



**Smart Training**  
& consulting  
group

# **Smart Training & Consulting**

## **Student Handbook**

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*This student handbook is designed to provide you with information about the services provided by the Smart Training & Consulting Group and our approach to providing you a safe, fair and supported environment to participate in training and assessment. This handbook does not provide you with specific information about a course offered by Smart Training & Consulting Group. This information is contained in the course advertising materials which are supplied separately.*

### ***Acknowledgement of Country***

*Smart Training and Consulting Group acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work, and learn. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture and pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.*

*Where our training takes place on specific Country, we also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of that land and extend our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who now reside in these areas.*

## About Smart Training & Consulting Group

### Our Purpose

Our purpose is to create opportunities and transform lives.

### Our Goal

Our aim is to provide you with an educational experience that is **SMART**.

- **Successful** - We are committed to providing you with every opportunity to succeed.
- **Meaningful** - We will provide you with a meaningful educational experience that adds value to your lifelong learning.
- **Achievable** - We will support you to achieve your goals and excel.
- **Respectful** - We respect each student as an individual and endeavour to meet the learning needs of all.
- **Transformational** - Our aim is to transform the lives of our students through high quality education and training.

Smart Training & Consulting Group is a Registered Training Organisation (Code: 91785) governed by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). We are located in Cessnock NSW. We train and assess across a number of disciplines including Aged Care, Disability Support, Hospitality and Business. Our scope of registration includes the following qualifications:

- BSB20120 Certificate II in Workplace Skills
- BSB30120 Certificate III in Business
- BSB40520 Certificate IV in Leadership and Management
- BSB50420 Diploma of Leadership and Management
- CHC33021 Certificate III in Individual Support
- CHC43015 Certificate IV in Ageing Support
- SIT20322 Certificate II in Hospitality
- SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality

You can find out more about Smart Training & Consulting Group at the following websites:

[www.smarttrainingandconsulting.com.au](http://www.smarttrainingandconsulting.com.au)

[National Training Register link](#)

## Contact Information

Address: Unit 2, 36 Vincent Street, Cessnock NSW 2325

Phone: (02) 4013 6145

Email: [reception@smarttrainingandconsulting.com.au](mailto:reception@smarttrainingandconsulting.com.au)

Our office is contactable from 8 am - 4 pm, Monday to Friday.

Outside of business hours, email is the preferred method of contact.

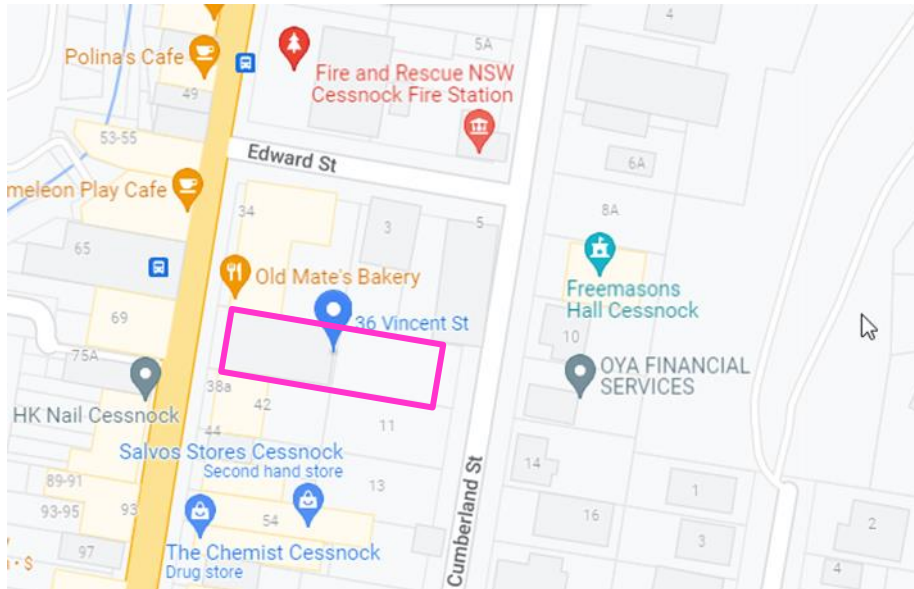
Students in individual programs will be given a contact for outside of business hours.

In the event of a personal emergency, students are encouraged to contact Emergency Services.

**Police, Fire, Ambulance – 000**

## Delivery Locations

We are located at:



## Parking

If you are attending training or an appointment at our premises, carparking is available in public carparks. Entry to these carparks is via Cumberland Street. Please note parking on Vincent Street is restricted to one-hour and regularly monitored by Parking Inspectors.

## Public Transport

Bus stops are a short walk from the Smart Training & Consulting Group premises. There is a bus stop on Vincent Street at the corner of Edward Street. Please refer to relevant timetables for more information.

## Food Options

If you are looking to buy lunch whilst you are at our premises, we are located very centrally and are surrounded by take away shops, cafes and restaurants.



## Code of Conduct

As a student, it is your right to:

- Be provided with a safe training environment free from harassment and discrimination
- Have your personal information stored, maintained and protected in accordance with the National Privacy Principles and have access to that information on request
- Receive the training and support necessary to achieve educational goals
- Be provided with enough information regarding the requirements of the training program to enable you to make an informed decision regarding enrolment
- Be provided with information regarding the implications of government funded training entitlements and subsidy arrangements in relation to your enrolment
- Be fully informed of fees and charges to complete your training, including charges for equipment and other resources as required
- To have your Training Plan and/or Support Plan modified if required
- Receive quality training and assessment that meets the Revised Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025
- To be supported through a recognition of prior learning (RPL) and or credit transfer (CT) process
- Receive information relating to deferring or cancelling studies
- Receive an accurate Certificate and/or Statement of Attainment on successful completion of an accredited training program
- Have access to Smart Training's consumer protection system and our Complaints and Appeals Processes
- Receive a refund for services not provided in the event of the training program being terminated early or if the agreed services are not provided either by ourselves or by a third party delivering on our behalf.
- Be treated fairly and with respect by trainers, other staff and students
- Learn in an environment free of discrimination and harassment
- Pursue educational goals in a supportive and stimulating learning environment
- Receive information about assessment procedures and your progress in the training program in a timely and professional manner

To comply with Smart Training & Consulting Group's Code of Conduct you are expected to:

- contribute to learning in a harmonious and positive manner irrespective of gender, race, sexual preference, political affiliation, marital status, disability or religious belief.
- comply with the rules and regulations of Smart Training & Consulting Group.
- be honest and respectful, which includes not falsifying work or information and not conducting yourself in any way that may cause injury or offence to others
- be responsible for your own learning and development by participating actively and positively and by ensuring that you maintain progress with learning modules.
- monitor your own progress by ensuring that assessment deadlines are observed.
- utilise facilities and Smart Training & Consulting Group publications with respect and to honour our copyrights and prevent our publication from being distributed to unauthorised persons.
- respect other students and Smart Training & Consulting Group staff members and their right to privacy and confidentiality.
- comply with Smart Training & Consulting Group safety requirements and instructions.
- comply with plagiarism and academic integrity requirements.

