



2020 Smart & Skilled Student Handbook

This information handbook has all the information about the enrolment in the Smart and Skilled Training programs. This is also a guide with information on the AUSCHS policies and procedures related to the enrolment of the individual.

For further information, please contact us at info@auschs.edu.au

Please visit the [Smart and Skilled website](#) to get the most current information on the Fees and Fee-Free Scholarships and newly introduced Fee- Free Traineeships to be available (when you start your training as a Traineeship) from Jan 1, 2020.

**Please note the information related to the Smart and Skilled Funding is subjective to change, Please either contact us or visit the smart and skilled website for most current information.*

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NEW SOUTH WALES SMART & SKILLED PROGRAM

As a component of the student recruitment and enrolment process, AUSCHS evaluates a student’s eligibility to government subsidy or support initiatives that may assist the student with access to subsidies that will support their course progression and minimise the financial burden.

In 2015 the NSW Government implemented the Smart & Skilled Program to support access to these initiatives to improve and develop the NSW workforces’ abilities and skills to promote innovation and develop competitive practice.

SMART AND SKILLED CODE OF PRACTICE

AUSCHS has adopted the following Code of Practice, that outlines the students and AUSCHS’ rights and obligations under the Smart and Skilled program.

	Student Rights and Obligations, including but not limited to:	AUSCHS Obligations, including but not limited to:
Pre- Enrolment & Enrolment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek admission and enrol on the same basis as prospective students without disability, including the right to reasonable adjustments. • Be informed of the type of personal information that is collected about them, and the security of this information. • Behave in a responsible and ethical manner during enrolment • Provide accurate information to AUSCHS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take reasonable steps to ensure that the enrolment process is accessible. • Consider students with a disability in the same way as students without a disability when deciding to offer a place. • 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. • Take reasonable steps to ensure that personnel and students are informed about their obligation not to harass or victimise students with a disability. • Provide a consumer protection system including an identified consumer protection officer • Maintain procedures for protecting consumers' personal information.

	Student Rights and Obligations, including but not limited to:	AUSCHS Obligations, including but not limited to:
Course, Participation, Development and Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to courses and programs. • Education and training will be delivered in an environment that is free from discrimination caused by harassment and victimisation or based on a disability. • Receive high quality education and training that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Suitable to the students’ abilities e.g. LLN ○ Aligned to achieve a specific outcome e.g. job role or pathway ○ Designed to meet the AQF level, Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence. ○ Flexible so all students, regardless of personal circumstances, background or special needs, can apply the same level of skill and knowledge after completion of the course. • Are granted reasonable adjustment, to ensure training and assessment methods are customised and/or adjusted to allow for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fairness e.g. students with a disability can participate in education and training on the same basis as students without a disability. ○ Flexibility e.g. modifications to assessment to account for workplace /technology practice and application needs. • Behave in a responsible and ethical manner during training & assessment. • Will allow access to self, services and facilities for the delivery of the course. • Update AUSCHS of changes in personal information, as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take reasonable steps to ensure participation. • Consult with the student or their associate about the effect of the disability on their ability to participate. • Make a reasonable adjustment if necessary. • Repeating this process over time as necessary. • Take appropriate action if harassment or victimisation occurs. • Implement strategies to prevent harassment or victimisation. • Provide the training and support necessary to allow the consumer to achieve competency • Provide a quality training and assessment experience for all consumers • Provide clear and accessible feedback to the consumer • Enable students with a disability to participate in learning experiences (including assessment and certification). • Consult with the student or their associate. • Take into consideration whether the disability affects the student’s ability to participate in the learning experiences.

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Student Support Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students can access or be referred to all relevant student support services, based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ disclosed information at enrolment ○ disclosed information given to AUSCHS staff at any time during the course. • Students with a disability have the right to specialised services needed to participate in their enrolled course. • Access to the provider's consumer protection complaints system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that students with a disability has access to general and specialised support services, where required. • Facilitate the provision of specialised support services. • Ensure complaint mechanisms are available to students.
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SMART & SKILLED PROGRAMS

A reform of the NSW vocational education and training (VET) system that helps people get the skills they need to find a job and advance their careers. Smart and Skilled provides eligible students with an entitlement to subsidised training up to and including Certificate III. It also provides government funding for higher-level courses (Certificate IV and above) in targeted priority areas.

Entitlement Foundation Skills or Entitlement Full Qualification Programs

Under the Smart and Skilled entitlement, eligible students can access government-subsidised training for qualifications up to and including Certificate III on the NSW Skills List. The entitlement covers all apprenticeships and some traineeships.

Flexible Conditions:

- *An individual who has a Post-School Qualification at Certificate IV level or higher is not eligible for subsidised course services for the Smart and Skilled Entitlement Full Qualifications Program or the Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills Program.*
- *If a person acquires a disability after completion of a Post-School Qualification at Certificate IV level or higher and needs to retrain in a new entry level career and provides evidence that the Qualification is necessary as part of a program of rehabilitation and that the injury was sustained after achieving the post school qualification, then the person will be eligible to receive subsidised course services in that Qualification.*

Targeted Priority Full Qualification Program

Eligible students may enrol in higher-level Smart and Skilled qualifications (Certificate IV to Advanced Diploma) in targeted priority areas, subject to funding availability. Targeted priorities also include the purchasing of pre-vocational and part qualifications.

Apprenticeships and Traineeship Full Qualification Program

Under the Smart and Skilled entitlement, eligible students can access government-subsidised training for qualifications up to and including Certificate III on the NSW Skills List. The entitlement covers all apprenticeships and some traineeships.

An individual is eligible to receive subsidised course services in the Smart and Skilled Entitlement Apprenticeships and Traineeships Program if that individual, at the time of commencement:

- Is approved or registered as an Apprentice or New Entrant Trainee in NSW; and
- The approved Qualification listed, is in the training contract.

NB: If an individual is approved or registered as an Existing Worker Trainee, they will not be eligible to receive subsidised course services.

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships Program

An individual is eligible to receive subsidised course services in the School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships Program if that individual, at the time of commencement:

- Is approved or registered as a School Based Apprentice or School Based Trainee in NSW; and
- The approved Qualification listed, is in the training contract.

