fee exemptions and concessions where relevant;
- Withdrawal without penalty;
- Repeat attempts to complete a unit of competency;
- Fee refunds;
- Recovery of outstanding fees; and
- Levying of student fees.

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***Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia***

No mandated student fee arrangements are applicable.

## **Fee Concessions and Exemptions**

Fee concessions and exemptions apply to a range of publicly funded vocational education and training course services provided by ACOD across jurisdictions.

ACOD collects, records and retains all evidence relating to fee transactions.

Where a fee concession, waiver, exemption or refund is granted, ACOD retains all supporting evidence relating to the decision for each student.

ACOD has a formal process in place to support the assessment of student eligibility for waiving any remaining fees and charges, after concessions have been applied. ACOD only permits a fee concession or exemption for a student where evidence supporting the eligibility for concession or exemption is obtained from the student.

Fee concession and exemption arrangements do vary depending on the jurisdiction and government support program available. Please refer to the following table for fee concession and exemption information relevant.

### ***Australian Capital Territory***

#### ***Australian Apprenticeships***

##### *Concession*

A Student is eligible for a fee concession if, at the commencement of training they:

- Hold a current Health Care Card or Pension Card; or
- Can prove genuine hardship.

Where the student is under 18 years of age this rule will apply if the parent/guardian holds one of the above cards. ACOD may choose to waive the remaining tuition fee for Students that are eligible for a fee concession.

##### *Exemption*

The tuition fee is not charged where:

- The employer is the RTO for its own Student; or
- The students leaves one employer and recommences within 12 months with another employer, in the same qualification and with the same RTO; or



- The student is required to go to a different RTO as a result of a change of RTO process; or
- The student is an ASBA and the school is the RTO.

### **.New South Wales**

#### **Concession fees**

Concession fees are discounted fees for disadvantaged students. Concessions fees are a flat fee for the qualification level.

A student who receives a specified Commonwealth Government welfare benefit or allowance is eligible for a concession fee for a qualification up to and including Certificate IV. A student who is receiving a specified benefit or allowance at the time of enrolment is eligible for a concession.

The concession fee is also available to a student who is a dependant of a person receiving a specified Commonwealth Government welfare benefit or allowance. To be eligible for the concession the person who the student is a dependant of must be receiving the benefit or allowance at the time of enrolment.

There are no concessions for students enrolling in Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas.

*Fee for concession students where recognition of prior learning and/or credit transfer has been awarded*

Where a student is eligible for a concession and has been awarded RPL and/or CT, if the adjusted Standard Student fee (First or Subsequent) is lower than the concession fee, the student will pay the relevant Standard Student fee.

#### *Proof of eligibility*

The recipient of a specified Commonwealth Government welfare benefit or allowance must provide the following proof of eligibility for a concession:

- A letter from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) confirming receipt of the benefit. The letter should clearly show the Centrelink Reference Number (CRN) and the benefit or allowance category; or a current concession card that shows the CRN and clearly shows the benefit or allowance category; or
- A current Centrelink income statement that clearly shows the CRN and the benefit or allowance category; or
- Any other evidence that clearly shows the CRN and the benefit or allowance category; or
- Documentary evidence from the Department of Veterans' Affairs stating their pension/benefits status; or

- For people applying for Austudy or Youth Allowance, an approval letter from Centrelink that shows the CRN and indicates that commencement date of their benefit is within two weeks of their enrolment or two weeks within the date of the first class attendance or participation in training.

An individual who is seeking a concession as a dependent child, spouse or partner of someone who is receiving a specified Commonwealth Government welfare benefit or allowance must provide documentary evidence that Centrelink recognises the individual as the dependant. The evidence should clearly show the CRN of the benefit or Commonwealth Government welfare recipient.

### ***Fee exemptions***

Students who qualify for a fee exemption are:

- Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- People with a disability(ies) (that is people who meet the disability fee exemption criteria, including the dependent child, spouse or partner of a recipient of a Disability Support Pension). (See also Proof of eligibility for fee status);
- Refugees and asylum seekers (that is people who meet the refugee and asylum seeker eligibility and exemption criteria specified); or
- Recipients of Fee-Free Scholarships.

