



Student Handbook



THE BENCHMARK GROUP
excellence in education

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Welcome to The Benchmark Group

The Benchmark Group is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO. 21824) specialising in the development and delivery of nationally accredited skills programs and qualifications.

As an RTO working in the health sector, our focus is on the delivery of programs designed to provide students with the opportunity to expand their skills and careers. We concentrate on skills and knowledge that can be immediately implemented in a vocational context. Skills learnt today can be used tomorrow.

The Benchmark Group have extensive experience as a national training provider, delivering culturally appropriate, accredited training to a range of primary healthcare professionals working in regional, rural and remote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health settings.



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) registered with Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), The Benchmark Group has an obligation to ensure the quality of the nationally recognised training and assessment we deliver, including nationally accredited courses and nationally recognised qualifications.

We must comply at all times with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* which are part of the VET Quality Framework.

AUSTRALIAN SKILLS QUALITY AUTHORITY (ASQA)

ASQA uses the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* to ensure nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment across Australia's VET system. Compliance with the Standards is a requirement for all ASQA registered training organisations. Information on ASQA and the VET Quality Framework are available at www.asqa.gov.au.

AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (AQF)

The AQF is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework. Information about the AQF is available from www.aqf.edu.au.

NATIONALLY RECOGNISED TRAINING

Nationally recognised training is any program or training leading to vocational qualifications and credentials that are recognised across Australia. Only Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) can deliver nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications or statements of attainment.

Nationally recognised training courses are listed on www.training.gov.au. This site is the official national register of VET in Australia and is the authoritative source of information on training packages, qualifications, accredited courses, units of competency, skill sets and RTOs.

TRAINING PACKAGES AND ACCREDITED COURSES

Training packages are nationally endorsed standards and qualifications which have been developed to meet the needs of a specific industry or industry sector.

National endorsement ensures that the level attained for each qualification will be the same regardless of where in Australia that qualification was obtained.

Training packages are developed and constantly updated with input from industry representatives to make sure that the learning content and the standards set continue to be relevant and responsive to the needs of industry and the individual enterprise.

An accredited course fulfils a training need not addressed by a training package or addresses training in a new or emerging area. A course can be accredited as:

- A short course with a Statement of Attainment 'Course in' outcome, or
- A qualification recognised within the AQF, for example, a Certificate II or a Diploma.

An RTO can issue a nationally recognised qualification or Statement of Attainment following full or partial completion of an accredited course.

An accredited course can be made up of a combination of enterprise units of competency (developed by the course owner) and/or training package units of competency.

The Benchmark Group accredited courses are:

- Nationally recognised
- Meeting an established industry, enterprise, educational, legislative or community need
- Providing appropriate competency outcomes and a satisfactory basis for assessment
- Meeting national quality assurance requirements, and
- Where it leads to a formal qualification, aligned appropriately to the AQF.

COMPETENCY BASED TRAINING

The underlying principle of competency based training is that competency is recognised based on what a person can do or what they know not how long they have spent learning.

Competency is the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace.

Competency embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments. Outcomes from competency based training reflect workplace duties, working environments and performance requirements.

TRAINERS AND ASSESSORS

Our trainers and assessors meet the requirements of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*; they hold the current Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or equivalent, have extensive industry experience and current skills and knowledge in the subject matter being delivered, and in training and assessment practices.

THIRD PARTY ARRANGEMENTS

The Benchmark Group may have a written agreement with a third party to provide training and assessment services on our behalf.

Although third parties provide the training and assessment, The Benchmark Group is fully responsible for the quality and standard of those services.

Students enrol directly with The Benchmark Group; students will be notified prior to enrolment if services will be provided under a third party arrangement. Students will receive their Certificate and/or Statement of Attainment directly from The Benchmark Group.

The responsibility of student support also lies with The Benchmark Group; further information regarding student support is available in this handbook.