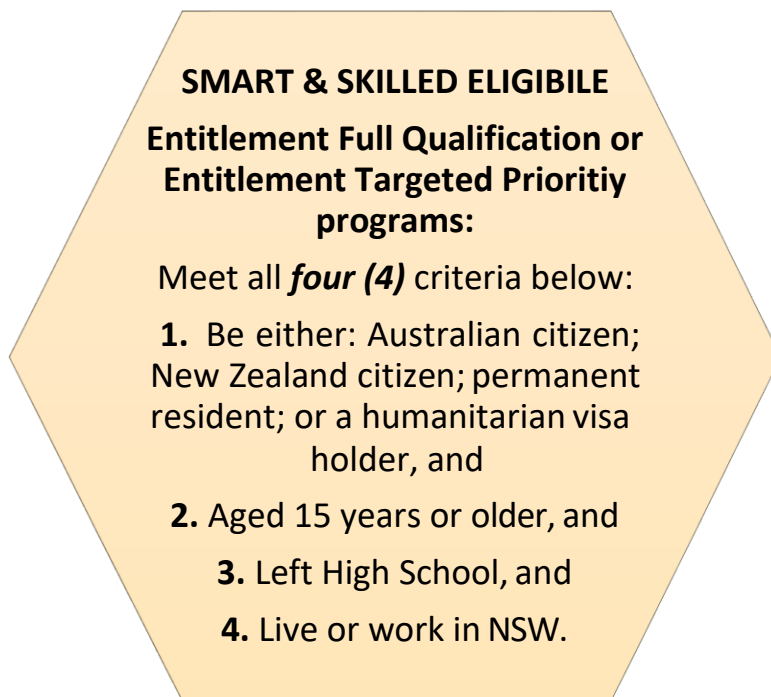
SMART & SKILLED ELIGIBILITY

AUSCHS representatives who have received a Delegation of Authority from the AUSCHS Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are able to undertake government subsidy eligibility assessments. AUSCHS representatives will follow the following procedures when enrolling students in Smart and Skilled training courses, in accordance with the Smart & Skilled notification of enrolment processes. As a general guide, eligibility is included in the tables below. However, further conditions can apply for unemployed, disabled or Aboriginal people. If you are not sure of your eligibility, please discuss it with us.

Students will be asked to provide proof of eligibility and will be informed of what type of evidence is acceptable. The enrolment form is designed to capture evidence of your eligibility during the enrolment process, including the acquisition of any required supporting evidence e.g. identification (please refer to [Evidence of Eligibility](#)).

1. **Check eligibility:** We will check your eligibility for the program.

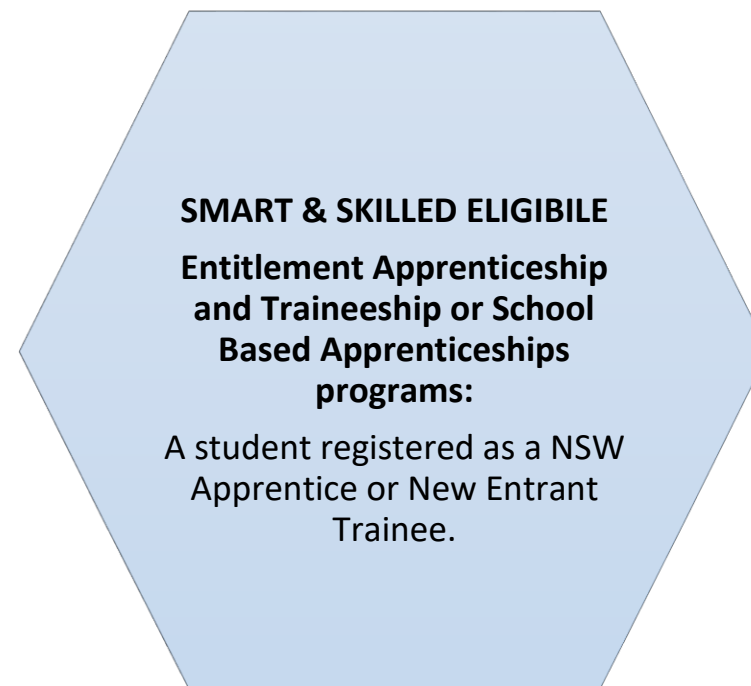
Step 1: Smart & Skilled Eligibility: Fit one of the following Smart & Skilled Eligibility categories.



SMART & SKILLED ELIGIBLE
Entitlement Full Qualification or Entitlement Targeted Priority programs:

Meet all **four (4)** criteria below:




- 1.** Be either: Australian citizen; New Zealand citizen; permanent resident; or a humanitarian visa holder, and
- 2.** Aged 15 years or older, and
- 3.** Left High School, and
- 4.** Live or work in NSW.



SMART & SKILLED ELIGIBLE
Entitlement Apprenticeship and Traineeship or School Based Apprenticeships programs:

A student registered as a NSW Apprentice or New Entrant Trainee.

Step 2: Program Eligibility & Fee Category:

		Eligible for Program:	No Post-School Qualification Held Fee Payable:	Post-School Qualification Held Fee Payable:	Concession Available	Exemption Available	
 <p>Meets Smart and Skilled eligibility (excluding Smart and Skilled Entitlement Apprenticeships and Traineeships)</p>	Entitlement Foundation Skills		First Qualification Fee	First Qualification Fee	✓	✓	
	Entitlement Full Qualifications		First Qualification Fee	Subsequent Qualification Fee	✓	✓	
	Targeted Priorities Full Qualifications						
	Certificate IV	}	First Qualification Fee	}	Subsequent Qualification Fee	✓	✓
	Diploma					NA	✓
	Advanced Diploma					NA	✓
Targeted Priorities Prevocational and Part Qualifications							
Prevocational (full qualifications)		First Qualification Fee	Subsequent Qualification Fee	✓	✓		
Part Qualifications		Fee Exemption	Fee Exemption	NA	✓		
 <p>Meets Smart and Skilled Entitlement Apprenticeships and Traineeships program eligibility</p>	Entitlement Apprenticeships and Traineeships						
	Apprenticeships		Apprenticeship Fee	Apprenticeship Fee	✓	✓	
	Traineeships		Traineeship Fee	Traineeship Fee	✓	✓	
 <p>Does not meet Smart and Skilled eligibility</p>	<p>Not eligible for government-subsidised training under Smart and Skilled. Student can access fee-for-service training.</p>						

2. **Declarations:** You will also be required to sign the following declarations that are included in the enrolment form at enrolment:
- Consent to Use and Disclosure of Personal Information to The Department of Education and Communities and Other Government Agencies
 - Privacy Form if you would like us to apply for a USI on your behalf.
3. **Pre-enrolment information:** Prior to enrolment you will be provided with information on:
- Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer
 - Course information and eligibility
 - [Subcontractor](#), information if relevant
 - Processes to defer or discontinue training
 - Accessing support during training, including contact details for support services
 - Consumer Protection
 - [Fee & Refund policy](#)
 - Fees chargeable
4. **Notification to Department:**
On completion of this process a copy of the Notification of Enrolment Report will be generated and kept on your file. A Student Commitment ID will also be issued.

If you have any questions regarding the Enrolment Process, please do not hesitate to contact us.

PLANNED START DATE

AUSCHS ensures the planned start date:

- Prior to the commencement of the Activity Period, may not be later than **four (4)** months from the commencement of the Activity Period; or
- After the commencement of the Activity Period, may not be later than **four (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, AUSCHS cancels the Commitment ID immediately.

EVIDENCE OF ELIGIBILITY

An individual must provide evidence to support their eligibility for Smart and Skilled.

- 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.

- **Proof of eligibility for a concession fee**

A list of the specified Commonwealth benefits and allowances is noted above. The recipient of a specified Commonwealth 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); or
- A current concession card that shows the CRN; or
- A current Centrelink income statement that clearly shows the benefit or allowance category and

the CRN; or

- Any other evidence that clearly shows the CRN and the benefit or allowance category; or
- For people applying for Austudy or Newstart 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 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 welfare recipient.

- **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.