### ***Frequency of exemption***

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students that meet the Smart and Skilled disability fee eligibility requirements (“students with a disability(ies)”) and students who meet the refugee or asylum seeker eligibility and exemption criteria (“students who are a refugee or asylum seeker”) will be exempt from fees for any Smart and Skilled enrolments for which they are eligible.

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, “students with a disability(ies)” and students who are a refugee or asylum seeker must meet the Smart and Skilled eligibility criteria or be a NSW apprentice or a NSW new entrant trainee undertaking a Skills List traineeship qualification.

### ***Fee exemption Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students***

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students prove their status and eligibility for a fee exemption through descent, self-identification and community identification.

Students will need to declare their status and be able to provide documentary evidence of community identification, if required.

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### *Fee exemption Students with a disability(ies)*

A student who seeks a fee exemption on the basis of disability will need to provide:

- A letter from Centrelink confirming receipt of the Disability Support Pension. The letter should clearly show the Centrelink Reference Number (CRN); or
- A current Disability Pensioner Concession Card that shows the CRN; or
- A current Centrelink income statement for the Disability Support Pension, which clearly shows that income is for the disability pension and also shows the CRN; or
- Any other evidence that clearly shows the CRN and confirms receipt of the Disability Support Pension; or
- Documentary evidence of support demonstrating a clear additional need as a result of the student's disability. This evidence must be a letter or statement from:
  - a medical practitioner; or
  - an appropriate government agency such as Veteran's Affairs or a TAFE NSW teacher (for students with a disability), a school counsellor or special education coordinator, Centrelink, a Disability Service Provider, or a Job Capacity Assessor; or
  - a specialist allied health professional (including a rehabilitation counsellor, psychologist, speech pathologist, or occupational therapist).

An individual who is seeking an exemption as a dependant child, spouse or partner of someone who is receiving a Commonwealth Government Disability pension must provide documentary evidence that Centrelink recognises the individual as a dependant. The evidence should clearly show the CRN of the Disability Pension Recipient.

### *Fee free training Refugees and asylum seekers*

Refugees and asylum seekers who hold particular visas are eligible for Smart and Skilled. Individuals who hold one of the below visas are eligible for Smart and Skilled. Additionally, individuals who hold any of these visas are eligible for fee-free training for qualifications up to and including Certificate IV.

A student who seeks a fee exemption on the basis of their visa status will need to provide visa documentation, or documentation such as an ImmiCard where appropriate, which states that they hold one of the visas specified.

### *Permanent visas*

- Emergency rescue visa (Subclass 203)
- Global special humanitarian programme visa (Subclass 202)
- In-country special humanitarian programme visa (Subclass 201)
- Protection visa (Subclass 866)

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- Refugee visa (Subclass 200)
  - Woman at Risk visa (Subclass 204).

#### *Temporary visas*

- Bridging Visa A (BVA)
- Bridging Visa B (BVB)
- Bridging Visa C (BVC)
- Bridging Visa D (BVD)
- Bridging Visa E (BVE)
- Safe Haven Enterprise visa (Subclass 790)
- Temporary Humanitarian Concern visa (Subclass 786)
- Temporary Humanitarian Stay visa (Subclass 449)
- Temporary Protection visa (Subclass 785).

#### ***Fee-Free Scholarships***

Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarships are a category of “Fee Exemption”; meaning that Fee-Free Scholarship recipients are exempt from paying student fees. Training providers will be compensated for the student fee revenue foregone as a result of the student being fee exempt rather than paying the concession fee.

To be eligible for a Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarship, individuals must first meet the rules for the relevant program.

Smart and Skilled eligible students undertaking a full qualification up to and including Certificate IV may be eligible for a Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarship and are:

- Aged between 15 and 30 (inclusive) at the start date for training and eligible for a concession fee (i.e. a Commonwealth Government welfare recipient); or
- Commencing in training from 1 January 2016 and meet the Out-of-Home Care definition at the time of enrolment and are:
  - aged 15-17 years and currently in out-of-home care; or
  - Aged 18-30 years and previously in out-of-home care; or
- Aged 15 and over, commencing in training 1 July 2016 and be able to disclose (self-declare) at enrolment that they meet the domestic and family violence definition.