## **Behaviour misconduct**

Smart Training & Consulting Group seeks to provide an environment that is free from unacceptable behaviour and promotes a positive learning environment for all students. Behaviour misconduct is defined as unacceptable behaviour and includes, but is not limited to:

- Behaviour that impairs the reasonable freedom of other persons to pursue their studies and participate in the activities of the RTO
- Any act or failure to act that endangers the safety or health of any other person
- Actions that impair any person's participation in a legitimate RTO activity or, by act or omission disrupts the peace or good order of the RTO
- Acting in a way that causes students or staff or other persons within the RTO to fear for their personal safety

- Wilfully obstructing or disrupting any official RTO meeting, ceremony, activity, class or examination/assessment
- Any form of harassment, whether based on gender, race, age, sexual preference or religious belief
- Wilfully damaging or wrongfully dealing with any RTO property, or the property within the RTO of any person, including theft
- Being under the influence of prohibited drugs and/or substances including alcohol
- Trespassing or knowingly entering any place within the premises of the RTO that is out of bounds to students
- Making a false representation as to a matter affecting student status
- Possession of dangerous articles or banned substances
- Abusive behaviour to others

As a student, it is your responsibility to:

- Be informed of and comply with Commonwealth or State law
- Behave in a way that supports the freedom of other persons (students) to pursue their studies and participate in the activities of the RTO
- Identify themselves truthfully
- Behave in a way that supports the safety or health of any other person
- Maintain the peace or good order of the training environment
- Treat Smart Training & Consulting Group property with respect and prevent damage or destruction of property
- Behave in a way that supports the conduct of official Smart Training & Consulting Group meetings, ceremony, activity, class or examination/assessment
- Treat others with respect and not discriminate based on gender, race, age, sexual preference or religious belief
- Be free from (not under the influence of) prohibited drugs and/or substances including alcohol during attendance at the Smart Training & Consulting Group

- Not trespass or knowingly entering any place within the premises of Smart Training & Consulting Group that is out of bounds to students
- Give truthful information relating to student status and
- Communicate in a way that demonstrates respect for others and is free from verbal abuse.

Where student is identified for behaviour misconduct, a Smart Training & Consulting Group staff member will complete a *Behaviour Misconduct Report* and submit this to the Education Quality Assurance Manager.

Students who demonstrate behavioural misconduct will be counselled and issued a formal warning. Students who demonstrate behavioural misconduct after being formally warned will have their enrolment cancelled and will not be entitled to a refund. This does not limit the requirement to provide suitable warning in writing and the opportunity to make oral or written representations regarding the misconduct or the student's right to appeal a decision.

Where the student's behaviour is so serious or leads to the actual damage to property or harm to another person, the student's enrolment can be closed immediately, and the incident will be reported to the Police. This does not remove the students right to appeal a decision made by Smart Training & Consulting Group. Only after any appeal process has been completed that the student's enrolment can be closed and the student will be issued a statement of attainment only for units of competency they have achieved. Whilst any appeal is being processed, the student enrolment is to be temporarily suspended, and the student is not to attend the Smart Training & Consulting Group premises.

## Your safety

Smart Training & Consulting Group is committed to providing you a safe environment in which to participate in training and assessment. We are aware under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* of our responsibilities to maintain a safe environment.

The following guidelines are provided as a basis for safe practice in the training and assessment environment. The guidelines are particularly relevant to students, trainers and assessors.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>General Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know and observe details of emergency response and evacuation plans</li> <li>• Do not undertake activities which may cause injury to self or others</li> <li>• Be responsible for your own actions</li> <li>• Follow equipment operating procedures and trainer instructions for the safe operation of equipment</li> <li>• No smoking at the training and assessment facilities or offices</li> <li>• Report all potential hazards, accidents and near misses to the RTO staff</li> <li>• No consumption of alcohol within training and assessment facilities or during the conduct of training and assessment</li> <li>• Keep training and assessment areas neat and tidy at all times</li> <li>• Observe hygiene standards particularly in eating and bathroom areas.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Electrical equipment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report faulty electrical equipment to the Education Quality Assurance Manager.</li> <li>• Electrical equipment must be tested and tagged every 12 months by a qualified person.</li> <li>• Only licensed electricians are permitted to perform electrical work; students, trainers, and assessors must not attempt repairs.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fire safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire evacuation procedures and fire equipment locations will be communicated to students and visitors that are new to the building.</li> <li>• All users must know the location of exits and fire extinguishers, as demonstrated during site orientation.</li> <li>• Regular users are responsible for understanding fire drill procedures.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>First Aid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First aid facilities are provided at training locations, with a kit located at reception.</li> <li>• All accidents must be reported to staff and recorded, including any first aid given.</li> <li>• Safety incident reports must be completed for all first aid incidents or near misses.</li> </ul>

### **Computer Facilities**

- Prolonged computer use can cause fatigue, eye strain, and posture-related aches.
- In line with current work health and safety guidelines, take regular breaks from the screen and desk, including stretching or changing position or task that you are completing.
- Maintain good posture by adjusting chair height and arm position, position screens to reduce glare and ensure comfortable viewing distance.

### **Lifting**

- Only lift items when instructed by the Trainer; avoid lifting if you have a history of back problems.
- Identify contents and weight before lifting, never lift beyond your capacity—use proper technique: bend knees, keep your back straight, and avoid twisting.
- Do not lift above shoulder height, block your vision, or hold your breath while lifting.
- Ensure loads are secure, lift slowly, and be aware of your surroundings. Ask for help if unsure.

### **Work and study areas**

- Keep all work areas clean and free of hazards to prevent trips and falls.
- Dispose of rubbish properly and keep kitchen areas tidy, with dishes washed.
- Avoid leaving cloths on benches or near bins.
- Do not sit or climb on desks or tables, and keep passageways clear of bags or clothing.

### **Work placement**

- A workplace safety and suitability checklist and workplace agreement must be completed before any student commences work placement.
- All students must complete workplace health and safety induction onsite before any work placement commences.
- Students must obtain appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment required by the workplace.
- Appropriate supervision arrangements in the workplace must be established to ensure that the student's safe participation is monitored.
- Hazard risk assessment on planned work placement must be completed to identify the likelihood and consequence of injury or harm occurring and appropriate risk reduction measures. Details will be recorded on the Hazard Risk Control Register.
- Students will be briefed and provided contact details to contact Smart Training & Consulting representative anytime they feel that the situation in the workplace is not safe.

### **Psychosocial Hazards**

- Report bullying, harassment, or workload issues promptly to a supervisor or coordinator.
- Use available support services and resources, including student or staff-specific tools.

- Take regular breaks, maintain healthy boundaries, and practice stress management.
- Communicate respectfully with clear response expectations.
- Participate in professional development or study support.
- Engage in peer and team activities to foster a supportive environment.
- Set structured work/study schedules for a healthy balance.
- Stay informed through official policies, handbooks, and updates.
- Provide feedback through established channels and use all available support programs.

## Responding to Hazards

Any student who encounters a safety hazard are to respond using the following steps designed to ensure the safety of everyone and to address the hazard effectively:

1. **Identify the Hazard:** Recognise any potential safety hazard in the workplace. This could be anything from a spill on the floor to malfunctioning equipment.
2. **Assess the Risk:** Evaluate the potential risk associated with the hazard. Consider the likelihood of an accident occurring and the possible severity of its consequences.
3. **Control the Area:** If possible, isolate the hazard to prevent further risk. This could involve cordoning off the area, shutting down equipment, or evacuating the area if necessary.
4. **Notify the Relevant Personnel:** Report the hazard immediately to the nearest staff member or senior manager. Provide them with detailed information about the hazard and its location. They will continue to deal with the Safety Hazard.

## Language, literacy, numeracy and digital proficiency

Smart Training & Consulting Group will assess all student's language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) proficiency as part of their enrolment to identify where the student's current skills are aligned with the intended course or where the student may need support. The results of the LLND assessment will be reviewed to determine if you need training support. Evidence of the student's language, literacy, numeracy and digital proficiency assessment is to be retained in the student's record.

There may be valid situations where language, literacy, numeracy and digital proficiency assessment is not required where the student has completed a certain level of education or has demonstrated their ability to study with prior education and training.

The following outlines the approach that Smart Training & Consulting Group will apply to determine if a student requires language, literacy, numeracy and digital proficiency assessment:

### Short Course

All students are required to complete a basic initial core skills assessment, called a *Written Application*, that screens LLND levels, which is included as part of our overall screening and enrolment process. It will be used to identify students who do not have the required core skills and competencies for the short course they are enrolling in, or who require additional supports. Students enrolling into a short course will generally not be required to complete the full language, literacy, numeracy and digital proficiency assessment but instead, if support requirements are identified from the initial core skills assessment these will be further explored with the student through a support plan meeting.