Students undertaking training with a third party provider, on behalf of The Benchmark Group have the same rights and obligations as the students completing their training directly with The Benchmark Group. This includes the right to make a complaint or appeal a decision about services being provided by third party providers on our behalf.

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES

We are obliged to let you know that should The Benchmark Group cease to trade for any reason we will work with the regulatory authorities to meet our regulatory obligations which includes transferring your student records to an alternative provider.

Where there are any changes to agreed services, including in relation to any new third-party arrangements or a change in ownership or changes to existing third-party arrangements, students will be notified of the changes and the impact on them as soon as practicably possible.

PRIVACY NOTICE

Under the *Data Provision Requirements 2012*, The Benchmark 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 your application form and your training activity data) may be used by The Benchmark Group for statistical, regulatory and research purposes. The Benchmark Group may disclose your personal information for these purposes to

- Commonwealth and State or Territory government departments and authorised agencies; and
- NCVER.

Personal information that has been disclosed to NCVER may be used or disclosed by NCVER for the following purposes:

- populating authenticated VET transcripts;
- facilitating statistics and research relating to education, including surveys and data linkage;
- pre-populating RTO student enrolment forms;
- 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 receive a student survey which may be administered by a government department or NCVER employee, agent or third party contractor or other authorised agencies. Please note 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* (Cth), the National VET Data Policy and all NCVER policies and protocols (including those published on NCVER's website at www.ncver.edu.au).

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The Benchmark Group complies with all relevant Commonwealth and State or Territory legislative and regulatory requirements pertaining to training and assessment and business practices at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, demonstrating compliance with VET legislation, Human Rights Legislation at a federal level and Equal Opportunity and Discrimination legislation at a state level.

Students are provided with information regarding changes in legislation and regulatory requirements that affects their participation in vocational education and training services provided.

TRAINING GUARANTEE

The Benchmark Group will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all students receive the full training services paid for at all times, including but not limited to training and assessment, assessment only, recognition of prior learning or short courses.

In the unlikely event of The Benchmark Group being unable to fulfil its commitment to provide a course at the agreed date it will offer the student a full refund or re-schedule the course. The Benchmark Group takes a collaborative approach with students and provides support to facilitate the successful completion of their course within agreed timeframes.

WHAT WE EXPECT

Students enrolled in The Benchmark Group courses should adhere to the following principles:

- Display a commitment to learning and to achieving success
- Be responsible and accountable for their own learning, behaviour and decisions
- Actively participate in all workshop activities and learning experiences
- Attend all scheduled sessions and be punctual at all times
- Complete all online assessments and workplace practice activities
- Work in harmony and respect the rights and opinions of staff and other students
- Treat others as they themselves would like to be treated
- Use acceptable language at all times.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD EXPECT

The Benchmark Group is committed to providing all students with an inclusive, safe learning environment where they feel welcomed and respected.

The Benchmark Group will at all times conduct its dealing with students in a fair and equitable manner, complying with relevant legislation in order to ensure equitable outcomes for both The Benchmark Group and its students.

ACCESSIQ

accessIQ is a bespoke online student administration and learning management system; it represents an intuitive end-to-end solution for managing a student's learning journey from enrolment to completion.

It allows students to:

- Track progress, enrolments and waitlists
- Edit saved answers and review before submitting
- Study anywhere, at anytime and on any device.

APPLICATION PROCESS

As part of the application process you are required to provide information to assist The Benchmark Group in determining your eligibility for the course.

Eligibility is based on the provision of personal information and meeting the entry requirements of the course as outlined on the website and course brochures.

You will receive an email notifying you of your successful application; the email will include all course details including dates, times and location.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for a course at The Benchmark Group you must be able to meet minimum Language, Literacy and Numeracy levels, qualification and vocational requirements.

Further information regarding individual course entry requirements can be obtained from course brochures and The Benchmark Group website at www.benchmarkgroup.com.au.