Individuals are eligible for one scholarship per financial year (commencing 1 July 2015) and a maximum of two scholarships over four financial years (ending 30 June 2019).

There is a limit of 50,000 Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarships per financial year. This limit does not apply to students who meet the fee-free criteria who are

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living in social housing in NSW or on the NSW Housing Register (waiting list); or students who meet the out-of-home care criteria for a fee-free scholarship.

*Social Housing definition*

For the purposes of the Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarship scheme, “NSW Social Housing” includes tenants of:

- Public housing (owned and managed by the NSW Government or managed by a community housing provider);
- Community housing (owned and/or managed by community housing providers);
- Aboriginal housing (owned and/or managed by the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) and Aboriginal Community Housing Providers);
- Clients receiving crisis accommodation/supported accommodation (Specialist Homelessness Services); or
- Clients receiving private rental assistance funded by Family and Community Services (for example: private rental subsidy, rental bond loans, tenancy guarantees).

A social housing resident or person on the NSW Housing Register (waiting list) who seeks a Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarship will need to confirm, by student declaration/signature, that the information provided about their social housing status is correct.

*Out-of-Home Care definition*

The term ‘out-of-home care’ is defined in section 13.5 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1985 and refers to children or young people who are cared for by a person other than their parent, in a place that is not their usual home. Children and young people enter out-of-home care because they are in need of care and protection.

There are two main types of out-of-home care:

- Statutory care - where the Children’s Court has made a Care Order placing the child or young person in the parental responsibility of the Minister for Family and Community Services
- Supported care - where the Secretary of Family and Community Services forms the opinion that the child or young person is in need of care and protection.

Children and young people in out-of-home care usually reside with relative/kinship carers, foster carers or in residential care services.

A student who meets the out-of-home criteria who seeks a Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarship will need to confirm by student declaration/signature that they meet the eligibility criteria, and if requested provide supporting evidence.

*Domestic and family violence definition*

For the purposes of the Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarship scheme, people who have experienced or are experiencing domestic and family violence or their dependants must have a letter of recommendation from a domestic and family violence service, refuge or other support agency.

A student who meets the domestic and family violence criteria who seeks a Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarship will need to confirm by student declaration/signature that they meet the eligibility criteria, and provide supporting evidence.

### ***Evidence of Eligibility***

Eligibility for a fee exemption or concession is assessed at enrolment and cannot be adjusted after enrolment. Eligibility evidence is retained on each student's course file.

Where the evidence, provided by the student, is a copy of the original, the copy must be an 'original copy' certified by a person who is on the list of approved witnesses who can verify documents. A list of approved witnesses is available at the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department website at:

[www.ag.gov.au/Publications/Pages/Statutorydeclarationsignatorylist.aspx](http://www.ag.gov.au/Publications/Pages/Statutorydeclarationsignatorylist.aspx).

### **Notifications and Guarantee**

ACOD notifies clients as soon as practical after any change occurs that may affect the course services being provided. This includes changes of significant impact including:

- Any new third party arrangements ACOD puts in place, for the delivery of services to those specific clients; and
- A change in ownership of the RTO entity should that occur.

ACOD guarantees that no additional charges will be imposed during the period covered by the Course Fees Agreement.

All students are offered the option to pay fees across multiple instalments. Where an employer pays fees this is typically paid in one instalment.

### **Third Party Fee Arrangements**

ACOD has no third party representatives that collect fees on behalf of ACOD.

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## Fee Protection

ACOD does not collect more than \$1,500 in prepaid fees (fees in advance) from individual learners at any time for any course service. As such, no further fee protection arrangements are required. The requirements that apply to prepaid fees include all fees that a student is required to pay, including enrolment fees, tuition fees, materials fees and any other fee component that is a mandatory payment for the course.

ACOD is required to protect prepaid fees from individual students and prospective students. These requirements do not apply for employers for example, where an employer engages ACOD to provide training and/or assessment to its personnel.

## Payment of Fees

On registration, students are given the ACOD course fees agreement, outlining the payment plans options.