- **Students with a Disability**

A student who seeks a fee exemption on the basis of disability needs 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 needs due to 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 consultant (for students with a disability), a school counsellor or special education coordinator, Centrelink, a Disability Service RTO, 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 dependent child, spouse or partner of someone who is receiving a Commonwealth 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.

SMART & SKILLED FEE AND REFUND POLICY

❖ FEE POLICY

AUSCHS is aware of its contractual responsibilities under the Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy and have implemented the following practices to administrate these requirements.

PRE- ENROLMENT: Smart & Skilled Fee Quotation

Even though Smart & Skilled prices are set by the department, fees can still vary depending on each students' circumstances.

Therefore, prior to enrolment, AUSCHS can only provide prospective students an indicative fee quotation, based only upon the information provided from the student, and their preferred qualification and delivery requirements. These fees will be provided upon request.

Alternatively, the student is welcome to obtain a fee estimate on the Smart & Skilled website using the Eligibility and Course Finder tools found on: <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/are-you-eligible>.

ENROLMENT: Smart & Skilled Fee Agreement

Enrolment is when the training fees can be determined and agreed to parties, as it is at this point that AUSCHS will have full access to the students' eligibility and enrolment status which will determine the Smart and Skilled Fee. The Smart and Skilled Fee will be determined based on:

- **Smart & Skilled Eligibility status**
 - Students Information meets e.g. Smart & Skilled eligibility criteria
 - Employment Information e.g. workplace, employment status (*fulltime or part-time*), delivery mode
- **Smart & Skilled Program Eligibility**
 - Qualification Enrolled e.g. course level (*Certificate II- Advanced Diploma*)
 - Smart & Skilled Program e.g.
 - Entitlement Full Qualification
 - Targeted Priority Full Qualification
 - Entitlement Apprenticeship and Traineeship
 - School Based Apprenticeships

- **Smart & Skilled Fee Category**

The **five (5)** student fee categories are:

1. Student First Qualification

Applies to students who:

- are not doing an apprenticeship or who do not qualify for a concession or an exemption.
- do not already hold a post-school qualification from any tertiary sector, including 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 prior to turning 17;
- Certificate I qualifications;
- Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills qualifications;
- Certificate IV NSW Tertiary Preparation Certificate; and
- 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); and
 - 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).

The First Qualification fee also applies to students aged 15-17 years, regardless of any previous qualification.

2. Student Subsequent Qualification

- The 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.
- Where a student completes a Smart and Skilled qualification and enrolls in another Smart and Skilled qualification (except an apprenticeship or traineeship), the student will be charged the Student Subsequent Qualification fee for the subsequent qualification.

3. Apprenticeship/Traineeship:

- Traineeship fees are the same as for the Student First Qualification fee.
- This means that the fee for a NSW new-entrant trainee is always at the First Qualification rate, regardless of the number or level of previous post school qualifications they hold.
- The fee for a qualification undertaken as part of an apprenticeship (i.e. the Smart and Skilled Entitlement Apprenticeships and Traineeships Program) is capped, so there will be instances where the apprenticeship fee is lower than the fee for the same qualification undertaken by a student who is not an apprentice.
- There is only one fee category for apprentices. An apprentice is eligible for the apprenticeship fee regardless of the number or level of previous post-school qualifications they hold.

4. Concession:

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

- To be eligible for the concession the student must be receiving or depend on the benefit or allowance and be able to provide evidence of the benefit or allowance at the time of enrolment and cannot be adjusted after enrolment.
- Eligibility evidence is retained on each student's course file.
- 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.
- There are no concessions for students enrolling in Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas.

Specified Commonwealth Benefits and Allowances for Concession Fees include:

- Age Pension
- Austudy
- Carer Payment
- Disability Support Pension
- Youth Allowance
- Newstart Allowance, with the exclusion of:
 - o A NSW Apprentice
 - o A NSW New Entrant Trainee
 - Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment
 - Farm Household Allowance
 - Family Tax Benefit Part A (maximum rate)

- Parenting Payment (Single)
- Special Benefit
- Sickness Allowance
- Veterans' Children Education Scheme
- Veterans' Affairs Pensions
- Widow B Pension
- Widow Allowance
- Youth Allowance
- Wife Pension.

5. Exemption:

For students who are eligible for a Fee Exemption. Students who qualify for a fee exemption are:

- Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- People with a disability
 - who meet the disability fee exemption criteria, including the dependent child, spouse or partner of a recipient of a Disability Support Pension.
 - **Frequency of Exemption:** At the time of enrolment, a student with a disability or their dependant, where eligible for the program, is entitled to one exemption per calendar year and a concession for all subsequent enrolments up to Certificate IV in a calendar year. A student with a disability must declare their previous enrolments in a Smart and Skilled qualification in a calendar year. This includes enrolments in that calendar year that have not commenced, enrolments that commenced in a previous calendar year that are continuing in the calendar year and previous calendar year enrolments that are completed in the calendar year.
 - To be eligible for the exemption the student must be able to provide evidence of their disability or Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status at the time of enrolment and cannot be adjusted after enrolment.
 - Eligibility evidence is retained on each student's course file.

Fee Agreement & Confirmation

Enrolment Form

After information is recorded in the student and employer sections of the Enrolment Form, the AUSCHS representative will complete their section which determines the students' eligibility for the Smart & Skilled program and the associated fees. These fees are recorded in the enrolment form section "Incentives and Fees".

Workplace Fee Agreement

If the student is in an employment-based enrolment e.g. traineeship, and the employer has agreed to pay the training fees on behalf of the student, where applicable (i.e. under certain Awards for certain Apprenticeships and Traineeships or by agreement). This agreement is documented and confirmed in the following documents:

- Workplace Fee Agreement
- Enrolment form

This fee information in these documents include:

- All fees payable to AUSCHS, 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 rights as a consumer, including but not limited to any statutory cooling-off period, if one applies.

Notification of Enrolment

Each Smart & Skilled enrolment is reported to the department and, when the enrolment is approved the provider receives a document called the 'Notification of Enrolment'. This document outlines the enrolment information, and allocates the enrolment an approval number, called the 'Commitment ID' which AUSCHS uses when reporting all training progression and completion.

This Notification of Enrolment document is provided in **two (2)** formats:

1. **Provider Copy:** this is saved by AUSCHS in the students file.
2. **Student Copy:** this is sent to the student and confirms the required training fee for the course.

Adjustments to Fees

AUSCHS charges a fee for each government subsidised course that a student enrolls in, as relevant to the relevant government contractual requirements.

AUSCHS will make no charges to the Smart & Skilled fees. If, however, the Department revises the course fee, and the student fee remains unpaid at the time, the new fee be charged or calculated based on a pro-rata rate of:

$$\text{\$} = \frac{\text{The New Qualification Fee}}{\text{The Number of Enrolled Units}} \times \text{Number of Uncompleted/Unpaid Enrolled Units}$$

Adjustments to Fees for RPL or Credit Transfer

Fees will be adjusted to reflect any RPL and/or CT and if necessary refunds will be made. Where RPL and/or CT is granted after enrolment, AUSCHS takes all necessary steps to advise affected students of adjusted fee and to adjust the fee levied, including adjustments to subsequent fee payment schedules.

AUSCHS 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.