UNIQUE STUDENT IDENTIFIER

A Unique Student Identifier (USI) is a reference number issued by the Australian Government to all students completing nationally accredited training. A USI is made up of numbers and letters that creates a lifetime record of nationally recognised training.

The Benchmark Group is obligated by law to collect USI's for all students completing accredited training and cannot issue a certificate or statement of attainment unless we have a valid USI or a notice of exemption from the USI register.

Information about exemptions for individuals is available at <https://www.usi.gov.au/training-organisations/training-organisation-requirements/exemptions-individuals/how-apply>

The USI Initiative is underpinned by the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*, the *Student Identifiers Regulation 2014* and the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*.

CREDIT TRANSFER

Credit Transfer may be claimed for one or more units of competency relating to a vocational qualification to enable an individual to forego training and have their competencies recognised.

Credit Transfers can be granted under any of the following circumstances:

- Under the principles of National Recognition, a student is granted an automatic credit for any unit that they have successfully completed at any other RTO
- When the unit has exactly the same code and title
- When a unit code and/or title differs, and equivalency has been determined

To apply, you will need to complete the Application for Credit Transfer Form and submit it as part of your application. You will need to attach certified copies of transcripts from your previous study.

There is no charge to apply for Credit Transfer. Contact The Benchmark Group for more information.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process that assesses the competency/s of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning.

RPL can give you a full or part qualification. It can reduce the amount of time you need to study, by recognising what you already know. It can also be used to identify the training you need to complete a qualification or provide a pathway to a higher qualification.

To apply you will need to complete an RPL Application and Evidence Kit. The RPL process involves gathering evidence to demonstrate skills, knowledge and experience, responding to questions, completing tasks and may include observation in the workplace.

Fees are applicable for Recognition of Prior Learning and you will be advised of these fees upon contacting us.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY (LLN)

Where a student's LLN levels are identified as being lower than the specified requirements for the course, The Benchmark Group will offer the student assistance throughout the course.

Assessors will also monitor student assessment submissions for any LLN issues.

Where a trainer identifies LLN issues for a student that significantly impact upon the student's ability to complete the course, the trainer will discuss with the student the support that can be given.

Strategies and any actions to be taken to assist the student are documented on an individual Learning Support Plan. The Learning Support Plan is retained by the trainer until the end of the course and will be used to monitor the student throughout the training.

Where support needs go beyond what can be met with individual mentoring and reasonable adjustment during the training and assessment process, The Benchmark Group may refer the student to external support; additional support may occur on a fee for service basis.

FEES AND CHARGES

Fee Protection

In some circumstances, The Benchmark Group may collect a fee in excess of \$1500 prior to a student commencing study.

To protect the student fee, The Benchmark Group holds an unconditional financial guarantee from the ANZ Bank, for an amount that has been determined to be in excess of the total amount of prepaid fees held by The Benchmark Group in excess of the threshold prepaid fee amount for each student for services to be provided.

Cooling off Period

A cooling off period is a safeguard designed to give students the opportunity to change their mind about a purchase or agreement they have made. Cooling off periods refer to a specified time frame during which a consumer can legally withdraw from a contract or agreement with little or no penalty.

The Benchmark Group provides students with a 3-day cooling off period. This means that if a student accepts an offer of a place and pays The Benchmark Group the relevant course fees before the course start date, and then changes their mind (for any reason), a full refund of course fees paid to date will be provided. Notification of cancellation must be in writing.

Biosecurity Amendment

In January 2020, the Australian government amended the national Biosecurity Act to include COVID-19 as a quarantinable disease. In light of the potential infection risks of COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus 2019) in the community, The Benchmark Group may experience course cancellations.

If it is necessary to cancel or postpone a course as a result of biosecurity concerns, all students will retain their registration and alternative arrangements will be made to transfer the registration to an alternative course. In this instance, no refund will be provided.

The cancellation and refund policy does not cover disinclination to attend a course, where a student is disinclined to attend for reasons associated with biosecurity. In some instances, we are happy to support reasonable requests for refunds in writing.