### Long Course

All students will complete the basic initial core skills assessment, called a *Written Application*, that screens LLND levels, which is included as part of our overall screening and enrolment process. Student may be required to complete a more extensive initial core skills assessment when their initial screening indicates a deficit. This must be completed by the student as part of the screening process. The information gathered will support the development of a Student Support Plan.

### Student support services

During your enrolment, Smart Training & Consulting Group will engage with you on a number of occasions to identify if you require any support. We do this through requesting you to complete enrolment documentation which includes a *Written Application*, discussions over the phone, enrolment interview and finally during your orientation.



One of the important objectives of these engagements is to understand what support services you may need to fully participate in your study. You will be asked various questions about your support needs or your “individual needs”. This is simply the term we use to define what your needs are, and this enables us to organise the appropriate support services or to refer you to specialist support services. Make sure you take the most of this opportunity and let us know if you need support.

## What support is available?

Smart Training & Consulting Group will use a combination of our own services and the services of referral agencies to either provide or refer you to the following support services:

- administrative support (Admin Team),
- language, literacy and numeracy support (Trainer, Coordinator or external referral),
- studying and learning support (Trainer, Coordinator or external referral),
- English as second language support (external referral),
- alternative payment plan (Admin Team/ Management Team),
- counselling support (external referral),
- disability access support, where feasible, and
- employment services referral (external referral).

**Appendix a.** in this handbook outlines the details of a number of external services available in our local area. Smart Training will assist you in accessing support that may be relevant to you.

Where specialist support services are recommended by Smart Training & Consulting Group (such as Counselling Support for example), students are advised that these services may incur additional cost by the service provider that is separate from the services provided by Smart Training & Consulting. Students should verify the cost of these services with the provider before proceeding with these specialist support services. Students are also welcome and encouraged to use a services provider of your choosing. Services recommended by Smart Training & Consulting Group are recommended only for your convenience and this recommendation by no means that we give any warranty of these services. You should make your own enquiries and satisfy yourself that the service is suitable for your needs.

If you need support during your course, please approach and inform reception and you will be connected with the best person who can assist you. If the matter is sensitive and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with reception, simply inform reception that you would like to

meet with a manager. It is our absolute priority to provide you the support needed to enable you to progress in your study and complete your chosen course. Smart Training & Consulting Group is committed to our student's welfare both during and after hours of study.

## **Your wellbeing**

We are committed to fostering a supportive and safe environment that promotes the mental, physical, social, and emotional wellbeing of all students. If you need assistance or support at any time during your studies, you can seek help from your trainer or a Coordinator. Requests for help will be kept confidential.

Depending on the nature of the issue/s, adjustments may be made to your training plan, assessment due dates, additional training support may be provided to you, or you may be referred to external support services (e.g. counselling services that provide vocational, emotional and psychological support, or services to assist in accessing financial support).

## **Diversity and equity**

Smart Training & Consulting Group is committed to providing a supportive learning environment for all our students. This includes ensuring that our training and assessment environment is inclusive, respectful and free from discrimination and harassment. Smart Training & Consulting Group staff members are there to ensure every student, regardless of their background or identity, has equitable access to learning opportunities, feels valued, and can contribute to the classroom community. If at any time you feel that the training environment is not safe, you should contact a Coordinator as soon as possible.

## **Disability Inclusion**

If you think you'll need changes made in the classroom or extra learning support, you should contact a Coordinator as soon as possible. You can do this when you apply to enrol and before you start studying. You can also ask for help at any time during your studies.

Disclosure of disability or ongoing ill health, including mental ill health, is your choice and is not a requirement for participation in our courses. However, we encourage you to share information about the impact of your disability with us when you enrol so we can put reasonable adjustments in place in a timely way to support you in your learning and assessment.

## **Children and Young Students**

Smart Training & Consulting Group is committed to providing a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment that caters to the unique needs of students under the age of 18. Smart Training & Consulting Group can provide additional resources, guidance, and adjustments to ensure that young students have equal opportunities and feel safe, respected, and

encouraged. A coordinator will work with young students and their family or carer (if desired) during the enrolment process to develop a learning support plan, if required.

## Harassment and Discrimination

Smart Training & Consulting Group is committed to ensuring that the training and assessment environment is free from discrimination and harassment. All Smart Training & Consulting Group staff members (including contractors) are aware that discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances. If discrimination and harassment is found to have occurred disciplinary action will be taken against any staff member who breaches this policy. Suspected criminal behaviour will be reported to police authorities immediately. Students should expect fair and friendly behaviour from Smart Training & Consulting Group staff members, and we apply complaint handling procedures advocated by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Equally, students are also responsible for their own behaviour and are not to demonstrate or carry out any behaviour which can be perceived as harassment or discrimination on behalf of the other person. Students witnessing such behaviour should contact a Coordinator as soon as possible.

Students who feel that they have been discriminated against or harassed should report this information to a staff member of Smart Training & Consulting Group that they feel they can trust. This will initiate the complaint handling procedure which will be fair and transparent and will protect your rights as a complainant.

To find out more about how to manage a complaint, including contact details, refer to the Australian Human Rights Commission website

## Your privacy

Smart Training & Consulting Group takes the privacy of students very seriously and complies with all legislative requirements. These include the *Privacy Act 1988* and *Australian Privacy Principles*.

Here's what you need to know:

- Smart Training & Consulting Group will retain personal information about you relating to your enrolment with us. This includes your personal details, your ethnicity and individual needs, your education background. We will also retain records of your training activity and are required to do this in accordance with the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.
- Your personal information is retained within our hard copy filing system and our computer systems. Your information is collected via the enrolment form and through your completion of administrative related forms and based on your training outcomes. Hard copy files are

secured in lockable filing cabinets which are monitored throughout the day and secured in the evening. Electronic data retained on our computer systems is protected via virus protection software and firewall protection. Our data is backed up continuously to our server which is secure.

- Smart Training & Consulting Group is required by the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* to securely retain your personal details for a period of 30 years from the date your enrolment has completed. The purpose of this is to enable your participation in accredited training to be recorded for future reference and to allow you to obtain a record of your outcome if required.
- In some cases, we are required by law to make student information available to Government agencies such as the *National Centre for Vocational Education and Research* or the *Australian Skills Quality Authority*. In all other cases Smart Training & Consulting Group will seek the written permission of the student for such disclosure. Smart Training & Consulting Group will not disclose your information to any person or organisation unless we have written instructions from you to do so. If you require your records to be accessed by persons such as your parents, you need to authorise this access otherwise this access will be denied.
- You have the right to access information that Smart Training & Consulting Group is retaining that relates to you. Further instructions are provided on how to access records within the section titled “Access to your records”.
- If you have concerns about how Smart Training & Consulting Group is managing your personal information, we encourage you to inform our staff and discuss your concerns. You are also encouraged to make a complaint directly to us using our internal complaint handling arrangements outlined in this handbook. Under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act) you also have the right to make a complaint to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) about the handling of your personal information. You can find more information about making a privacy complaint at the website of the OAIC.

## National VET Data Policy

As part of your enrolment, you will be asked to declare your acceptance of the terms of the service contract and the refund conditions and confirm that you have been fully advised of the fees, refund conditions and conditions of enrolment and agree to be a student at Smart Training & Consulting.

You agree that it is your responsibility to retain a copy of any written agreement you enter into with Smart Training & Consulting Group, such as payment plans etc. and receipts of any payments of tuition fees or non-tuition fees.

You understand that under the *Data Provision Requirements 2020*, Smart Training & Consulting Group is required to collect personal information about you and to disclose that personal information to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd (NCVER).

