

Code of Practice

Purpose

This Code of Practice has been developed to provide students with timely and appropriate information, advice and support services to assist them in achieving their identified outcomes.

The RTO also provides staff and students with a commitment to quality and compliance with Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) guidelines.

This Code of Practice is made available to all students who should take the opportunity to read this document and understand its contents. RTO staff are conversant with this document.

Antidiscrimination - Access and Equity

The RTO has in place policies on Access and Equity, which ensure that staff and students are not discriminated against in accordance with relevant State, Commonwealth and Territory Legislation. All staff are made aware of their obligations under the relevant legislation during staff induction and professional development programs.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that no student is discriminated against in relation to their access to all aspects of learning and assessment and equity in the learning process.

Any person believing that they have experienced any form of discrimination through their relationship with the RTO should report their complaint immediately to RTO management.

Discrimination

Discrimination refers to treating individuals or groups less favourably (make distinctions) than other individuals or groups so as to disadvantage some and advantage others in same or similar circumstances.

In summary, the RTO will provide to its students, prior to enrolment, information about each of the following:

- Student selection, enrolment and induction/orientation procedures
- Course information, including content and vocational outcomes
- Fees and charges, including refund policy and exemptions (where applicable)
- Provision for language literacy and numeracy assessment
- Student support, including any external support the RTO has arranged for students
- Flexible learning and assessment procedures
- Welfare and guidance services
- Appeals, complaints and complaint procedures
- Disciplinary procedures
- Staff responsibilities for access and equity
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) arrangements.

Workplace Harassment

Workplace harassment in any form including sexual harassment and bullying will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Harassment includes workplace and cyber bullying.

Any person should be able to work in an environment free from intimidation and harassment. The RTO acknowledges that workplace harassment is against the law in any workplace context (which includes conferences, work or business related functions, and business or field trips) and expects that its workplace and training environment at all times reflects the principles of law for the benefits of its employees, students and visitors.

Workplace Health and Safety

The RTO is obliged under legislation:

- to ensure the health and safety of each of their workers and students
- to ensure the health and safety of other people who are not workers or students; e.g. visitors and guest presenters
- to ensure people can come to work or a training venue with a minimum of risk of injury or illness
- ensure that any equipment used by staff or students is safe when properly used.

Students are obliged to obey instructions regarding their health and safety and the health and safety of others. They must not deliberately interfere with or misuse anything that has been provided for workplace health and safety. They must not deliberately endanger the workplace health and safety of others, or deliberately injure themselves.

Marketing & Advertising

The RTO has policies and procedures to ensure that national guidelines and protocols for Advertising and Marketing as required by the Australian Quality Training Framework Condition 8 (Accuracy and integrity of marketing) are complied with and include practices that are:

- true and honest
- accurate
- form part of the RTO's scope of registration
- approved by the officer with the relevant authority within the organisation.

The RTO will market its educational/training services with integrity and accuracy, avoiding vague and ambiguous statements. Written permission will be obtained from any person or organisation for the use of any marketing material that refers to that person or organisation. The RTO agrees to abide by any conditions pertaining to that permission. No false or misleading comparisons will be made with any reference to any other training provider or course. The NRT Logo will only be employed in accordance with its conditions of use.

Customer Service

The RTO recognises that its customers are an important and integral part of its business and not an interruption to its work but rather the purpose of it.

The organisation is therefore committed to providing a level of customer service that includes:

- answering the telephone promptly in a warm and friendly manner

- sending responses to course enquiries within 2 days of the enquiry
- following up enquiries
- acknowledging customer complaints as opportunities to demonstrate superior customer service.
- treating complaints seriously and efficiently in a friendly and courteous manner
- examining methods to improve our customer service to ensure our products are more effective and competitive.
- understanding that each customer contact represents an opportunity to make a positive impact and demonstrates our ability to provide excellent service.

The RTO has student service standards that ensure students issue of assessment and qualifications are actioned promptly (within 14 days) upon the student's completion of their course of study.

External Review

The RTO agrees to participate in external monitoring and audit processes required by the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority and Skills Victoria. This covers random quality audits following complaints as well as audits for the purposes of re-registration. This is in compliance with the relevant AQTF standard.