The Benchmark Group reserves the right to cancel a course without notice, at their own discretion. No additional refund will be provided in addition to course fee regardless of circumstances.

If a student cancels their registration for reasons other than detailed in the above Biosecurity Amendment clause; they will need to provide notice in writing prior to the commencement of the course. Should notification be received 14 days or more prior to the course commencing, a refund of 90% of your course fee will be provided. Should notification be received less than 14 days prior to the course commencing, no refund will be provided.

Online learning

If a student cancels their registration and is yet to commence the online activity, a 90% refund will be provided. Once assessments have been commenced and/or assessed, students will be eligible for a maximum 25% refund of the fee paid at the time of registration.

If cancelled, completed assessments will remain on the student's console and any outstanding assessments will be removed. In the event that a student wishes to recommence a cancelled course, the full fee will apply.

Transfers

If a student is unable to attend a course, a substitute student may take their place at no additional cost but must complete an enrolment form prior to attending. Enrolled students who fail to attend without notification will not be entitled to a refund.

Transfers to other courses can be organised where appropriate. Please provide notice in writing at least 14 days prior to the commencement of the course to allow time for transfer.

Appropriate financial arrangements are in place to guarantee the refund of course fees when:

- The course is cancelled or discontinued, with or without notice; or
- The customer has an acceptable reason for discontinuing the course (e.g. medical).

Alternatively, a substitute course or date may be offered and mutually agreed on.

If for any reason it is necessary to cancel a course and a suitable transfer to an alternative course cannot be made, you will receive a full refund of fees paid.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

Locations

The Benchmark Group delivers courses throughout metropolitan, rural and remote areas in all states and territories of Australia.

Delivery Modes

The Benchmark Group uses a blended delivery model, combining face-to-face classroom learning with in class activities, self-directed learning, virtual classrooms and access to resources via accessIQ. Some courses are delivered as self-directed online learning and assessment.

Face to Face

Face to face delivery may include, trainer presentations and demonstration, group discussions, and simulated practical in class activities where workplace conditions and practices are created.

Workplace safety

The Benchmark Group has implemented Workshop Safety Guidelines to ensure we do not compromise the health or safety of our team and students.

The Benchmark Group has developed a set of COVID-19 Workshop Safety Guidelines that are regularly updated in line with current health advice. Staff and trainers are regularly briefed around any changes to the guidelines and all students will be provided with a copy of the current COVID-19 Workshop Safety Guidelines prior to attending any workshop. All staff, trainers and students will be reminded of the importance of not attending training if they are unwell.

In Class Activities/Simulated Environment

Skills are taught and assessed in a simulated environment prior to any workplace skills activities being undertaken by the student.

Simulated environments reflect workplace and industry conditions in primary healthcare, including but not limited to, general practice, specialist clinics, emergency departments, and rural and remote healthcare clinics.

Self-Directed Learning

Students may be required to undertake self-paced theoretical study, self-directed research and self-study to revise and reinforce areas of knowledge.

Resources

Students have access to all course materials, assessment resources and additional readings in the Resource Library on accessIQ. Relevant learning materials, including course workbooks and student companions, and required equipment are also provided in the classroom.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the demonstration of the specified skills and knowledge to the required level. The purpose of assessment is to confirm that an individual can perform the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed in the relevant endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards.

Assessment is 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.

It is all about collecting enough evidence to show that the student is competent in the skills and knowledge specified by the nationally endorsed unit of competency.

To be assessed as competent, we ensure students can demonstrate their:

- Ability to perform relevant tasks in a variety of workplace or simulated workplace situations
- Understanding of what they are doing, and why, when performing tasks
- Ability to integrate performance with understanding, to show they are able to adapt to different contexts and environments.