Your personal information (including the personal information contained on the enrolment form and your training activity data) may be used or disclosed by Smart Training & Consulting Group for statistical, regulatory and research purposes. Smart Training & Consulting Group may disclose your personal information for these purposes to third parties, including:

- School – if you are a secondary student undertaking VET, including a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship
- Employer – if you are enrolled in training paid by your employer
- Commonwealth and State or Territory government departments and authorised agencies
- NCVER
- Organisations conducting student surveys and
- Researchers.

Personal information disclosed to NCVER may be used or disclosed for the following purposes:

- Issuing a VET Statement of Attainment or VET Qualification, and populating Authenticated VET Transcripts
- Facilitating statistics and research relating to education, including surveys
- Understanding how the VET market operates, for policy, workforce planning and consumer information and
- Administering VET, including program administration, regulation, monitoring and evaluation.

You may also receive an NCVER student survey which may be administered by an NCVER employee, agent or third-party contractor. You may opt out of the survey at the time of being contacted.

NCVER will collect, hold, use and disclose your personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988, the VET Data Policy and all NCVER policies and protocols (including those published on NCVER's website at [www.ncver.edu.au](http://www.ncver.edu.au)).

## Unique Student Identifier

If you're studying nationally recognised training in Australia, you will be required to have a Unique Student Identifier (USI). Your USI links to an online account that contains all your training records and results (transcript) that you have completed from 1 January 2015.

When applying for a job or enrolling in further study, you will often need to provide your training records and results (transcript). One of the main benefits of the USI is the ability to provide students with easy access to their training records and results (transcript) throughout their life. You can access your USI account online from your computer, tablet or smart phone anytime.

It's free and easy to create your own USI and will only take a few minutes of your time. If you already hold a USI, but cannot locate it, we can, with your permission, locate the information for you.

Students are advised that there are a number of unique circumstances where a person may be exempt from requiring a USI. These do not apply to the vast majority of students in Australia. The USI Exemption Table is available from the USI website which explains these circumstances.

## Accessing your records

You are entitled to have access to your records. These records include your:

- student file,
- learning and assessment record,
- administrative records,
- AQF certificates, including a reissuance of a statement of attainment or qualification which has been previously issued.

You may require these records to monitor your progress with training or simply to go back and confirm something in a previous training module. Whilst these records will be retained by Smart Training & Consulting, you are welcome to request access anytime.

You can access hard copy records and/or reports from our student management system but only relating to you personally. You can request this access using the *Student Records Request Form*. Access to requested records during a workday will be arranged as soon as possible and within 24 hours. Students should note that these records cannot be taken away unless a copy is requested. Where photocopies are requested, Smart Training & Consulting Group reserves the right to charge a one-off photocopy fee of \$10.00. There is no cost to simply view records at our office.

In the case of accessing a reissuance of a previously issued Statement of Attainment or Qualification certificate, please complete and submit a *Student Records Request Form* and

return this to the Smart Training and Consulting Offices. Reissued AQF certificates will be an exact duplicate of the original with the exception of small wording at the bottom of the document which identifies the certificate as reissued. Certificates will be emailed to the original student email address. Hard copies of Certificates are not issued by Smart Training and Consulting.

## Fees and Charges

Smart Training & Consulting Group charge fees for services provided to students undertaking training and assessment. These charges are generally for items such as course materials, textbooks, student services and training and assessment services.

Fees are payable at different stages depending on the type of course the student is enrolling in. As an example:

- for a **Short Course**, the total fee will be required to be paid at reception at the point when the student is registering for the course.
- for a **Long Course** with a scheduled start date, the student will be required to make an initial payment for their course within 5 days of being issued an invoice or prior to the course commencing, whichever occurs first.

Our *Quotation for Services* will detail all program specific fees. It will also include our *Standard Schedule of Fees and Charges*.

The payment requirements for all courses are specified within the current Smart Training & Consulting Group *Quotation for Service*. The document will identify the amount and when the initial payment must be made and any subsequent payments that are due as the course progresses. If for whatever reason you have not received a copy of the *Quotation for Services* and/ or *Standard Schedule of Fees and Charges*, please contact Smart Training & Consulting Group and we will send this to you immediately.

Smart Training & Consulting Group may discontinue training if fees are not paid in accordance with the agreed *Standard Schedule of Fees and Charges*. If a payment is required prior to a service being delivered, the student is not permitted to undertake the service unless prior approval has been given by the CEO. Smart Training may cancel an enrolment or discontinue training if fees are not paid as required.

Where a student is required to pay an application fee as specified in the current *Standard Schedule of Fees and Charges*, the application fee is non-refundable.



Below is the outline for our current *Standard Schedule of Fees and Charges*.

Item	Cost
Re issuance of certificate or statement of attainment	\$25.00
Replacement of hard copy Learner Guide	\$20.00 (plus postage fees where applicable)
Replacement of hard copy assessment documents (such as Student Assessment Workbook)	\$10.00 (plus postage fees where applicable)
Recognition of Prior Learning (per unit fee)	\$350.00
Reassessment fee (per unit fee)	\$200.00

- a. A *Quotation for Services* applicable to individual programs will be provided to prospective learners/ clients, as part of our pre-enrolment information. This will outline standard fees as well as course specific costs including:
- any additional fees such as fees for re-issuing an AQF certificate, re-assessment fee or other miscellaneous charges
  - payment terms, including the timing and amount of fees to be paid and any non-refundable amounts or administration fees
  - consumer protection arrangements
  - payment methods
  - any discounts, fee reductions or exemptions available for multiple enrolments, concession card holders, continuing students, group bookings etc

**NOTE: a *Quotation for Services* will also be developed for products and services that Smart Training may deliver, that extends beyond training and assessment, for e.g. Consultancy Services**

Payment plans may be negotiated on an individual basis and are at the discretion of the General manager- Please contact reception to make an appointment to discuss.



Smart Training will withhold final results and Certification Documents until all fees have been finalised.

## **Payment methods**

Smart Training & Consulting Group accepts payment for fees using the following payment methods:

- Credit Card either over the phone or via our electronic invoice
- Electronic Funds Transfer (account details provided on the invoice)
- Cash

Please refer to our invoice for payment options.

## **Fees Paid in Advance**

Smart Training & Consulting Group does not require prospective or current students to prepay fees in excess of the threshold for prepaid fee amount which is in excess of a total of \$1,500. This is an important consumer protection measure to limit the amount of fees that a student can be charged in advance of the services being delivered to the student.

If the cost of the course is less than \$1,500, generally the full amount will be requested for payment prior to the course commencing.

## **Refund policy**

The following refund policy statements apply:

- i. Where the course is a designated short course and the individual student is responsible for the fee- students are not required to pay before enrolment. Where payment and enrolment has occurred, no refund will apply if the student chooses to withdraw their enrolment.
- ii. Where an individual student is responsible for the fee- they are required to pay either a deposit or their full fee (if less than \$1500) at least 2 business days prior to commencement unless a payment plan has been approved. A Student who gives notice to cancel their enrolment, prior to the commencement of a course or within the first 10 business days, will be entitled to a 75% refund of fees paid. The amount retained (25%) by Smart Training & Consulting is required to cover the costs of staff and resources which will have already been committed based on the student's initial intention to

undertake the training. The full fee of any invoice issued will apply for any student who attends more than two weeks training.

- iii. Where a third party is responsible for student fees- the nature of the third-party arrangement will vary depending on the client. A quotation for training services or a third-party agreement will outline the fees applicable in each arrangement. Generally, full fees will apply for any student who attends for two + weeks of training (census date). If a student who has agreed to enrol withdraws before commencement and fees have been charged, the third party may exchange the student for another. If a student withdraws within the first two weeks of training, 50% of any fees paid will be refunded to the third party.

Discretion may be exercised by the General Manager in all situations.

All requests for refund of fees must be made in writing using the *Refund Request Form* which may be obtained from Smart Training & Consulting reception. The form must be signed by the student or third party.