The student fee, after RPL and/or CT is calculated as follows:

$$\text{\$} = \frac{\text{The Qualification Fee}}{\text{The Number of Enrolled Units}} \times \text{Number of Enrolled Units (after Credit/RPL)}$$

All Other Fee Information

- **Fee Arrangements**

AUSCHS fees are designed to minimise the impact of fees and charges, through flexible payment plans, dependent on service type. Students will be notified of any schedule of payments on enrolment, and

AUSCHS will ensure that all fees are paid in full prior to completion of training and assessment.

- **Fee Records**

All course services fees, relevant invoices and receipts for each student course enrolment are recorded and maintained by the Accounting system and the Student Management System.

This system acts as the official accounts receivables system for AUSCHS and is maintained as the official and auditable records for all fees, charges and refunds.

- **Third Party Fee Arrangements**

AUSCHS third party representatives, if applicable, do not collect fees on behalf of the RTO. No extra fees will be charged to students under a sub-contacting arrangement.

- **Fee Protection**

AUSCHS does not collect, in advance, of more than \$1,500 from students at any time for any course, eliminating the need for further fee protection arrangements.

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

- **Embedded Qualifications Fees**

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. AUSCHS charges an administrative fee to produce the additional testamur (set at \$75 including GST) but the student is required to pay additional student fees for the lower level qualification.

- **Repeated Assessment Fees**

Students will be entitled to **three (3)** attempts to successfully complete a unit of competency without any additional cost. Any further attempts will incur a charge which will be at the discretion of AUSCHS management.

- **Withdrawal Without Fee Penalty**

AUSCHS advises prospective students, prior to any fees being paid, of the 'withdrawal without penalty' cut-off date. That is, the date by which the student can withdraw and be refunded any fees paid on enrolment. This date is generally before 20% of the scheduled unit of competency hours have been delivered.

- **Course Services Fees**

All course services fees are published and available on the AUSCHS 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.

- **Student Support Services Fees**

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

Clear and accurate information on these items is included in the AUSCHS (Australian College of Higher Studies)'s Student Handbook.

- **Incidental Expenses**

There may be some instances of a personal cost to a student over and above the general course fees, these costs can include:

Essential equipment and other items that the student has the choice of acquiring from AUSCHS, or from a supplier, 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: a 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 AUSCHS.

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.

For each qualification, AUSCHS 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.

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

Recovery of Outstanding Student Fees

AUSCHS collects and retains all fees to be paid by the student by the time they complete their subsidised training. AUSCHS has a robust process for the recovery of outstanding fees from a student.

The failure by a student to pay a fee owing is considered a breach of discipline and can lead to penalties being imposed on the student under disciplinary 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. For significant student debts, formal debt collection actions may also be undertaken.

Government Subsidised/ Supported Fee Arrangements

The following government contractual / jurisdictional arrangements apply to AUSCHS fees and charges, and are in accordance with Smart & Skilled subsidised students are in line with the NSW Fee

Administration Policy:

https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/forms_documents/smartandskilled/contract/fee_administration_policy_2020.pdf

- AUSCHS only charges fees for subsidised students in accordance with the NSW Fee Administration Policy, as per the relevant fee set by the NSW Government.
- AUSCHS uses the NSW RTO Calculator to confirm an individual's personal and program eligibility for a qualification.
- AUSCHS charges the student the relevant fee set by the NSW Government as validated by the RTO Calculator.
- AUSCHS does not charge Smart & Skilled subsidised students a fee other than what is calculated by the NSW Government through the RTO Calculator.

Information provided to clients is consistent with AUSCHS course services arrangements.

Where a student is being enrolled under any loan or delayed payment arrangement (including VET FEE-HELP), 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.

❖ REFUNDS

AUSCHS does not collect prepaid fees in advance of more than \$1500 from students at any time for any course service, from time to time however a refund may be required for specific student cases.

Refund Policy information is made available to clients through:

- AUSCHS' relevant handbook (for each stakeholder group)
- AUSCHS website.

Refunds may be issued:

- Based on an arrangement made with clients prior to enrolment
- Automatically or sought and negotiated on an individual basis with AUSCHS on a case by case basis.

- **Refunds Due to Non-Provision of Services**

Course fees are to be refunded in full if AUSCHS is unable to commence the course service as agreed due to a lack of minimum student numbers or unforeseen circumstances.

Where AUSCHS or a third-party representative is unable to complete the course services due to unforeseen circumstances or closure, any course services fees are refunded on a pro-rata basis, with comparison of the course fees paid against the units of competency where services have been delivered.

Where there is an instance of AUSCHS default due to unforeseen circumstances, AUSCHS will endeavour arrange for another course, or part of a course, to be provided to students at no (extra) cost to the student as an alternative to a refund. Where the student agrees to this arrangement, AUSCHS will not refund fees paid.

- **Refunds Due To Client 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 evidence can be successfully provided to support the student's circumstances, course service fees may either be transferred to the next available course where applicable, or a refund of unused course fees will be issued.

This decision of assessing the extenuating circumstances rests with the CEO and shall be assessed on a case by case situation.

Where delivery has commenced, course fees have been paid and a client believes a special circumstance refund is warranted, the client may apply for a refund using the Refund Application Form. This form is available from any relevant AUSCHS personnel and is also available within the relevant handbook for each stakeholder group.

Once completed, the Refund Application Form should be submitted to:

CEO
Australian College of Higher Studies 13 Gibraltar Street
Bungendore, NSW 2621

All refund applications are assessed and processed within **fourteen (14)** days of the application being placed. The client will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application, including reasons for refusing a refund in cases where this occurs.

AUSCHS does not typically 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 AUSCHS. Please refer to the Complaints section for further information.

- **Third Party Refunds**

If course services fees have been paid to AUSCHS by a third party, any refunds payable will be remitted to that third party.

- **Refund Arrangements**

AUSCHS' general refund arrangements for all clients and all course services are as follows:	
<u>Withdrawal without Penalty Cut-off Date</u>	Full refund of course services fees paid.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>AUSCHS' withdrawal without penalty date is set at 20% of the duration of the unit and is the last day which students can withdraw from a unit and be eligible for a full refund of their unit fee.</i> ▪ <i>The withdrawal/census date applies to each individual unit of study and not to the course.</i> 	
<u>Withdrawal after Penalty Cut-off Date</u>	Refund of pro rata course services fees paid, based on the number of units commenced.

<p><u>Non-Provision of Services Prior to Commencement</u> AUSCHS is unable to commence the course for which the original enrolment and payment has been made.</p>	Full refund or alternative placement in a course, as per the clients' preference.
<p><u>Non-Provision of Services After Commencement</u> AUSCHS is unable to continue to deliver the course as agreed.</p>	
<p><u>Non-Provision of Services due to RPL and/or Credit Transfer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Recognition of Prior Learning and/or Credit Transfer has been granted.</i> ▪ <i>If a student does not complete a qualification at a certain level but has completed all the requirements of a qualification at a lower level with lower level fees AUSCHS will refund the fees on a pro-rata basis after calculating what has been completed.</i> 	

❖ **OTHER ENROLMENT INFORMATION**

Enrolment Notification Guarantee

AUSCHS 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 puts in place, for the delivery of services to those specific clients; and
- Any changes to course enrolment or fees; and A change in AUSCHS ownership.