Assessment Methods

Assessment methods include but are not limited to:

- Observation in a simulated environment
- Practical demonstration (classroom activities)
- Case studies and role plays

- Scenarios
- Oral and/or written questioning
- Interviews
- Workplace Observed Practice (Third Party Reports)

Reasonable Adjustment

Reasonable adjustment refers to measures or actions taken to provide a learner or candidate for assessment with the same educational opportunities as everyone else. It may involve the use of alternative methods and practices that demonstrate flexibility, without diminishing the integrity of the unit of competency.

Refer to the Reasonable Adjustments section in this handbook for further information.

Evidence Gathering

Assessment must be conducted over a period of time to ensure a sufficient range of current, valid, reliable and authentic quality evidence is gathered. The assessment evidence gathered must facilitate reliable, consistent and valid judgements on student performance.

Assessment Outcomes

Each assessment task will be given an outcome of either Satisfactory (S) or Not Satisfactory (NS). You must complete all tasks for a unit satisfactorily to achieve an overall outcome of Competent (C). If one or more of your tasks are assessed as Not Satisfactory (the assessment does not produce enough evidence to demonstrate the requirements), you will be given an overall outcome for the unit of Not Competent (NC).

Validation of Assessment Outcomes

Validation is undertaken to ensure the continuous improvement of The Benchmark Group's assessment system; the assessment tools, processes and outcomes.

When validating assessment outcomes we focus on the judgements made by assessors to ensure that the same standards are applied to all assessment results within the same unit, regardless of the delivery mode or location.

Completed assessments are randomly chosen for validation. The outcomes of the validation do not affect your original result.

Assessment Attempts

Students are given three opportunities to demonstrate competency in each skills activity prior to performing any workplace practice.

Where a student does not achieve competency in one or more of the simulated classroom skills

activities, the assessor will organise for the student to undertake further education and skills training prior to reassessment; this could be on the same day or another suitably agreed time.

Resubmission

Further evidence for assessment might be required if the student has partially completed the assessments and some of the work/assignments can be corrected or completed for resubmission.

To be eligible for resubmission, the student must participate in learning and classroom activities and undertake the given assessment tasks.

Resubmission is an informal process and can be arranged between the student and assessor through mutual understanding. Assessors may allow up to two resubmission attempts before moving on to the next step.

Re-Assessment

If a student does not qualify for resubmission, or is still deemed NC after the resubmission, they will need to go through the reassessment process. To qualify for re-assessment the student must have completed and submitted the required assessments for the unit of competency. Re-assessment will occur only for those assessment tasks in which the student was deemed NC.

Re-assessment is a formal process and the assessor must record this on the student's record as a re-assessment.

If a student is still deemed NC after two re-assessments, the student will need to repeat the unit.

APPEALING ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

All students undertaking courses or training programs offered by The Benchmark Group have the right to lodge appeals against decisions made by Benchmark Group assessors.

Please refer to the Complaints and Appeals section in this handbook for information about how to lodge an appeal. Information can also be accessed via The Benchmark Group website at <https://www.benchmarkgroup.com.au/complaints-and-assessment-appeals>

STUDENT SUPPORT

The Benchmark Group will identify any support individual students need prior to commencement and provide access to the required support throughout their training.

All learners are supported in a manner that enables them to achieve their full potential and success in their training outcome.

All learners are provided with opportunities to develop and successfully gain skills, knowledge and experience through education and training. This includes advice and access to educational and support services as necessary for individual students to meet the requirements of the training product they are enrolled in.

Internal Support

The Benchmark Group provides students with access to a clinical hotline for ongoing clinical support and a qualified assessor to assist students with any queries regarding their learning and assessment.

Students can contact The Benchmark Group for more support regarding enrolments, payment of fees, extensions and cancellations.

External Support

If a student requires additional support with their studies, work or life, The Benchmark Group may recommend an appropriate external agency. These agencies include, but are not limited to:

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.

Website: www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au
Phone: 1300 655 506

Lifeline

Anyone can call Lifeline. Lifeline service offers a counselling service that respects everyone's right to be heard, understood and cared for. They also provide information about other support services that are available in communities around Australia. If you feel that you might need telephone counselling, you can call about anything that might be troubling you.