Where refunds are approved, the refund payment must be paid to the student or third party within 14 days from the time the student gave written notice to cancel their enrolment. Tuition refunds are to be paid via electronic funds transfer using the authorised bank account nominated by the student or third party on the *Refund Request Form*.

The following outlines the Smart Training & Consulting refund policy in action against various circumstances and situations:

- Refunds for textbooks - Where a student has purchased a textbooks or training workbooks and subsequently cancels, Smart Training & Consulting will not provide a refund monies for a textbooks or training workbooks.
- Non-transferable - Smart Training & Consulting refunds are not transferable to another person or RTO.
- Refunds for classes missed - No refunds will be made for classes missed due to exams, excursions, or other obligations that fall outside the normal schedule of classes.
- Intake numbers are insufficient - Smart Training & Consulting reserves the right to cancel a course if intake numbers for a scheduled course are insufficient. In the

unlikely event that Smart Training & Consulting cancels a course if intake numbers are insufficient, the student will receive a full refund.

- Behaviour Misconduct - Students who demonstrate behavioural misconduct after being formally warned are to have their enrolment cancelled and will not be entitled to a refund (ref to *PP2.7- Behaviour Misconduct*).

Students have the right to access Smart Training & Consulting Group complaints and appeals processes and to also take further action under Australia's Consumer Protection Laws.

## **Training funding and subsidy rights and obligations**

As a student receiving a subsidy to participate in training, you have certain rights and obligations. First and foremost, you have the right to expect that your training meets high-quality standards. This means that your education must align with the standards, regulations, and requirements set down by the *Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)* and relevant funding initiatives such as the Smart and Skilled program. This ensures that your qualification meets nationally recognised benchmarks for educational excellence.

In terms of personal information management, you have the right to be fully informed about how your personal information is collected and used by Smart Training & Consulting Group. Your privacy is protected under applicable laws and regulations, giving you control over your personal data throughout your educational journey.

Additionally, you have the right to access Smart Training & Consulting Group's complaints process. This ensures that you have a clear pathway to address any concerns that may arise during your studies, and that you will receive fair treatment in all aspects of your educational experience.

Along with these rights, come certain obligations that you must fulfill as a student. Your primary obligation is to provide accurate and truthful information to Smart Training & Consulting Group. This includes all personal details, previous educational experience, and any other information requested during your enrolment. If any of your details change during your studies, you are responsible for updating this information promptly.

## **Consumer Protection and Guarantee**

If Smart Training & Consulting Group cancels or ceases to provide planned training, Smart Training & Consulting Group must issue a full refund for any services not yet provided. The basis for determining "services not yet provided" is to be based on the units of competency completed by the student and which can be issued in a statement of attainment at the time the service is ceased.

*As an example: A student enrolled in a course of 2 units of competency and paid \$600.00 up front as the total course fee. The course was cancelled due to the trainer falling ill and the student at that time had completed 1 of the 2 units. The student's enrolment would be finalised, and the student would receive a Statement of Attainment for the 1 completed units. The student would also receive a refund of \$300.00 which represents that value of the training not delivered.*

As a student undertaking a vocational education and training course, you are protected under Australian Consumer Law and under State and Territory consumer protection laws. You can find out more information about your rights as a consumer from the Australian Consumer Law website which includes a range of helpful guides relating to specific areas of protection.

Students who are unhappy with Smart Training & Consulting Group arrangements for the collection and refunding of tuition fees are entitled to lodge a complaint. This should occur in accordance with Smart Training & Consulting Group *PP 2.9 Complaints Handling* policy.

### **Learning material replacement**

Students who require replacement of issued text or training workbooks will be liable for additional charges to cover the cost of replacement. See standard charges above.

### **Statutory cooling off period**

A statutory cooling off period (which is 10 days) is a period of time provided to a consumer to allow them to withdraw, without penalty, from a consumer agreement, where that agreement was established through unsolicited marketing or sales tactics. These include tactic such as door-to-door sales and telemarketing. Smart Training & Consulting Group do not engage in unsolicited marketing or sales tactics and therefore a statutory cooling off period is not applicable to our students who have enrolled into a course. For refund option in other circumstances, students must refer to the *PP2.8 Fees and Refunds* policy.

### **Changes to terms and conditions**

Smart Training & Consulting Group reserves the right to amend the terms and conditions of a student's enrolment at any time. Changes may include adjustments to course delivery arrangements, ownership or third-party agreements, training product transitions, or updates to our policies and procedures.

If a change occurs that affects a student's enrolment, the student will be informed in writing within a reasonable timeframe before the change takes effect. This notification will allow the student adequate opportunity to seek clarification or to lodge an appeal if they believe they may be adversely affected.

Further information about appealing a decision is provided in the section on Complaints and Appeals Handling

### **Requesting to transfer between courses**

Requests for transfers to an alternate course can be made at any time. Requests for course transfer are to be made in writing using *Application for Course Transfer*. Requests for course transfer are subject to the availability of an alternate course, the crossover of units of competency the student has already completed and where a credit transfer would align with the new course. In some circumstances where there is no available course and there is no viable pathway for the student to credit transfer completed units of competency into the new course, course transfer will not be approved. Where the student is accessing a training subsidy, there may also be restrictions preventing course transfer. These restrictions will be considered regarding the student's individual circumstances.

### **Requesting to defer or suspend a course**

Deferral from a course after the course has commenced is not permitted. In this circumstance, the student has the option to suspend or withdraw from the course (ref to *PP1.13 - Student Completion and Issuing Certificates*). Requests for deferral from the course prior to it commencing can be arranged based on the schedule of upcoming courses if Smart Training & Consulting is advised in writing more than 5 working days prior to the course commencing. Requests for course deferral are to be made in writing using the *Application for Course Deferral form*. Applications for course deferrals may be denied if we do not anticipate the course to be offered in the future.

The legislative requirement for some training arrangements, such as Traineeships, may allow for deferment/ suspension after a course has commenced.

### **Withdrawing from a course**

There are circumstances where a student may finalise their enrolment early for personal or academic reasons. Students who have requested to withdraw from the course will be offered counselling on their options which may include transferring to a different course or receiving additional student support to assist them in the current course. Where the student declines these options and requests to withdraw from the course, the student will be issued a statement of attainment only for units of competency they have achieved. Requests for course withdrawal are to be submitted using the *Enrolment Withdrawal form*. For policy relating to student requests for course withdrawal refer to *PP1.13 - Student Completion and Issuing Certificates*.

### **Student who are not contactable or not responding**

Where a student is not contactable or fails to respond to requests by the Smart Training & Consulting, the student's enrolment is to be closed via a Smart Training initiated withdrawal.

Before a student's enrolment can be closed without their written or expressed consent, a minimum of 3 attempts (one week apart) must be made using the last known contact details (using either email or phone). After these attempts, with nil response, our next step is to contact next of kin outlined in Enrolment Form to attempt contact. If there is still no response, a final email will be sent outlining Smart Training's intention to withdraw the student if nil contact is made by close of business the next day.

## Plagiarism

Students must submit only original work for assessments, assignments, and projects. Examples of plagiarism include:

- Direct copying of paragraphs, sentences, a single sentence or significant parts of a sentence
- Direct copying of paragraphs, sentences, a single sentence or significant parts of a sentence with an end reference but without quotation marks around the copied text
- Copying ideas, concepts, research results, computer codes, statistical tables, designs, images, sounds or text or any combination of these
- Paraphrasing, summarising or simply rearranging another person's words, ideas, etc., without reference or explanation
- Offering an idea or interpretation that is not one's own without identifying whose idea or interpretation it is
- A 'cut and paste' of statements from multiple sources
- Presenting as independent, work done in collaboration with others
- Copying or adapting another student's original work into a submitted assessment item
- Copying or adapting a student's own work submitted in a previous essay or assessment or
- Unintentionally failing to cite sources or to do so adequately.