SMART AND SKILLS CUSTOMER PROTECTION POLICY

AUSCHS has a Customer Protection Policy in place as contractually required under Smart and Skilled. This includes the current Complaints and Grievances Policy which can be found in the student handbook and the following procedure:

AUSCHS Smart & Skilled Customer Protection Policy, makes additional stipulations of consumer protection, as is contractually required under Smart and Skilled. This includes the current Appeals & Complaints Policy and Procedure which can be found in the student handbook (on page 29-33) and the following additional procedures:

- Every attempt will be made to resolve any student complaints using the AUSCHS Grievance and Complaints Policy.
- Any complaint or grievance will be actioned as part of our commitment to Continuous Improvement. On notification of a complaint or grievance procedures will be followed as per the Complaint and Grievance Policy.
- The General manager will be the designated Customer Protection Officer. This role will be to handle all complaints and grievances and to ensure Consumer Protection contractual compliance with the Smart and Skilled Guidelines.
- Contact details are as follows:

Jasdeep Kang - General Manager
 Australian College of Higher Studies
 13 Gibraltar Street, Bungendore, NSW 2621
 Contact number: 1300600888
 Email: jasdeep@auschs.edu.au or info@auschs.edu.au

If students feel matters are unresolved to their satisfaction and wish to inform a third party, they should contact the NSW Department of Education and Communities Consumer Protection Unit for Students. They can do so at: <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/for-students/consumer-protection-for-students>

❖ COMPLAINTS

Equity & Bullying Complaints

Any individual who believes that they have been subject to actions or words that may constitute discrimination or bullying should act upon such bullying as soon as possible by following the procedure set out below. Individuals who believe they have witnessed discriminatory or bullying behaviour by another individual in the workplace are also able to make complaints.

In the first instance, the aggrieved individual should, wherever practicable and if they feel comfortable doing so, attempt to amicably resolve the matter with the individual(s) who are alleged to have engaged in bullying. When confronting the issue, the individual should clearly state the offensive behaviour experienced, explain that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive and ask that the behaviour does not continue. The person may not be aware that their behaviour or conduct was causing offense or was unwelcome.

This is not a compulsory part of the complaint procedure, and if an individual does not wish to confront the person directly, then this is not encouraged.

Where the alleged bullying involves the individual's direct manager and it is not practical for them to

directly resolve the matter, they shall immediately notify the CEO who, with the individual's approval will endeavour to investigate and resolve the matter on an informal basis in accordance with the procedure set out below.

Jennifer Hemmings - CEO
Australian College of Higher Studies
13 Gibraltar Street, Bungendore, NSW 2621
Contact number: 1300600888
Email: jennyh@auschs.edu.au or info@auschs.edu.au

Formal Complaint Procedure

Where an individual student wishes to lodge a formal complaint, they will be required to do so by communicating this in writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

A written complaint shall include the names of individuals concerned, details of the incident(s) and the names of any witnesses' present.

Where a written complaint has been lodged, a formal investigation procedure will commence immediately. Formal investigations may be conducted by the Chief Executive Officer or an external person who is appointed by AUSCHS e.g. an independent mediator.

Regardless of whether the investigation is carried out by an AUSCHS personnel member, or by an independent body/person, the investigator will aim to follow the procedure set out below:

- Clarify details of what took place and ensure that all necessary information is obtained;
- Identify the outcome the complainant is seeking;
- Discuss with the complainant their legal rights, including lodging a formal complaint with the relevant state or federal tribunal;
- Discuss the complaint made with the person/s accused of bullying; and
- Making a determination as to whether the alleged behaviour occurred and if it constituted bullying.

If AUSCHS feels it is appropriate in the interests of health and safety of individuals concerned, and / or the efficiency of the investigation process, individuals may be requested to refrain from attending work / course services for a period of time whilst the investigation is underway. Alternatively, individuals may be given different duties or work to perform while the investigation is being conducted. Employees who are requested to do either of these will be paid at their normal rate of pay during this period.

Where it becomes apparent that the complaint made relates to conduct which constitutes misconduct or otherwise warrants disciplinary action, the investigator is to refer to AUSCHS's *Disciplinary Procedures* for further action and resolution.

Whilst the investigator will endeavour to preserve the confidentiality of the complainant and the person complained of, it may be necessary to speak with other workers or people involved to determine what happened and to maintain the integrity of the investigation process.

Where potentially unlawful conduct has occurred, AUSCHS will alert the appropriate authorities. Those people who are involved in the complaint (including the complainant, witnesses etc.) are also under a duty to maintain confidentiality and display a commitment to uphold the integrity of the investigation

process. If the complainant chooses to bring a support person with them to any meetings, they too are bound by confidentiality.

Gossiping and/or the spreading of rumours as a result of, or in connection with, a process followed under this policy will not be tolerated under any circumstances and may lead to further disciplinary action for those concerned.

Informal Complaint Procedure

An informal complaint procedure includes a range of alternatives which can be applied in a flexible manner in order to address different complaints in consideration of the relevant circumstances. The informal complaint procedure is intended to be used for less serious allegations of bullying and instances which generally do not warrant disciplinary action being taken. An individual who is unsure of whether or not to make a formal or informal complaint may make an informal complaint first and decide if they want to escalate the complaint to a formal complaint.

Different options for handling informal complaints may include, but are not limited to:

- AUSCHS relevant manager having a conversation with the alleged bully about the behaviour complained of; and
- AUSCHS relevant manager having a meeting with the individuals concerned in an attempt to reach a resolution.

Complaint Outcomes

The outcomes of a formal or informal complaint procedure will depend on the nature of the complaint, its severity and what is deemed appropriate in the relevant circumstances.

Where the results of an investigation procedure suggest that an individual is guilty of bullying, appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in line with the *Disciplinary Procedures*. The disciplinary action will depend on the nature and severity of the behaviour and may include termination of employment, which may be instant dismissal where serious misconduct is deemed to have occurred. Where the complaint involves a contractor or agent of AUSCHS and an investigation process reveals that a person has engaged in unlawful conduct or other behaviour which is prohibited by this policy, those concerned may face termination of their contracts immediately, or will not be renewed in the future.

In addition to the remedies provided above, other action may be deemed necessary to resolve or remedy the behaviour complained of, including but not limited to:

- Providing training to employees concerned regarding bullying;
- Requiring employees who have breached this policy to apologise to appropriate person(s);
- Adjusting working arrangements where appropriate;
- Providing counselling to employees (complainant and the person complained of);
- Placing employees on performance improvement plans to ensure improved behaviour; and/or
- Providing coaching and mentoring.

Appeals Procedure

If any parties involved are unhappy with the outcome, or the way the complaint handling procedure was managed by AUSCHS please contact the AUSCHS CEO to discuss your concerns.

Once notified the Chief Executive Officer will conduct a review of the procedure followed, and the

outcome issued, and make a final determination on the issue. Once this determination is made, the person who has made the appeal will be notified of the outcome and this determination will be final. The following external bodies can also provide further information:

Jurisdiction	Contact Details
New South Wales	Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW 02 9268 5544 http://www.antidiscrimination.lawlink.nsw.gov.au
National	Australian Human Rights Commission 1800 620 241 https://www.humanrights.gov.au
National <i>AUSCHS Employees</i>	Fair Work Ombudsman 13 13 94 http://www.fairwork.gov.au

Any Disadvantaged students will be interviewed at enrolment to ensure any required adjustments are included in their training and assessment plan.