Website: www.lifeline.org.au
Phone: 13 11 14

Beyond Blue

Beyond Blue provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live.

Website: www.beyondblue.org.au
Phone: 1300 224 636

Fair Work Australia

Fair Work Australia is the national workplace relations tribunal. It is an independent body with power to carry out a range of functions relating to minimum wages, employment conditions, termination of employment and other workplace matters.

Website: www.fwa.gov.au

Phone: 1300 799 675

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Reasonable adjustment refers to measures or actions taken to provide a learner with the same educational opportunities as everyone else. It may involve the use of alternative methods and practices that demonstrate flexibility, without diminishing the integrity of the unit of competency.

The Benchmark Group has an obligation to provide reasonable adjustment to ensure maximum participation of students with disability.

Its purpose is to make it possible for students with disability to:

- Participate fully, with the same learning opportunities as learners without disability
- Have the same opportunity to perform and complete assessments as those without disability.

Reasonable adjustment in teaching, learning and assessment activity lessens the impact of an individual's disability on their capacity to learn.

Reasonable adjustment does not give students with disability an advantage over others. Nor does it change course standards or outcomes or guarantee success.

Reasonable adjustment can involve:

- Making learning materials and assessment tools more accessible e.g. use of large print
- Adapting physical facilities, environment and/or equipment e.g., allowing for wheelchair access; allowing note-taking support
- Making changes to the assessment arrangements e.g. allowing extra time to complete a task
- Making changes to the way evidence for assessment is gathered e.g., allowing a verbal response to questioning rather than written

Any reasonable adjustment made will not compromise the integrity of the learning or assessment process.

ISSUING CERTIFICATES AND STATEMENTS OF ATTAINMENT

On the successful completion of your course, The Benchmark Group will issue you with either a qualification, statement of attainment, or certificate of attendance depending on the course you have completed. This will include your name, completion date, the name of the qualification, any unit of competency or course achieved and a unique certificate identification number.

All AQF certification documentation is issued through accessIQ. Certification documentation is generated in PDF format and saved to your accessIQ account.

You will be sent an email notifying you of your achievement and how to access your certification documentation.

You can download certification documentation from your 'My Achievements' page in your accessIQ Student Console.

A hardcopy version of certification documentation will be sent to an individual student upon request.

Nationally recognised qualifications are issued when you are deemed competent in a course that is recognised throughout Australia.

Nationally recognised statements of attainment are issued when you are competent in units of competency, but less than the amount for a full qualification.

Certificates of attendance are issued for industry training that is useful for your employment, but not part of the nationally recognised training system.

The certificates issued by The Benchmark Group contain appropriate levels of security to ensure that they cannot be fraudulently copied.

REVOCATION OF A QUALIFICATION OR STATEMENT OF ATTAINMENT

The Benchmark Group may revoke a qualification or statement of attainment should it be deemed that it was obtained as a result of misleading or deceptive conduct, issued in error by The Benchmark Group, or as directed by ASQA.

In cases where an alleged fraud or dishonesty has been substantiated, the CEO may revoke the qualification and require the return of the qualification, the record of results or the statement of attainment (whichever applies) if shown that the qualification was improperly obtained.

Qualifications or statements of attainment may also be revoked if the participant is unable to provide full payment for the completed course, on the basis that all reasonable efforts have been made to receipt payment. A final notice of revocation will be issued, providing a period of fourteen days to remit payment for the full amount.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRY ENDORSEMENT

Courses delivered by The Benchmark Group may be endorsed by professional bodies and industry specific points or recognition may be awarded in some circumstances. In the event that your course is endorsed to achieve points or recognition, you must meet the minimum required activity as determined by the endorsing authority.

As a general guide, one hour of active learning equates to one hour of Continuous Professional Development (CPD). It is the responsibility of the individual student to calculate how many hours of active learning have been completed. The hours of active learning estimated above should act as a guide to CPD hours.