Fees and Charges

The RTO has an established Charges and Refund Fees policy that is fair and equitable.

Complaints

The RTO will ensure that students have access to a fair and equitable process for dealing with complaints and will provide a process where students may appeal against decisions, which may affect their academic progress.

The RTO will make every attempt to resolve the student's complaints. The Executive Officer will handle complaints. The processes will be outlined in the students' handbook. Where complaints cannot be resolved internally, the RTO will advise students of the appropriate body to whom they may take their complaint.

Internal Customer Service Policy

The RTO staff will be treated with respect, be free from sexual or racial harassment, and other abusive behaviour.

It is every employee's responsibility to represent the RTO in a professional manner at all times and maintains the confidentiality agreement outlined in the contract of employment.

Employees should at all times maintain professional and ethical contacts with all external students, agencies and competitors.

As the employer, the RTO can expect that employees complete work to a required standard on time.

Employees have the right to expect fair treatment at all times and receive adequate remuneration for services rendered.

Management & Administration – Financial Management

The RTO has in place policies and management strategies, which ensure sound financial and administrative practices. Management guarantees the organisation's sound financial position and safeguards students' fees until used for training and assessment.

The organisation has a refund policy, which is fair and equitable policy and practices for managing the integrity of student records are in existence. These ensure that records are managed with security and confidentially. Students may peruse their individual records upon request. The organisation has adequate public liability insurance.

The Executive Officer has defined responsibility and authority to:

- ensure that the organisation complies with its financial management policies
- monitor and report on compliance with its financial management policies and procedures, for review and as a basis for improvement.

The RTO will provide Skills Victoria with a formal assurance that it has sound financial management standards for matters related to its scope of registration and scale of operation.

A qualified accountant who has membership of either the Certified Practising Accountants Australia or the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia certifies RTO financial accounts at least annually.

If requested by Skills Victoria, the RTO will make available a full audit report from an independent qualified accountant who has membership of either of the organisations mentioned above.

Monitoring of Education Training & Assessment Standards

The RTO will adopt policies and management practices which maintain high professional standards in the delivery of education and training services and which maintain the interests and welfare of students. Assessment will meet the AQTF requirements (including Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer).

The RTO will maintain a learning environment that is conducive to the success of students. Adequate facilities, equipment and training materials will be utilized to ensure the learning environment is conducive to the success of students.

The RTO will ensure that teaching staff are not only appropriately qualified but are also sensitive to the cultural and learning needs of students. The organisation will also provide training for its entire staff as and when required.

The RTO will ensure:

- students are informed of the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process
- students are provided with feedback about the outcomes of the assessment process
- assessments are equitable for all persons taking account of cultural and linguistic needs
- assessments provide for assessment on appeal.

The RTO will ensure that assessments comply with the principles of validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility and wherever relevant focus on the application of knowledge and skills to the standard of competence in the workplace.

Professional Development

The RTO is an organisation committed to the professional development of all of its employees and opportunities are provided for staff to upgrade their skills and knowledge to conform to and exceed industry standards. This is done through giving staff the opportunity to attend industry seminars, product training courses and AQTF workshops.

Information to Students

The RTO will supply accurate and current information to prospective students covering, but not limited to, information contained in this Code of Practice. The RTO will supply this information to students before enrolment or entering into written agreements with them and will regularly review all information to ensure its accuracy and relevance.

Refund policy

Individual student: Where enrolment fees have been paid in advance by an individual student, and the student subsequently withdraws from the course, the fees/charges shall be refunded less an administrative charge of 15% of the course costs provided the student withdraws seven (7) days prior to the commencement date of the course. Where a student withdraws 6 or less days prior to course commencement or after the commencement date of the course, there shall be no refund, as course costs will have been expended in implementing the training.

The RTO policy requires that students not eligible for a government funded place will be charged tuition fees monthly in arrears to a maximum of \$1000 per invoice.

Should the RTO cancel a training course, students are entitled to a full refund or the transfer of funds to a future course.

Agreeing to the Refund policy, does not remove the right of the student to take further action under Australia's consumer protection laws or to pursue other legal remedies, should the student be dissatisfied with Management's decision regarding refund.

When giving a student a refund or pro rata refund, the RTO will provide a written statement that explains how the amount has been calculated.