❖ ACCESS AND EQUITY STATEMENT

In line with obligations under Commonwealth legislation, AUSCHS is committed to promoting a fair and equitable environment for personnel and clients that is free from discrimination, harassment and vilification.

Access and equity means policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that VET is responsive to the individual needs of clients 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; and
- 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.

AUSCHS 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)*,

the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Cth)* and the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)*.

AUSCHS 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.

AUSCHS strives to maximise opportunities for access, participation and outcomes for all students within the vocational education, training and employment system.

AUSCHS undertakes to identify and, where possible, remove barriers that prevent individuals from accessing and participating in our services. AUSCHS is committed to treating all prospective and actual students *on the same basis*.

On the same basis, a person with a disability can 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.

AUSCHS 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 AUSCHS 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.

Discrimination

Discrimination can be direct, indirect or systemic.

Direct discrimination is any action which specifically excludes a person or group of people from a benefit or opportunity, or significantly reduces their chances of obtaining it, because their status or personal characteristics, irrelevant to the situation (e.g., sex, ethnic origin) are applied as a barrier. Direct discrimination has as a focus assumed differences between people.

Indirect discrimination is the outcome of rules, practices and decisions which treat people equally and therefore appear to be neutral; but which, in fact, perpetuate an initially unequal situation and therefore significantly reduce a person's chances of obtaining or retaining a benefit or opportunity. Rules, practices and decisions are applied to all groups alike, but it is the very assumption of a likeness that constitutes the discrimination.

Systemic discrimination is system of discrimination perpetuated by rules, practices and decisions which

are realised in actions that are discriminatory and disadvantage a group of people because of their status or characteristics and serve to advantage others of different status or characteristics. Direct and indirect discrimination contribute to systemic discrimination.

Bullying & Harassment

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards an individual or a group of individuals that creates a risk to health and safety and is unlawful. Repeated behaviour refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and can involve a range of behaviours over time.

Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard for the circumstances, would see as unreasonable, including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening. Examples of bullying may include (but are not limited to):

- A manager or supervisor using a management style that is harsh, involves shouting, constant criticism or humiliation of an individual or group of individuals in private or in front of their peers;
- An individual being treated less favourably by another individual or group of individuals, including, but not limited to, bullying or intimidation; forcing an individual to participate in an “initiation” process; the playing of practical jokes or forcing an individual to undertake demeaning tasks;
- Sniggering or gossiping behind someone’s back;
- Laughing at someone which is intended to make them feel uncomfortable or distressed;
- A manager setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines for an individual to meet, or setting tasks that are unreasonably below or beyond a person’s skill level; and/or
- Continuously and deliberately excluding someone from workplace activities including ignoring or keeping individuals isolated from relevant communications about work issues.

AUSCHS is committed to providing a workplace and client services which are free from bullying, harassment and unlawful discrimination. AUSCHS aims to ensure all those participating in the workplace and services are treated with respect, dignity and fairness with an aim of creating an environment which promotes positive working relationships.

AUSCHS ensures that all stakeholders understand what will be regarded as bullying, how complaints of bullying can be made and how claims will be treated. This applies to all personnel, agents and clients engaging in AUSCHS’s services.

AUSCHS expectations are not limited to the workplace or working hours, and will include all work-related events which includes, but is not limited to; lunches, client functions, meetings and conferences as well as social events.

AUSCHS expectations relate to, but are not limited by the following types of communication:

- Verbal communication either over the telephone or in person in the workplace, and outside of it;
- Written communication including; letters, notes, minutes of meetings etc.;
- Internal and external electronic communication including:
 - Email;
 - Instant messaging services;
 - Internal intranet;
 - Faxes;
 - Social media and networking forums including; Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other forms of social media; and

- Communications via text message.

In line with AUSCHS (Australian College of Higher Studies)'s commitment to creating a workplace which is free from workplace health and safety risks and one which strives to create positive working relationships, all individuals are expected to observe the following minimum standards of behaviour, including:

- Being polite and courteous to others;
- Being respectful of the differences between people and their circumstances;
- Ensuring they do not engage in any bullying behaviour(s) towards others in, or connected with the workplace which includes all individuals;
- Ensuring they do not assist, or encourage others in the workplace, or in connection with the workplace to engage in bullying behaviour(s) of any type;
- Adhering to the complaint procedure if they experience any bullying behaviour(s) personally;
- Reporting any bullying behaviour(s) they see happening to others in the workplace, or connected with the workplace in line with the complaint procedure; and
- Keeping information confidential if involved in any investigation of bullying.

Fair and reasonable management action taken to counsel an individual for instances of underperformance, investigating complaints made against personnel, discipline for misconduct and other work directions in line with business needs does not amount to bullying.

All individuals are expected to always adhere to the standards of behaviour contained herein. Any individual who is found to have breached these expectations will be disciplined accordingly, which may lead up to, and include termination of employment. If a contractor of AUSCHS is found to have breached these expectations, their contract stands to be terminated, or may not be renewed in the future.

❖ STUDENT SUPPORT

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

Support Service	How to access	Contact details
Face to Face	Contact us in person by visiting us or having a face time chat or video conferencing	1. 13 Gibraltar Street, Bungendore, NSW 2621 2. Face Time Call- 0488912225 3. Video Conferencing (make a prior arrangement)- AUSCHS on Google+, Skype
Online	Email us	info@auschs.edu.au jennyh@auschs.edu.au jasdeep@auschs.edu.au
Phone	Phone us	1300 600 888 0421 661 998 0488 912 225
Career Advice	Make a booking with our Career advice specialist	1300 600 888

Employment advice	Get contacts from us for different JSA's who we work with	1300 600 888
Further Study options	Email us or contact us by phone or come and see us in person	1. 13 Gibraltar Street, Bungendore, NSW 2621 2. 1300600888 3. 0421 661 998 4. 0488 912 225
Lifeline	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 www.lifeline.org.au
Reading and Writing Hotline	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 www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au

SMART AND SKILLED TRAINING & ASSESSMENT

❖ RPL & CREDIT TRANSFER

AUSCHS's National Recognition Policy states that a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) will recognise a Student's Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Qualifications and/or Statements of Attainment issued by any other RTO's in Australia.

Students must provide copies of their certificates, i.e. Qualification(s) and/or Statement(s) of Attainment, for AUSCHS to commence with verification procedures.

Applications for RPL & Credit transfer are available at enrolment or as requested.

All Recognition processes at AUSCHS, either RPL or Credit Transfer, should be fair, transparent and accountable. If students are unhappy with the outcome, students can appeal; contact the Training Manager at AUSCHS for more information.

Credit Transfer

Credit Transfer is the recognition of academic credits gained through formal study at RTOs, professional bodies or enterprises and universities (Credit Transfer is sometimes referred to as Exemptions or Advanced Standing).