Where plagiarism is detected in students works submitted for assessment the following action will be taken:

**Plagiarism resulting from poor academic practice** - If it has been determined that the plagiarism has arisen from poor academic practice, the student is to be requested to revise the work and submit it for reassessment. The student will be offered support and additional training in the use of referencing systems.

**Intentional plagiarism** – If it is determined that the plagiarism was intentional, the student's work is not to be accepted, and the student is to be issued with an alternative assessment to complete. The student will be given a formal warning in writing (Warning Letter for Academic

Misconduct) by the General Manager explaining the seriousness of the incident and the consequences if the student is found to plagiarise again (i.e. withdrawal from the course). Students who are found to continue to plagiarise work in support of their assessment will have their enrolment closed. Where a student has been found plagiarising to a level which is considered to be deliberate and egregious, the student's enrolment will be closed following being notified of the decision. The student will have the right to appeal any decision that they are notified of in accordance with the appeals policy.

To prevent cheating or plagiarism, students are responsible for:

- Submitting only work that is their own or that properly acknowledges the ideas, interpretations, words or creative works of others
- Avoiding lending original work to others for any reason
- Being clear about assessment conditions and seeking clarification if in doubt
- Being clear about what is appropriate referencing and the consequences of inappropriate referencing
- Only use AI tool according to the acceptable use guidelines
- Discouraging others from plagiarising by observing the practices above

## Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Smart Training & Consulting Group employ a range of strategies and software solutions to monitor the use of artificial intelligence content in assessment submissions made by students. This is a normal part of our assessment quality control. The following are guidelines on the **unacceptable use of artificial intelligence** content:

- **Direct Generation of Assessment Responses.** Using AI to generate complete or partial answers for assessments, such as:
  - Having AI write workplace documentation like risk assessments or incident reports
  - Using AI to complete practical task descriptions or work procedures
  - Submitting AI-generated responses for knowledge questions
  - Using AI to create workplace portfolios or evidence collections
- **Bypassing Skill Development.** Using AI in ways that prevent learning essential vocational skills such as:
  - Having AI solve workplace calculations instead of developing mathematical competency
  - Using AI to create technical drawings or designs without learning the underlying principles
  - Relying on AI for measurements or specifications instead of developing measurement skills
  - Having AI interpret technical manuals or workplace documents without developing comprehension skills



- **Professional Communication Tasks.** Using AI to complete communication tasks that demonstrate professional competency, such as:
  - Having AI write client communications or workplace emails
  - Using AI to generate workplace reports
  - Submitting AI-generated meeting minutes or briefing notes
  - Using AI to create workplace presentations or training materials
- **Evidence Collection.** Using AI to fabricate or manipulate evidence of competency, such as:
  - Creating artificial workplace scenarios or examples
  - Generating fictional workplace experiences or observations
  - Producing simulated workplace documentation
  - Creating artificial supervisor feedback or third-party reports
- **Practical Skills Documentation.** Using AI to document practical skills without performing them, such as:
  - Writing up practical task procedures without completing them
  - Generating safety check documentation without performing checks
  - Creating maintenance logs without conducting maintenance
  - Documenting customer service interactions that did not occur
- **Group Work and Collaboration.** Using AI to bypass genuine workplace collaboration:
  - Having AI generate team contributions
  - Using AI to complete assigned portions of group tasks
  - Creating artificial peer feedback or evaluations
  - Generating team meeting outcomes without participation

The unacceptable use of artificial intelligence content is considered a form of plagiarism and students found to be breaching this policy. Action will be taken in accordance with the plagiarism policy. Where there may be acceptable uses of artificial intelligence content, this will be specifically identified to each student within the assessment instructions of the task.

Please refer to Smart Training and Consulting's policy for AI, *PP 1.9 Plagiarism and AI* for more information.

## Assessment

Smart Training & Consulting Group assessment is conducted using a combination of practical and theoretical tasks.

The following provides a brief explanation of the primary assessment methods:

**Supervised assessment**, such as:

Practical observation, including:

- Task demonstration (in simulated and real work environments)



- Role play
- Team activities
- Presentation

Knowledge examination, including:

- Supervised knowledge assessment
- Verbal question and answer

**Non-supervised assessment**, such as:

Written responses

Work projects

Assignments

Evidence portfolios

Online assessment task

Workbook activities

Workplace logbook

## Re-assessment

Students who are assessed as *not yet competent* are to be provided with detailed verbal and written feedback to assist them to identify the gaps in their knowledge and skills to be addressed through further training. These students are to be provided with additional training and learning support to target their specific gaps in knowledge and/or skills and prepare them for additional assessment.

It is the policy of Smart Training & Consulting to provide **three** opportunities for training and re-assessment at no additional cost to the student or employer. The initial assessment is **one** and therefore the student will have two remaining opportunities if they are not able to demonstrate competency on the first attempt. Students are given a period of five (5) business days to re-submit their assessment to their trainer. Students who require additional training and re-assessment after they have exhausted their three opportunities will be required to pay a fee for additional training and re-assessment. Please refer to the current fee schedule to identify the re-assessment fee.

Where students repeatedly do not demonstrate competence following significant learning and assessment support, a student's enrolment can be closed through mutual agreement.

Please refer to *PP 1.6 Assessment* policy for more information.

## Recognition of Prior Learning

In accordance with the requirements of the *Revised Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025*, Smart Training & Consulting Group provides the opportunity for students to apply to have prior learning recognised toward a qualification or units of competence for which they are enrolled.

Recognition of Prior Learning involves the assessment of previously unrecognised skills and knowledge that an individual has achieved outside the formal education and training system. Recognition of Prior Learning assesses this unrecognised learning against the requirements of a unit of competence, in respect of both entry requirements and outcomes to be achieved. By removing the need for duplication of learning, recognition encourages an individual to continue upgrading their skills and knowledge through structured education and training towards formal qualifications and improved employment outcomes. This has benefits for the individual and industry. Most importantly, it should be noted that recognition is just another form of assessment.

The following guidelines are to be followed when an application for recognition is received:

- Any student is entitled to apply for recognition in a course or qualification in which they are currently enrolled.
- Students may not apply for recognition for units of competence or a qualification which are not included in Smart Training & Consulting Group scope of registration.
- Whilst students may apply for recognition at any time, they are encouraged to apply before commencing a course. This will reduce unnecessary training and guide the student down a more efficient path to competence.
- Students who are currently enrolled in a course are eligible to apply for recognition in that course at no additional charge.
- Assessment via recognition is to apply the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.
- Recognition may only be awarded for whole units of competence.

### Forms of evidence for recognition

Recognition acknowledges that workplace skills and knowledge may be gained through a variety of ways including both formal and informal learning or through work-based or life experience.

Like assessment, recognition is a process whereby evidence is collected, and a judgement is made by an assessor or assessment team.

Forms of evidence toward recognition may include:

- Work records
- Records of workplace training
- Assessments of current skills

- Assessments of current knowledge
- Third party reports from current and previous supervisors or managers
- Evidence of relevant unpaid or volunteer experience
- Examples of work products
- Observation by an assessor in the workplace
- Performance appraisal or
- Duty statements.

Many of these forms of evidence would not be sufficient on their own. When combined, with a number of evidence items, the candidate will start to provide a strong case for competence. Smart Training & Consulting Group reserves the right to require candidates to undertake practical assessment activities of skills and knowledge to satisfy itself of a candidate's current competence.

Smart Training & Consulting will provide all students the opportunity to seek recognition of their prior learning. Recognition is viewed simply as another method of assessment and therefore is conducted in accordance with this policy. Further information can be found in *PP1.11 - Recognition of Prior Learning*.

**Note:** For particularly short, low-cost courses, the recognition of prior learning process may have limited value to students and may not be available. If unsure, please check with a Coordinator.