Apprentices and trainees are treated the same as other students and are legally liable to pay fees.

## Payment Instalments

Students paying by instalment, ACOD is responsible for the collection of outstanding fees and charges. Fair and adequate recovery procedures are in place to manage the collection and recovery of monies.

Students who have fallen behind in their payments are not enrolled in additional units unless appropriate arrangements, agreed to by both the student and present a signed authority from an employer to invoice that employer for the student's fees and charges, have been put in place to pay the amount outstanding.

## Recovery of Outstanding Student Fees

ACOD collects all fees to be paid by the student by the time they complete their subsidised training. ACOD retains student fees that it collects.

ACOD has a robust process for the recovery of outstanding fees from a student, involving:

- Multiple fee statement reminders progressively via email and phone contact;
- Suspension of enrolment due to non-payment of fees; and

- Lodgement of fees for collection in cases of extended non-payment.

The failure by a student to pay a fee owing is considered to be a breach of discipline and can lead to penalties being imposed on the student under Discipline arrangements.

One of the penalties that may be considered is the delay in release of results or testamur(s) as relevant to the student until all fees are recovered, depending on the contractual requirements in each jurisdiction. For significant student debts, formal debt collection actions may also be undertaken.

## Refunds

From time to time a refund may be required for specific student cases. Refund information and arrangements are made available to clients prior to enrolment through:

- ACOD's *Student Handbook*;
- ACOD website; and
- As a part of the *Course Fees Agreement* completed prior to enrolment.

ACOD has publicly published on its website, and makes students aware of this Refund policy before enrolment.

## Enrolment Fees

Enrolment fees paid for any course service cover administrative components of service provision, and are often mandatory fees in the cases of publicly funded course services. In these cases enrolment fees are non-refundable once the course service has commenced.

ACOD's general refund arrangements for all course services, including the provision of refunds to employers/industry for additional charges paid beyond the student and government contributions, are as follows:

Refund Arrangements	
ACOD is unable to commence the course for which the original enrolment and payment has been made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Full refund of all fees levied or placement in an appropriate alternate course, as per the clients' preference.</li> </ul>



<p>Student withdrawal before course commencement and/or the 'withdrawal with no penalty cut-off date.'</p> <p><i>The 'withdrawal with no penalty cut-off date' for each unit is before 20% of the scheduled unit of competency hours for each unit has been delivered.</i></p> <p><i>Students are advised that written advice (such as email) of course withdrawal is necessary to ensure that they are eligible for refunds.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Full refund of course tuition fees paid.</li> <li>○ A full refund of any resource fee if the course is a Diploma or Advanced Diploma course; or</li> <li>○ 50% of any resource fee if the course is below Diploma level.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: In cases for subsidised Students in specific jurisdictions where a mandatory government enrolment fee is required, these fees are non-refundable once the course services have commenced.</i></p>
<p>Recognition of Prior Learning and/or Credit Transfer has been granted.</p>	<p>Pro-rata refund paid based on a calculation of the number of units that have received RPL or CT results and the fees paid to date.</p>
<p>ACOD is unable to continue to deliver the course as agreed.</p>	<p>Pro rata refund of unit tuition fees levied for units of competency not completed, or placement in an appropriate alternate course, as per the clients' preference.</p>
<p>Student withdrawal after unit commencement.</p>	<p>No refund payable for units of competency beyond the 'withdrawal with no penalty cut-off date.'</p> <p>Proportionate refund is payable where the participant has withdrawn from a unit of competency/module. A refund of 30% of unit fees will be refundable in these situations.</p>

The same refund arrangements as outlined above apply to the provision of refunds to employers/industry for any additional charges that had been paid beyond the student and government contributions.

### ***Refunds Due to Non-Provision of Services***

All fees levied are refunded in full if ACOD is unable to commence the course service as agreed due to a lack of minimum Student numbers, a course or unit is cancelled or re-scheduled to a time unsuitable to the student, a student is not given a place due to maximum number of places being reached, where a student withdraws from training not of their own accord, or any unforeseen circumstances. A full refund of relevant unit tuition fees will be paid at any time during delivery if a class is cancelled because of declining student numbers, no available training personnel, ACOD is no longer approved to deliver government supported courses in the relevant jurisdiction, where ACOD RTO closes or due to other circumstances caused by ACOD.