In Vocational Education and Training (VET), AUSCHS, as an RTO, recognises the Australian Quality Framework qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by any other Australian RTOs. Credit can be awarded to a Student based on a combination of Credit Transfer plus an RPL assessment for any additional informal learning and/or life experiences he/she may have undertaken.

However, the granting of credit, in whatever form, can result in the Student being required to complete fewer units of competency or modules; for example, students can be exempted from some parts of a Course, depending on the students' level of previous experience and relevant formal education.

Recognition of Prior Learning

AUSCHS has an RPL process in place to enable Students to receive recognition for skills and knowledge obtained through any previous non-accredited short courses attended and/or work and life experience. Students may already be competent in some of the areas of the Course that they have chosen to undertake and will be given an opportunity to apply for RPL. If successful, they may be exempted from relevant parts of the training program.

All Students will be given the opportunity to seek RPL for industry skills or life skills that they believe relate to specific current industry competency standards.

The RPL Policy and process

Recognition Policy

1. Purpose

The Australian College of Higher Studies (AUSCHS) is committed to providing quality training and assessment in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015. As such, we are required to offer Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) services to all students, and to implement an assessment system that ensures that

assessment (including recognition of prior learning) complies with assessment requirements of Training Packages and VET Accredited course, the Principles of Assessment (POA) and Rules of Evidence (ROE).

2. Policy Statement

AUSCHS is committed to providing effective processes for Recognition options to all current and prospective students.

AUSCHS will ensure that:

- It implements an assessment system that ensures RPL assessments comply with assessment requirements of relevant Training Packages, VET Accredited Courses;
- RPL assessment is conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment (POA);
- RPL assessment is conducted in accordance with the Rules of Evidence (ROE);
- Recognition is offered to all students prior to enrolment;
- Adequate information and support are provided to students in understanding the process and gathering reliable evidence to support their recognition claim;
- all Recognition applications are processed in accordance with the AUSCHS Assessment Policy; and
- Appropriate recognition will be given to AQF Certification documentation issued by other RTOs.

3. Definitions

3.1 The following words and expressions have the following specific meaning, as in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

AQF certification documentation is the set of official documents that confirms that an AQF qualification or statement of attainment has been issued to an individual.

AQF qualification means an AQF qualification type endorsed in a training package or accredited in a VET accredited course.

Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a training package or VET accredited course.

Assessment system is a coordinated set of documented policies and procedures (including assessment materials and tools) that ensure assessments are consistent and are based on the Principles of Assessment contained in Table 1.8-1 and the Rules of Evidence contained in Table 1.8-2.

Authenticated VET transcript has the meaning given in the Student Identifiers Act 2014.

Competency means the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

Module means a group of learning outcomes in a VET accredited course where it can be established that it is not possible to develop an appropriate unit of competency.

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.

a) 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);

b) 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

c) 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).

Registrar has the meaning given in the Student Identifiers Act 2014.

Statement of attainment means a statement issued to a person confirming that the person has satisfied the requirements of the unit/s of competency or accredited short course specified in the statement.

Unit of competency means the specification of the standards of performance required in the workplace as defined in a training package.

4. Policy Principles

4.1 Underpinning Principles

- a) Recognition is made available to any person commencing a course with AUSCHS
- b) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the determination, on an individual basis, of the skills and knowledge currently held by the learner acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning.
- c) Recognition is used to determine the advanced standing or 'credit', for a training program, that the learner may be awarded as a result of their prior knowledge, skills and experience.
- d) Recognition is an Assessment process, and as such is subject to all provisions of the AUSCHS "Assessment Policy".
- e) Recognition assessment decisions must comply with Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence as outlined in the Standards for RTOs and in AUSCHS Assessment Policy. (See Assessment Policy)
- f) All students may apply for formal recognition of existing competencies against an AQF qualification / unit of competency that AUSCHS is registered to deliver.
- g) The onus is upon the candidate to demonstrate competence to the satisfaction of the assessors, including the provision of certification documentation.
- h) Competency may be derived from many sources:
 - i. Work experiences
 - ii. Work product/s
 - iii. Life experience
 - iv. Training programs offered by industry, private or community based providers which may or may not have been formally recognised
 - v. Training programs undertaken overseas (which may or may not be accredited in that country)
 - vi. Informal learning programs
 - vii. Certification from another RTO
- i) Only accredited and approved assessors will conduct Recognition assessments on behalf of AUSCHS. (See Assessment Policy)
- j) Recognition assessments must comply with the assessment requirements detailed in the relevant Training Package and VET Accredited course.
- k) Recognition application and assessments are subject to fees as outlined in the enrolment form section 'Training Fees'.
- l) The minimum acceptable claim for Recognition is a Unit of competency/module.
- m) Certification documentation will not be issued until all relevant fees are paid in full. (See Certification Policy)
- n) Information of Recognition processes and arrangements are provided to all students and prospective students.
- o) An applicant, who has undertaken a course that is not competency based, can gain credit transfer into a competency-based course if the mapping of competency can be justified.

4.2 Credit Transfer

- a) AUSCHS will accept and mutually recognise the decisions and outcomes of any RTO thereby ensuring mutual acceptance throughout Australia of the qualifications and Statements of Attainment awarded by other RTO's or AQF authorised issuing organisations.
- b) AUSCHS recognises AQF certification documentation from other RTOs, and authenticated VET transcripts issued by the Registrar and after review and verification of validity will apply a credit to all relevant units of competency.
- c) Credit Transfer applies when the certification documentation provided by the student contains the same national competency code as those that form part of the training and assessment program offered by AUSCHS.
- d) To receive credit transfer of held units of competency must be the current code, or an equivalent code. AUSCHS must be able to verify the mapping on www.training.gov.au.
- e) Certification documentation must be presented as a certified copy of an original. Certified copies must be signed by an authorised authority e.g. JP.
- f) AUSCHS are not obliged to issue an AQF qualification or Statement of Attainment that is achieved wholly

- through recognition of units and /or modules completed at another RTO or RTOs. (i.e. student cannot complete all of their learning and assessment with another RTO and request AUSCHS to issue the qualification under Recognition)
- g) The amount of recognition contributing to the issuance of certification documentation from AUSCHS (i.e. using units/modules completed at other RTOs) is at the discretion of the CEO.
 - h) In the event a student wishes to undertake refresher training in a unit/module for which they have been previously awarded recognition, then student will be advised that the completion of the assessment is not necessary, however, may be offered as an option.
 - i) Where the recognised AQF qualification and attributed units/modules forms part of another AQF qualification, the student will only be enrolled in the additional units required to complete the new qualification.
 - i. Fees will reflect reduced learning and assessment load.

5. The Process

Applicants may apply and submit all supporting documents supporting their claim for recognition of prior learning. If after examining the submitted evidence the assessor believes the applicant has sufficient evidence that they have acquired the knowledge and skills through any form of previous study, work or life experience, the student will be required to undertake a challenge test. This process will ensure that applicant's knowledge and skills are current. The challenge test requires the student to undertake the knowledge and practical assessments that all other student undertake. This process ensures fairness and equity to all students and does not lead to a situation where RPL 'tools' have to be developed to suit every applicant. In this context, an RPL process simply means the student does not have to attend classes and does not have to undertake the amount of reading or other learning, a mainstream student may do. The assessment process is however, identical.