A refund will be paid directly to the person who entered into the contract with a registered training provider unless that person gives written direction to pay someone else.

Recognition of Prior Learning – Recognition of Current Competencies- Credit Transfer

The RTO recognises the AQF Qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by other RTOs. Credit Transfer is covered on page 7 of this document. However, the objective of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is to ensure that a person's prior learning achieved through formal or informal education, training, work experience or other life experiences is appropriately recognised. The RTO encourages students to apply for RPL wherever it is considered appropriate.

The principles governing the recognition of prior learning are outlined below:

- assessment processes shall provide for the recognition of current competencies regardless of where they had been acquired
- RPL focuses on identifying the endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards currently held by individuals as a result of formal or informal training, not how, when or where the learning occurred
- RPL underpins any system of competency-based training. THE RTO has a demonstrable commitment to recognizing the prior learning of individuals
- RPL shall be available to all potential applicants, the processes shall be fair to all parties and that RPL shall involve the provision of support to potential applicants
- assessors must be confident that the person applying for RPL or RCC is currently competent against the endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards or outcomes specified in AQF accredited courses. The assessor must also be confident that the evidence is authentic, valid, reliable, and current and covers the exemption being sought.

After outlining the steps involved in the RPL process to students, the RTO will provide an RPL information session with an RPL assessor. Charges for this process may be applicable. In every case the RPL assessor will advise the student of their responsibilities and any charges that may be applicable.

The RPL/RCC process shall cover the following steps:

- Information
- Initial support and counselling
- Application
- Assessment
- Post-assessment guidance; and/or
- Certification.

Rights & Responsibilities of RTOs

RTOs are governed by legislation regarding the quality of training delivered to students. THE RTO is committed to the ongoing continual improvement of its organisation and the quality of education and training services to its students.

The RTO will ensure the following level of service to its students:

- support for its students as outlined in the section rights and responsibilities (students)
- provide quality education and training by ensuring that the qualification and experience of Instructors is commensurate with the content and level of course being conducted
- provide accredited training and an assessment procedure that is competency based
- provide a comprehensive, fair and equitable RPL process and policy.

Rights and Responsibilities (Students)

The RTO will ensure that its students:

- receive Competency Based Training and Assessment at a level equal to the quality of training provision for courses as outlined in the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and Australian Qualifications (AQF) Framework
- receive education and training in well appointed venues with appropriate resources and facilities that comply with the requirements of the training program and most importantly comply with Workplace Health and Safety Standards
- are afforded Equal Opportunity principles and practices and support with learning.

The RTO is required under State legislation to provide for the health, welfare and safety of both its employees and students (Duty of Care).

The RTO provides:

- a complaint procedure for training and assessment as outlined in this code of practice
- assistance to students with literacy and numeracy problems. The student handbook outlines the procedures to be followed in this instance
- arrangements for students with legitimate reasons to defer training or cancel their enrolments
- a refund and financial policy as outlined in this Code of Practice.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism involves using the work of another person and presenting it as one's own. Students are expected to acknowledge the intellectual property of others used in the preparation of projects and assessment tasks.

Plagiarism is the copying of another person's ideas or expressions without appropriate acknowledgement and presenting these ideas or forms of expression as your own. It includes not only written works such as books or journals, but data or images that may be presented in tables, diagrams, designs, plans, photographs, film, music, formulae, web sites and computer programs.

The RTO regards plagiarism and cheating as using material, in contravention of the assessment rules, to gain unfair advantage, usually in a 'closed book' assessment and is an extremely serious academic offence. The penalties associated with plagiarism and cheating are severe and extend from cancelling all marks for the specific assessment item or for the entire unit through to exclusion from your course.

The penalty will depend on the severity of the plagiarism and cheating, whether the student is a repeat offender, whether there is evidence of deliberate deceit and whether another student has been coerced into participating in the plagiarism and cheating.

Termination of Enrolment

Under its Quality Assurance procedures the RTO reserves the right to terminate a student's enrolment should the student:

- endanger the health and safety of another student or an Instructor
- engage in the falsification of documents and /or assessments and training outcomes
- divulge personal or confidential information relating to another student's documents, assessment and training outcomes

- prevent other student/s from completing their course of study in reasonable peace and privacy;
- refuse to act in accordance with any rules and regulations prescribed by the RTO that are designed to protect the wellbeing of others, e.g. smoking policies.