Where there is an instance of ACOD default due to unforeseen circumstances, ACOD will endeavour arrange for another course, or part of a course, to be

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provided to Students at no (extra) cost to the student as an alternative to a refund. Where the student agrees to this arrangement, ACOD will not refund fees paid.

### ***Refunds Due to Request Hardship Application***

Students may have extenuating circumstances that prevent them from attending scheduled course dates that may include but are not limited to illness, family or personal matters, or other reasons that are out of the ordinary.

Where delivery has commenced, course fees have been paid and an employer or Student believes a special circumstance refund is warranted, the client may apply for a refund by writing to the National Administration Manager via email at:

James@acod.edu.au

ACOD generally approves a pro rata refund of fees and charges at any time during the course of delivery if Students withdraw for reasons of personal circumstances beyond their control, such as

- Serious illness resulting in extended absence from course activities;
- Injury or disability that prevents the Student from completing their course; or
- Other exceptional reasons at the discretion of ACOD.

In all cases, relevant documentary evidence (for example, medical certificate) is required. Details of all refunds are retained for audit purposes.

This decision of assessing the extenuating circumstances rests with the Chief Executive Officer and shall be assessed on a case by case situation.

All refund applications are assessed and processed within fourteen (14) days of the application being placed. The applicant will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application, including reasons for refusing a refund in cases where this occurs.

ACOD does not provide a refund in cases where a student has withdrawn from a qualification but has completed all the requirements for a lower level qualification, which attracted a lower student fee.

All clients have the right to appeal a refund decision made by ACOD. Please refer to the Complaints section for further information.

## **Course Fees Agreement**

All prospective students, prior to enrolment, receive a *Course Services Agreement* including *Course Fees Agreement* from ACOD. The agreement makes

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a formal enrolment offer to the prospective student and/or relevant supporting client, and includes all relevant fees, charges, refunds and government support information relevant to the student's course selection.

### **Fee Records**

All course services fees, relevant invoices and receipts for each student course enrolment are recorded and maintained in the XERO financial management system. This system acts as the official accounts receivables system for ACOD and is maintained as the official and auditable records for all fees, charges and refunds.

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## Complaints and Appeals Policy

This policy applies to complaints generated by learners or customers of ACOD. A complaint may be about anything done, or not done (including assessment), by management, personnel or other students of ACOD, which the complainant feels has been unfair or unjust. The complaint may also be about but not limited to, discrimination, harassment, or any other decision or behaviour, which is thought to be unfair, unjust or upsetting.

### Policy

ACOD has a positive attitude towards complaints. Complaints give us the opportunity to develop the quality of our services and accordingly, ACOD Complaints Policy complies with the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2015. Students are encouraged to complain when they are dissatisfied and/or would like to see further improvement in training and service delivery.

A complaint may be lodged in person or by telephone, electronically or by letter. A verbal complaint may subsequently need to be made in writing to enable a full investigation. Those with special needs, such as people with limited English language or literacy skills and those with a disability will not be disadvantaged in the complaints process. The complaints process will be free of charge.

Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days and the outcome of the complaints will be recorded and registered in the complaints register. Complaints will be acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable. ACOD aim to resolve all complaints within 30 days. If the complaint or appeal requires more than 30 calendar days to process and finalise ACOD will;

- Inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 30 calendar days are required and
- Regularly update the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter

Complaints will be used to inform ACOD's continuous improvement processes.

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## Principles

The following principles underpin the process for responding to complaints about VET quality.

- Principle 1 – Equitable: Complaints are considered in a transparent, objective and unbiased manner. The complaints-handling process incorporates the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- Principle 2 – Accessible: Information about the complaints-handling process and the means to lodge a complaint is readily accessible and available on ASQA website [www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)
- Principle 3 – Comprehensive: The relevant circumstances and information surrounding a complaint are investigated to the level warranted by the severity of the complaint.
- Principle 4 – Responsive: Timeframes for investigating and resolving complaints will be set and monitored.
- Principle 5 – Accountable: There is appropriate national monitoring of complaints through regular reporting of complaints received and actions taken. The complaints-handling process is reviewed regularly.
- Principle 6 – Confidential: Confidentiality is maintained and anonymity preserved where requested. Complainants will be informed where this may limit the extent to which a complaint can be investigated.