6. Appeals

Students have the right to appeal a Recognition Assessment decision. (See Appeals Policy)

7. Access and Equity

Students have fair and equal rights to assessment, including recognition. (See Access and Equity Policy)

8. Records Management

All documentation from Recognition processes are maintained in accordance with Records Management Policy. (See Records Management Policy)

9. Monitoring and Improvement

All Recognition practices are monitored by the CEO and areas for improvement identified and acted upon. (See Continuous Improvement Policy)

❖ DEFERRAL OR WITHDRAWAL FROM TRAINING

Deferrals

If for any reason you wish to defer your involvement in training and assessment, please discuss this with your trainer as a first step. Your trainer may refer you to another appropriate staff member to discuss any support requirements or to the Customer Protection Officer if you have a complaint or grievance. In all instances we will endeavour to implement processes that will support you to continue with your training.

If you do decide to defer you can only do so for a maximum of 12 months, after this time you will not be entitled to continue with your course, subjective to the qualification being current.

Withdrawals

If you decide to withdraw from a course, we ask that you discuss the reasons for doing so with your trainer and assessor or staff member. They may refer you to another appropriate staff member to discuss any support requirements or to the Customers Protection Officer if you have a complaint or

grievance. If you still decide to withdraw then the following applies:

- You should give formal notice, preferably in writing, of the date and reasons for your withdrawal
- You will be refunded any outstanding fees in line with the Fee and Refund Policy
- You will be issued any Statement of Attainment for units assessed as competent within 21 days of notice of discontinuation
- Your Training Plan will be updated, and you will be given a copy
- You will be given the results of any assessments
- If you haven't paid your fees, the results of the assessments, Statement of Attainment and or Certificate will not be released till the fees due are paid in full.

❖ UNJUSTIFIABLE HARDSHIP

Once a reasonable adjustment has been determined, AUSCHS adjustment may consider if the adjustment would impose unjustifiable hardship on its operations. In determining what constitutes unjustifiable hardship, all relevant circumstances *of the case* are considered 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, AUSCHS:

- Considers 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, AUSCHS has considered all the financial and other resources that are reasonably available for 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.

AUSCHS 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;
- 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 teachers; and
- Benefits deriving from the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider because of the student's participation.

Where AUSCHS 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.

❖ REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

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*, AUSCHS 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 AUSCHS (Australian College of Higher Studies), personnel and other students; and
- The costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

Process for Considering Adjustments

AUSCHS 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, AUSCHS 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.

AUSCHS 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 AUSCHS 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 AUSCHS (Australian College of Higher Studies), and in structured professional development on a regular basis (at least annually) in access and equity issues and resources.

AUSCHS 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, AUSCHS 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 AUSCHS makes an adjustment for the student, the student or their associate is consulted about:

- Whether the adjustment is reasonable;
- 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.

When to apply a reasonable adjustment

In deciding whether to make a reasonable adjustment for a student, AUSCHS will assess whether:

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

A detailed assessment, which might include an independent expert assessment, may be required 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 for students with a disability

In assessing whether an adjustment is reasonable for the student with a disability, AUSCHS considers:

- 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 AUSCHS operations, personnel and other students; and
- The costs and benefits of making the adjustment.
- In making a reasonable adjustment, AUSCHS ensures that the integrity of the course or program and assessment requirements and processes are maintained.

AUSCHS 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, may provide an alternative adjustment to the student’s preferred form of adjustment, if the alternative is effective in achieving the desired purpose.

Reasonable Adjustments	
<i>Type of disability</i>	<i>Example reasonable adjustments</i>
<i>Mobility impairment</i>	Provision of wheelchair accessibility, access to aids such as for holding documents, adjustable tables, note taking support, oral rather than written presentations or exams, use of a personal computer, lifting limits.
<i>Vision impairment</i>	Use of audio recordings, enlarged text and images, enlarged computer screen images, use of voice synthesizers on computers, good lighting or reading lamps, Braille translations, provision for guide dogs, avoid moving furniture without informing the person, provision of additional writing time for assignments/tests.

Hearing impairment	Use of teletext, audio loops for people using hearing aids, use of Plain English documents, sign language interpreters for training and assessment.
Intellectual disability	Practical learning sessions, repetition of learning exercises, use of Plain English, use of mentors, assessment that is appropriate to the skill, i.e. avoiding written test for practical tasks, provision of additional time.
Speech impairment	Provision of time and patience, paraphrasing, getting individuals to put things in writing, minimizing stress.

Implementing Reasonable Adjustments

AUSCHS takes reasonable steps to ensure that any adjustment required to be made is made within a reasonable time. Whether the time is reasonable depends 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.

❖ UNIQUE STUDENT IDENTIFIER

From January 2015 it is a requirement that all students in Australia have a Unique Student Identifier (USI). The USI will be a lifelong number which will enable your records and results obtained after Jan 1, 2015 to be collected in an online system. By having a USI you will be able to access your training records and results (or transcript) whenever you need to.

You must have a USI before an RTO can issue a Certificates or Statements of Attainment.

The Department of Industry has developed the following video to help students access a USI: <http://usi.gov.au/students/Pages/default.aspx>. There are two ways to create a USI:

1. Create your own

This can be done by going to the [unique student Identifier Website](#) and following some simple steps:

To create a USI, you will be required to provide:

- Personal information – name, date of birth etc.
- Contact Information – at least one method of contact e-mail, mobile or mail

Form of ID: Options are: Driver License, Medicare card, Australian Passport, Visa (with Non-Australian passport) for international students, Birth Certificate (Australian), and Certificate of Registration by Descent, Citizenship Certificate, and Immicard

2. AUSCHS can create a USI for you

To enable a USI to be created on your behalf you will need to give your permission and you will be required to sign a [Privacy Notice](#) to this effect.

Privacy

Your Unique Student Identifier (USI) contains personal information, contact details and your training records and results. The USI system has been designed to keep this information safe and secure and is only accessed by the organisations and employers you choose to have access to your records.

The personal information that you provide to the Student Identifiers Registrar is collected, used, and may be disclosed, in accordance with the provisions of the Student Identifiers Act 2014 and the Privacy Act 1988. The Student Identifiers Registrar's Privacy Policy provides information about the protection of your information, including how you can access and seek correction of your personal information held by the Student Identifiers Registrar and how to make a complaint about a breach of your privacy and how such complaints are handled.

You will be required to set access controls to allow the Department of Education and Communities and AUSCHS the appropriate levels of access to your USI records.

For further information please refer to the USI Student Help Line.

❖ **SUBCONTRACTOR ARRANGEMENTS**

AUSCHS has not entered into any subcontracting arrangements for the delivery of your training and assessment.

❖ **SMART AND SKILLED CONTACT DETAILS**

If you feel you cannot resolve an issue with us or would like more information about Smart and Skilled the contact details for the Department of Industry are as below.

Smart and Skilled Contact Number: 1300 772 104

Smart and Skilled Website: <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/>

If you would like more information on Smart and Skilled Funding or any of the information Provided above, please feel free to contact us by emailing at info@auschs.edu.au or calling 1300 600 888.

Thank You and All the Best.
Kindest Regards,
AUSCHS TEAM.