## Credit Transfer

Credit Transfer is the recognition of learning achieved through formal education and training. Under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations, units of competency issued by any RTO are to be accepted and recognised by all other RTOs. Credit Transfer allows a student to be issued a unit of competency based on successful completion of the unit which has been previously awarded. If you are seeking credit transfer, you are required to present your statement of attainment or qualification with a record of results for review to Smart Training & Consulting Group, in the enrolment phase of your intended course.

These documents will provide the detail of what units of competence you have been previously issued. You must provide satisfactory evidence that the statement of attainment or qualification is authentic, is yours and that it has been issued by an Australian RTO. Statements of attainment or qualifications should be in the correct format as outlined in the *Australian Qualifications Framework*. You are required to submit copies only which are certified as a true copy of the original.

The following guidelines are to be followed in relation to credit transfer:

- Any student is entitled to apply for credit transfer in a course or qualification in which they are currently enrolled.
- Students may not apply for credit transfer for units of competence or qualification which are not included in Smart Training & Consulting Group scope of registration.
- Whilst students may apply for credit transfer at any time, they are encouraged to apply before commencing a course. This will reduce unnecessary training and guide the student down a more efficient path to competence.
- The student does not incur any fees for credit transfer and Smart Training & Consulting Group does not receive any funding when credit transfer is granted.
- Credit transfer may only be awarded for whole units of competence. Where a mapping guide identifies a partial credit, this will not be considered for credit transfer and applicants will be advised to seek Recognition of Prior Learning

## Issuing Qualifications and Statements of Attainment

Smart Training & Consulting Group will issue all Australian Qualification Framework certification documentation (Qualifications or Statements of Attainment) to a student within 30 calendar days of the student being assessed as meeting the requirements of the training product if the course in which the student is enrolled is complete.

Please note however that Smart Training & Consulting Group is not obliged to issue a certificate to a completed student if:

- All agreed fees the student owes to Smart Training & Consulting Group have been paid.
- The student has provided a valid Unique Student Identifier.

Students should be aware that a:

- *Qualification* is the result of a student achieving the units of competency for a qualification outcome as specified in an endorsed training package or an accredited course. A qualification is a formal certification that a student has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF. Technically within the AQF a qualification is comprised of a testamur and a record of results. A testamur is the actual official certification document that confirms that a qualification has been awarded to an individual.
- *Statement of Attainment* is issued when the student has achieved one or more units of competency as a result of completing a course which included units of competency only or where the student achieved one or more units of competency as part of an enrolment in a qualification-based course, but the student did not achieve all of the units of competency to receive the full qualification.

## Making a complaint or an appeal

A full copy of our complaints policy and procedure can be provided by our administration staff via email at request and is publicly available on our website.

## What is a complaint?

A complaint is negative feedback about services or staff which has not been resolved locally. A complaint may be received by Smart Training & Consulting Group in any form and does not need to be formally documented by the complainant to be acted on. Complaints may be made by any person but are generally made by students and/or employers.

## What is an appeal?

An appeal is an application by a student for reconsideration of an unfavourable decision or finding during training and/or assessment. An appeal must be made in writing and specify the particulars of the decision or finding in dispute. Appeals must be submitted to Smart Training & Consulting Group within **28 calendar days** of the student being informed of the decision or finding.

Smart Training & Consulting Group is committed to providing a fair and transparent complaints and appeals process that includes access to an independent external body if required. To make a complaint or an appeal, you are requested to complete one of the following forms:

- *Complaint Form*
- *Request to Appeal a Decision*

These forms are available via our office and may be emailed to you at your request.

Once you have completed the required form you are requested to submit this to Reception either in hard copy or electronically via the following contact details:

2/ 36 Vincent Street, Cessnock NSW 2325 – Phone (02) 4013 6145  
[reception@smartrainingandconsulting.com.au](mailto:reception@smartrainingandconsulting.com.au)

If you are a child or young person and you require support to understand and use the complaints process, please contact a Coordinator or your trainer for assistance.

## Early resolution of complaints and appeals

In all cases, issues that arise during training and assessment that are the source of frustration or are in dispute should be resolved at the time, as they occur between the persons involved, where possible. Sometimes, it will not be possible and in these cases, you are encouraged to come forward and inform us of your concerns with the confidence that you will be treated fairly.

## Complaint and appeals handling

Smart Training & Consulting Group applies the following principles to its complaints and appeals handling:

- A complaint or appeal may be received in any form (written, verbal), although persons seeking to make a complaint are recommended to complete the *Complaint Form* or *Request to Appeal a Decision*
- A person who makes a complaint or an appeal must be **provided a written acknowledgement** as soon as possible and **not later than 1 business day** from the time the complaint or the appeal is received. The acknowledgement must inform the person that they will receive a written response within **10 business** days and explain the complaint/appeal handling process and the persons rights and obligations.
- There is no time limitation on a person who is seeking to make a complaint. An appeal however must be made within **28 calendar days** of the person being informed of the decision or finding of which they intend to appeal.
- Written records of all complaints / appeals are to be kept by Smart Training & Consulting Group including all details of lodgement, response and resolution. Smart Training & Consulting Group will maintain complaints / appeals register to be used to record the details of the complaint / appeal and to maintain a chronological journal of events during the handling process. Records relating to complaint / appeal handling are stored securely to prevent access to unauthorised personnel.
- A person making a complaint or seeking an appeal is to be provided an opportunity to formally present his or her case at no cost.
- Each person may be accompanied and/or assisted by a support person at any relevant meeting.
- Where a complaint or appeal is made about or involves allegations about another person, Smart Training & Consulting Group is obliged to inform this person about this complaint/appeal or allegation and provide them the opportunity to respond and present information in response to the issues raised. This may be achieved through direct meetings or meetings via an electronic means. Smart Training & Consulting Group will maintain a detailed record of these meetings in the form of a record of conversation. At all times information must be handled sensitively and treated in confidence. Persons involved in a dispute or complaint should be reminded to treat each other with respect and conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner.
- The handling of a complaint / appeal is to commence within **ten (10) business days** of the lodgement of the complaint / appeal, and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

- The person making a complaint or seeking an appeal is to be provided a written response to the complaint / appeal, including details of the reasons for the outcome. A written response must be provided to the person within **ten (10) business days** of the lodgement of the complaint / appeal.
- Complaints / appeals must be resolved to a final outcome **within thirty (30) calendar days** of the complaint / appeal being initially received. Where Smart Training & Consulting Group General Manager considers that more than 30 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint / appeal, the GM must inform the person making a complaint or seeking an appeal in writing, including reasons why more than 30 calendar days are required. As a benchmark, Smart Training & Consulting Group will attempt to resolve complaints / appeals as soon as possible. A timeframe to resolve a complaint / appeal within thirty (30) days is considered acceptable and in the best interest of Smart Training & Consulting Group and the person making a complaint or seeking an appeal. A person making a complaint or seeking an appeal should also be provided with regular updates to inform them of the progress of the complaint / appeal handling. Updates should be provided to the person making a complaint or seeking an appeal at a minimum of two (2) weekly intervals.
- Decisions or outcomes of the complaint / appeal handling process that find in the favour of the person making a complaint or seeking an appeal shall be implemented immediately.
- Complaints / appeals are to be handled in the strictest of confidence. No Smart Training & Consulting Group representative will disclose information to any person without the permission of Smart Training & Consulting Group General Manager. A decision to release information to third parties can only to be made after the person making a complaint or seeking an appeal has given permission for this to occur. This permission must be given in writing.
- Complaints / appeals are to be considered and handled to ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are applied at every stage of the handling process. This means that the person making a complaint or seeking an appeal is entitled to be heard with access to all relevant information and with the right of reply. The person making a complaint or seeking an appeal is entitled to have their complaint heard by a person that is without bias and may not be affected by the decision. Finally, the decision must be made based on logical evidence and the decision-maker must take account of relevant considerations, must act for a proper purpose and must not consider irrelevant considerations.