## Procedure

All personnel will be equipped to respond to complaints constructively. The process for making a complaint is simple and usually involves:

- Talking to a trainer or assessor;
- Talking to the manager;
- Writing a letter; and/or
- Providing feedback on an evaluation form.

## Appeal Process

If a person making a complaint is unsatisfied with the response from the ACOD trainer they may approach ACOD management with the written complaint for

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advice as to an appropriate way forward. The CEO or delegate of ACOD will advise whether it would be appropriate for ACOD to take any action or whether the complaint should be referred to a relevant external body – e.g. the Ombudsman, a professional body such as the Australian Association of Social Workers or the Anti-Discrimination Board.

### Steps to Complain

- Approach the person concerned
- Make every attempt to solve the problem with the person involved. If the matter remains unresolved,
- Approach the ACOD manager

The ACOD manager is responsible for investigating a complaint or appeal and recommending the appropriate response or action. If the complaint is about a specific individual, the ACOD manager's response will include:

1. Informing the person about whom the complaint is made and seeking their views and perspective;
2. Giving consideration to the use of a mediator; and
3. Informing the complainant/appellant of the outcome of the complaint in a timely manner.

ACOD will conduct separate interviews with both the person making the complaint and the person the complaint is about.

The manager will investigate the matter, which will include an opportunity for the student to personally address the problem and report back to the student in a timely manner. Each complaint or appeal and its outcome will be recorded in writing and registered. Regardless of the outcome, all parties are to be notified of the outcome within 30 days.

### Mediation

A mediator can be provided by the Australian Mediation Association. ACOD agrees to pay the cost of one mediation session of up to two hours.

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If agreement is not reached you may:

- Refer your complaint to the Ombudsman in your State or Territory:

ACT: [www.ombudsman.act.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au)

NSW: [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au)

NT: [www.omb-hcsc.nt.gov.au](http://www.omb-hcsc.nt.gov.au)

TAS: [www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au)

WA: [www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au)

QLD: [www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au)

VIC: [www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au)

SA: [www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au](http://www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au)

Alternatively, the complainant or appellant can refer the matter to ASQA [www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au). The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training sector. ASQA regulates courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met.

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## Discipline Policy

ACOD is committed to the principle of ensuring that every student has the right to participate in training programs, free of inappropriate behaviour that may impair the learning processes, or the well-being of individuals.

### Student Responsibilities

Each ACOD student is expected to:

- Treat other and ACOD personnel with respect and fairness;
- Follow any reasonable direction from ACOD personnel;
- Be punctual and regular in attendance;
- Refrain from using mobile phones in workshops;
- Excessive or offensive swearing;
- Return ACOD equipment materials on time;
- Observe normal safety practices, such as wearing approved clothing and protective equipment;
- Refrain from smoking in ACOD buildings and designated areas; and
- Submit assessment events by the due date or seek approval to extend the due date.

ACOD student must not at any time:

- Harass fellow students or ACOD personnel;
- Damage, steal, modify or misuse property (including electronic records);
- Be under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Engage in any other behaviour which could offend, embarrass or threaten others; or
- Engage in plagiarism, collusion or cheating in any assessment activity.

### Cheating and plagiarism

*Cheating* is the act of attempting to circumvent the assessment practices in an unethical or illegal manner.

*Plagiarism* is a form of cheating. Plagiarism is the practice of claiming or implying original authorship of (or incorporating material from) someone else's written or creative work, in whole or in part, into one's own without adequate acknowledgement.



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Cheating and plagiarism are serious acts and may result in a students' exclusion from a unit, module or a course overall. Where a student has any doubts about including the work of other authors in their assessments, they should consult with their ACOD trainer and assessor.