Furthermore, any instructor employed by the RTO who violates students' rights or engages in any activity that causes stress or disadvantage to any student will be subject to disciplinary procedures that may involve termination of services. Instructors should be aware of complaint procedures and when in doubt contact senior management to arrange a personal interview.

Training Resources

The RTO provides all students with adequate print resources to successfully complete all training programs. In addition, the organisation will provide information about where additional resources can be obtained either from libraries or the internet.

Recognition of other RTOs' Qualifications & Statements of Attainment (Credit Transfer)

The RTO recognises the AQF Qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by other RTOs.

If students were previously enrolled in the same qualification with another training provider they should provide the RTO with a copy of their results. If they were deemed competent in specific units, they will not have to repeat them. The RTO will credit transfer their results.

Sanctions

The RTO will honour all guarantees outlined in this Code of Practice. The organisation understands that if it does not meet the obligations of this Code or supporting regulatory requirements, it may have its registration as a Registered Training Organisation withdrawn.

Student Welfare, Guidance & Support

The RTO provides protection for the welfare and safety of all students.

In the event of a student having a problem with the course, or on a personal level, the RTO would encourage the student to seek advice from one of the instructors. Each student is treated as an individual and any assistance would be given confidentially, and in a caring manner.

If unresolved, the student would be encouraged to approach the Executive Officer. If necessary, counselling would be directed to an independent advisor.

The RTO has student welfare and guidance referral services relevant to the training products. Where necessary, arrangements will be made for students requiring Literacy and/or Numeracy support. This will be outsourced to the relevant qualified experts. Any fees incurred are the responsibility of the student.

The RTO student information will ensure that all fees and charges are known to students prior to enrolment. Students are advised of course content, outcomes, and assessment procedures prior to commencing training.

For any matter outside its expertise or control, the RTO will make every attempt to refer the student or the relevant agency or expert.

The student is provided with appropriate information.

Records Management & Student Access to Personal Records

The RTO has sound management practices to ensure effective student services. It has operational standards to ensure timely issuance of training assessment, results and qualifications. These will be appropriate to competence achieved and issued in accordance with National Guidelines. All student records and documentation will be recorded, kept confidential and securely archived and kept in accordance with the Contract Body and the Registration Body records management requirements. Students can gain access to their files by request in writing allowing 14 days' notice. All relevant organisational documentation will carry a version number and date. Records of updated version numbers are kept on file.

Conditions for cancellation of courses by Executive Officer

Any fees received in advance would be placed in a separate chart of accounts and not accessed until the course commences. A relevant proportion of the fees paid will be retained in the account to cover any emerging contingency. The RTO as a general rule does not charge up-front fees.

Privacy Policy

The RTO recognises the importance of student's personal information. The organisation appreciates that students may have concerns about their privacy and about the confidentiality and security of their personal information.

The organisation only collects information considered necessary to deliver the best possible service.

Privacy laws are designed to regulate the way organisations collect, use, disclose, keep secure, and give persons access to their personal information.

With respect to this organisation's operation, it will observe the following National Privacy Principles in the following way:

Collection: The organisation will only collect information that is necessary for the purpose of providing a quality service to its students. The organisation will only collect information that is lawful and this will be done in an unobtrusive manner.

Use and Disclosure: The organisation will only use and disclose personal information about its students for the purpose for which it is collected, unless consent has been given to use the information for additional purposes.

Exceptions would be:

- where information is required by law

- considered necessary to assist a law enforcement agency.

Quality of Personal Information: The organisation's goal is to ensure that student's personal information is accurate, current and complete. Students are requested to contact us if any of the personal details they have provided change. Students are able to access and update information at any time that is mutually convenient to both parties if information held is incorrect or out of date. As an RTO, we are required to keep student records for 30 years. The organisation is open and ethical about the kind of personal information it keeps about its students. At the student induction, this policy will be explained in more detail.

Personal Information of a sensitive nature: The organisation does not collect personal information of a sensitive nature about you (e.g. race, religion, political views). However, should it be necessary to collect information of this nature it will only be done with your consent.