## Informing Persons and Responding to Allegations

Where a complaint involves one person making allegations about another person, it is a requirement for Smart Training & Consulting Group to hear both sides of the matter before making any judgements about how the complaint should be settled. A person who will be



affected by a decision made by Smart Training & Consulting Group because of a complaint has the right to be fully informed of any allegations and to be provided adequate opportunity to be heard and respond.

The person has the right to:

- Reply, either verbally or in writing,
- show cause why a proposed action should not be taken,
- deny allegations,
- call for evidence to disprove allegations and claims,
- explain allegations or present an innocent explanation, and
- provide mitigating circumstances (information aimed at reducing the severity, seriousness, of something).

Smart Training & Consulting Group also has an obligation to fully consider the substance of allegations and the response provided by parties before making a decision. Decisions must be communicated to the complainant and relevant persons subject of allegations in writing. This is to include advising these persons of their right to seek a third-party review of decisions made by Smart Training & Consulting.

Where an allegation is made that involve alleged criminal or illegal activity and it is considered outside the scope and expertise of Smart Training & Consulting Group to investigate the matter, then in these circumstances Smart Training & Consulting Group reserve the right to report these allegations to law enforcement authorities. Persons related to the matter involving alleged criminal or illegal activity will be advised if this course of action is being taken.

### **Review by an independent third party**

Where the person making a complaint is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by Smart Training & Consulting, they have the opportunity for a body or person that is independent of Smart Training & Consulting to review his or her complaint following the internal completion of complaint handling process. Before a person seeks a review by an independent third party, they are requested to first allow Smart Training & Consulting to fully consider the nature of the complaint and to respond to the person in writing. If after this has occurred, the person is not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to then seek a review by an independent third party. To request a review by an independent third party, the complainant should inform the General Manager of their request who will initiate the process with the Chief Executive Officer. In these circumstances, Smart Training & Consulting will seek an appropriate independent third party to review the complaint outcome (and its subsequent handling) and provide advice to Smart Training & Consulting in regard to the recommended outcomes. The independent third-party will respond with their recommendations as soon as practicable. This advice is to be accepted by Smart Training & Consulting as final, advised to the person making a complaint in writing and implemented without prejudice.



Where Smart Training & Consulting appoints or engages an appropriate independent person to review a complaint, Smart Training & Consulting will meet the full cost to facilitate the independent review.

## Unresolved Complaints and Appeals

Students who are not satisfied with the process applied by Smart Training & Consulting Group may refer their matter to the following external agencies:

- In relation to consumer related issues, the student may refer their complaint to the relevant **Office of Fair Trading**.
- In relation to the delivery of training and assessment services, the person may refer their complaint to the **National Training Complaints Service** via the following phone number: 13 38 73 or visit the website or alternatively to the Australian Skills Quality Authority website.
- In relation to matters relating to privacy, the person may refer their complaint to the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** via the website or call on 1300 363 992.

## Continuous improvement

Smart Training & Consulting Group is committed to the continuous improvement of our training and assessment services, student services and management systems. Central to this commitment is our approach to continuous improvement and the procedures we apply to achieve systematic and sustained improvement.

Students are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement to Smart Training & Consulting Group at any time during their studies so we can improve our services in the future. Students can report opportunities for improvement by discussing suggestions with their Trainer or the Training and Student Support Coordinator, sending us an email or completing the *Opportunity for Improvement* form. The *Opportunity for Improvement* form template is available on request. Suggestions for improvement will be considered by our management team at our regular management meeting.

During a long course, students will be invited to complete the *Mid-course Survey* which will usually be administered early in a course such as after the first term to collect feedback so any issues can be addressed to improve our service to you for the remainder of the course.

At the completion of your course, you will be issued with a *AQTF Learner Survey*. This is a nationally consistent survey tool which is designed to collect feedback from students about their experience with an RTO and in undertaking nationally recognised training. Your completion and return of this survey are important to Smart Training & Consulting Group for our ongoing improvement of services and to enable us to report this information to our registering authority. Your assistance in gathering this survey data is greatly appreciated.

## **Legislative and Regulatory Responsibilities**

Smart Training & Consulting Group is required to operate in accordance with the law. This means we comply with the requirements of legislative and regulatory requirements. The following legislation is a list of the Acts that Smart Training & Consulting Group has recognised it has compliance responsibilities to. They also represent obligations to you as a student whilst training with Smart Training & Consulting.

During your day-to-day work and when participating in training, you will need to be aware of the relevant legislation that may impact on your conduct and behaviour. The following is a list of the legislation that may generally apply to your day-to-day work and training. Further information on each is also available on their respective websites.

### **Australian Consumer Law**

As a student undertaking a vocational education and training course, you are protected under Australian Consumer Law and under State and Territory consumer protection laws. These protections include areas such as unfair contract terms, the consumer guarantees, to statutory a cooling-off period, and unscrupulous sales practices.

### **Work Health and Safety Act 2011**

The main object of this Act is to provide for a balanced and nationally consistent framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces. The WHS Act protects workers and other persons against harm to their health, safety and welfare through the elimination or minimisation of risks arising from work or from types of substances or plant.

### **Privacy Act 1988**

The Privacy Act is supported by the Australian Privacy Principles which came into effect on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The object of Australian Privacy Principles is to ensure businesses and government agencies manage personal information in an open and transparent way.

### **Disability Discrimination Act 1992**

Particularly Section 5 - Disability Discrimination

(1) For the purposes of this Act, a person (discriminator) discriminates against another person (aggrieved person) on the grounds of a disability of the aggrieved person if, because of the aggrieved person's disability, the discriminator treats or proposes to treat the aggrieved person less favourably than, in circumstances that are the same or are not materially different, the discriminator treats or would treat a person without the disability.

For the purposes of subsection (1), circumstances in which a person treats or would treat another person with a disability are not materially different because of the fact that different accommodation or services may be required by the person with a disability.

### **Sex Discrimination Act 1984**

The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 is an important Australian law that promotes equality and protects individuals, including students, from discrimination based on sex and related characteristics.

### **Age Discrimination Act 2004**

The Age Discrimination Act 2004 is another key piece of Australian legislation that protects people, including students, from being treated unfairly because of their age.

### **Racial Discrimination Act 1975**

This Act gives effect to Australia's obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

### **Copyright Act 1968**

The Copyright Act 1968 is an important Australian law that protects original works and creative materials from being copied, shared, or used without permission.

### **Fair Work Act 2009**

The main objectives of this Act are to provide a balanced framework for cooperative and productive workplace relations that promote national economic prosperity and social inclusion for all Australians.

### **National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011**

This legislation provides that basis for the regulation of Registered Training Organisations in Australia. The legislation provides the basis for the establishment of the National VET Regulator who are the registration authority for RTOs.

## Appendix a. Local Support Services

Please note this list is not exhaustive- please contact Smart Training Staff for more guidance

<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Name of Service</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>	<b>Services Available</b>
Housing Crisis	Hunter Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Advice line	4969 7666	Advice for renters and boarders
	Sanctuary Place (Mission Australia)	0401 020 400	They offer shared accommodation to people above 18. Not co-mingled. Closest homes are Farley, Maitland and Thornton
	Carrie's Place	4993 3400 carriesplace.org.au	Support for individuals dealing with domestic or family violence
Mental Health	Lifeline	13 11 14	Anonymous phone counselling services
	NSW Mental Health Line	1800 011 511	Anonymous phone counselling services
	Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467	Anonymous phone counselling services
Food	Salvation Army	(02) 8775 7988 salvationarmy.org.au	Access to Low-cost groceries & meals
	Food War Inc.	(02) 4966 2987	Low-cost groceries for pension/benefit card holders.
Legal aid	Legal Aid	1300 888 529 legalaid.nsw.gov.au	Legal advice and support
	Hunter Community Legal Centre	4040 9120 hunterclc.com.au	Legal advice and support