The following list outlines some of the activities for which a student can be accused of plagiarism:

- Presenting any work by another individual as one's own unintentionally;
- Handing in assessments markedly similar to or copied from another student;
- Presenting the work of another individual or group as their own work; and
- Handing up assessments without the adequate acknowledgement of sources used, including assessments taken totally or in part from the internet.

Students are required to submit a signed cover sheet with every assessment. This includes a declaration that all work submitted is their own work except where there is clear acknowledgement or reference to the work of others.

## Breaches & Misconduct

*Breach of discipline* means any conduct that impairs the reasonable freedom of other persons to pursue their learning or work, or is in breach of the ACOD's expectations.

A student commits a breach of discipline if she/he:

- Assaults a person on the premises of the ACOD training site or nominated facility;
- Unlawfully removes, damages or uses any property of another person or the ACOD;
- Obstructs personnel of ACOD in the performance of their duties;
- Obstructs the teaching, training of a group or an assessment activity;
- Commits or engages in any dishonest or unfair act in relation to an assessment activity, such as plagiarism or cheating;
- Wilfully disobeys or disregards any lawful order or direction given by a member of personnel;
- Enters part of the ACOD's premises when directed not to do so by a member of personnel;

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- Fails to leave part of the ACOD's premises when directed to do so by a member of personnel;
  - Fails to return ACOD property or pay replacement costs when instructed to do so;
  - Fails to pay financial commitments to ACOD;
  - Enters part of the ACOD's premises whilst under the influence of alcohol/drug;
  - Engages in any unlawful activity on the ACOD's premises such as using, possessing or supplying any prohibited drug, substance or weapon;
  - Discriminates against a person on the grounds of the person's age, race, sex, sexuality, gender, marital status, physical or intellectual disability, background or religion;
  - Incites hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or group of persons on the grounds of the person's age, race, sex, homosexuality, transgender, marital status, physical or intellectual disability or religion of the person or members of the group; or
  - Commits any other act which could reasonably be considered to be in breach of ACOD expectations.

### ***Addressing Breaches***

ACOD personnel and students have an interest and a responsibility to prevent minor behavioural problems from becoming larger ones. Any individual who believes that a breach of discipline has occurred should report the breach of discipline to ACOD without delay.

1. All cases of breach of discipline committed by an ACOD representative must be reported to the *Chief Executive Officer*.
2. In the case of a student breach, the breach must be reported to ACOD's *Chief Executive Officer* in writing with the following information:
  - Student name and program;
  - Description of the breach of discipline;
  - Damage or inconvenience caused by the breach;
  - Level of cooperation given by the student;
  - Witnesses to the breach; and
  - Evidence available to support the claim of a breach.

3. If appropriate, the student can be ordered off the ACOD's premises for the remainder of the day on which the breach takes place. Circumstances where it may be appropriate to exclude the student from the ACOD's premises include serious cases of breach of discipline such as violence, abusive behaviour, discrimination, vandalism or wilful disobedience of a personnel direction.

In situations of greater urgency, such as cheating or violence, an oral report may be made to ACOD's *Chief Executive Officer* in the first instance, followed by the written report as soon as practicable thereafter.

4. Within two working days of the report, the *Chief Executive Officer* will speak to the student concerned, in the presence of the relevant member of personnel if possible and if not then in the presence of a third party chosen by the *Chief Executive Officer*.

The student may also have a representative present to act as a witness to the discussion. Where appropriate, the students are cautioned and advised of the possible consequences and the grounds for such report. Confidentiality of all meetings is maintained.

5. ACOD's *Chief Executive Officer* may apply any of the following penalties where satisfied a breach of discipline has been committed and the penalty matches the seriousness of the breach:
  - A verbal or written reprimand;
  - A requirement to attend counselling at a specified time and place;
  - Payment of compensation by student for damages or loss of resources;
  - Restitution of property removed or damaged;
  - Use of specified equipment only in accordance with certain conditions (for a set period); or
  - Exclusion from ACOD.

Attempts are to be made to solve behavioural problems of students through discussion and mediation before the provision of more formal procedures is invoked.

6. Any penalty imposed is communicated to the student in writing within five days of the meeting. The student is also advised of the right to appeal the penalty under ACOD *Complaints* arrangements.