RECORD KEEPING AND ACCESS TO RECORDS

The Benchmark Group will keep a record of your completion and result in a secure, confidential manner, including copies of any relevant qualifications, statements of attainment or certificates of attendance you have obtained in line with the storage requirements detailed by ASQA.

As the student, you are able to access this information at any time on request. When you contact The Benchmark Group, you will be required to establish your identity by answering some questions regarding your original registration. Please allow up to five working days for The Benchmark Group to retrieve your documents from our archive system.

FEEDBACK

As part of our continuous improvement program, we constantly seek feedback about the courses, training and services we provide.

Evaluation forms will be provided for you to complete at the conclusion of your course. In addition, you may be randomly requested to provide feedback at any stage during or after your participation.

The aim of these evaluations is to allow you, the student to have an input into the workings of The Benchmark Group and to help us achieve a better and more efficient service.

ACCESS AND EQUITY

The Benchmark Group applies access and equity principles to all aspects of its operations, promoting equal opportunity for all learners to participate in our training and assessment services in an education environment free from discrimination and harassment in accordance with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* and state and federal legislation.

All students will be treated with equal merit and given equal access to all available courses appropriate to their needs.

Whilst giving equal access, it is recognised that client eligibility for services may be influenced by:

- Contract requirements
- Entry and prerequisite requirements
- Availability of services.

The Benchmark Group ensures all learners have access to the level of support required to enable them to reach their full potential without it causing unjustifiable hardship to the organisation.

All learners are provided with opportunities to develop and successfully gain skills, knowledge and experience through education and training.

This includes advice and access to educational and support services as necessary for individual students to meet the requirements of the training product they are enrolled in.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

It is unlawful to discriminate against a person or treat a person unfairly based on their personal characteristics.

The Benchmark Group is committed to providing an environment which is free from all forms of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, and harassment. The Benchmark Group will not tolerate any behaviour that harms, intimidates, threatens, victimises, offends, degrades or humiliates another person.

Learners must respect the rights of others and to treat other individuals fairly and not engage or encourage any form of discrimination or harassment. Any form of discrimination or harassment must be reported immediately to The Benchmark Group Chief Executive Officer via the Complaints and Appeals process. This process can be accessed on The Benchmark Group website.

Appropriate warning or disciplinary action will be taken against any learner where harassment or discrimination is found to have occurred. This may result in removal from the training program.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The Benchmark Group is committed to creating a fair and equitable organisational culture and will deal with any complaint or appeal in an effective and timely manner. All complaints and appeals received by The Benchmark Group will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement.

Students who undertake courses or training programs offered by The Benchmark Group have the right to lodge complaints about the service received or to lodge appeals against decisions made by Benchmark Group assessors.

Complaints may be made in relation to services, trainers, assessors, staff, a third party providing services on our behalf or other students. A student may also formally request a review of decisions including assessment decisions made by The Benchmark Group or third party providing services on our behalf.

Participants are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their trainer in an attempt to resolve their concern. If the participant's concerns or issues cannot be resolved in initial discussions, we would encourage them to consider a formal complaint.

The Benchmark Group ensures at all times that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process.

All complaints will be treated seriously and will be responded to quickly, impartially and confidentially.

All formal complaints and appeals will be treated as opportunities for improvement and will be reviewed as part of The Benchmark Group Continuous Improvement Process.

Further information regarding Complaints and Appeals can be obtained from our website at <https://www.benchmarkgroup.com.au/complaints-and-assessment-appeals>

PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

The Benchmark Group collects and stores personal information that is directly related to its business purpose and legal requirements in order to provide individuals nationally recognised training and assessment.

The Benchmark Group ensures each individual:

- Knows why their information is collected, how it will be used and who it will be disclosed to
- Is able to access their personal information upon request
- Does not receive unwanted direct marketing
- Can ask for personal information that is incorrect to be corrected
- Can make a complaint about The Benchmark Group if they consider that their personal information has been mishandled.

DATA COLLECTION

Personal information will be collected through course registration, enrolments forms, pre-enrolment, and training and assessment records.

The information we collect includes the AVETMISS 8 standard enrolment questions (whether on paper or electronic), any additional information provided to our staff verbally or otherwise and any information we may need to collect about individuals from third parties.

The types of personal information collected include:

- Personal and contact details
- Proof of identification
- Academic history
- Language Literacy and Numeracy proficiency for students
- Background information collected for statistical purposes about prior education, schooling, place of birth, disabilities, etc.
- Training, participation and assessment information
- Fees and payment information
- Information required for the verification and/or creation of a USI

USE OF DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

The personal information held about individuals will only be used to enable efficient student administration, provide information about training opportunities, issue statements of attainment and qualifications to eligible students, and to maintain accurate and detailed records of student course participation, progress and outcomes.

The Benchmark Group may need to disclose personal information to organisations and individuals that carry out functions on behalf of or in conjunction

with The Benchmark Group. These organisations may include ASQA and its auditors, the USI Register, the Department of Education and Training Victoria and NCVET. This includes personal details, contact details, course enrolment information, unit outcomes, AQF certification and statement issuance and information about training participation and progress.

The RTO will not disclose an individual's personal information to another person or organisation unless:

- They are aware that information of that kind is usually passed to that person or organisation
- The individual has given written consent
- The RTO believes on reasonable grounds that the disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to the life or health of the individual concerned or another person.
- The disclosure is required or authorised by, or under, law
- The disclosure is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law or of a law imposing a pecuniary penalty, or for the protection of public revenue.

Any person or organisation to which information is disclosed is not permitted to use or disclose the information for a purpose other than for which the information was supplied to them.

The Benchmark Group does not operate overseas, and therefore has no requirement to disclose personal information overseas.

DIRECT MARKETING

The Benchmark Group may use or disclose the personal information that it holds about an individual for the purpose of direct marketing, if:

- The personal information has been collected directly from an individual
- The individual would reasonably expect the organisation to use or disclose the personal information for that purpose
- The organisation provides a simple way for the individual to request not to receive direct marketing communications from the organisation (also known as 'opting out'), and
- The individual has not made such a request to the organisation

On each of our direct marketing communications, The Benchmark Group provides a prominent statement that the individual may request to opt out (unsubscribe) from future communications.

An individual may also request us not to use their personal information for the purpose of direct marketing at any time by contacting our office directly. Information will not be passed onto any third party marketing companies without the prior written consent of the individual.

SECURITY AND STORAGE OF INFORMATION

The Benchmark Group will store all records containing personal information securely and take all reasonable security measures to protect confidential personal information from misuse, interference and loss, and unauthorised access, modification or disclosure to avoid reputation damage and to avoid adversely impacting our students.

ACCESSING AND CORRECTION OF RECORDS

Individuals have the right to request to access or obtain a copy of the personal information that the RTO holds about them.

Requests to access or obtain a copy of the records held about an individual must be made using the Request to Access Records Form. The individual must prove their identity to be able to access their records.

There is no charge for an individual to access their records. Arrangements will be made within 10 days for the individual to access their records in the manner in which it was requested.

The Benchmark Group takes reasonable steps to correct personal information we hold, including upon request from an individual to do so, to ensure it is accurate, up-to-date, complete, relevant and not misleading, having regard for the purpose for which it is held.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Plagiarism by its definition is a form of cheating. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offences and may result in failure to achieve competency. It is important that students declare and cite all sources from which they have derived material and ideas, if not their own.

Examples of plagiarism that are not acceptable are:

- Submitting assessments substantially similar to, or copied from another student;

- Submitting assessments that use the exact words of another without using quotation marks and citing the original source;
- Presenting any work of another individual or group as one's own work

Cheating means seeking to obtain an unfair advantage in written assessments or practical work required to be submitted or completed by a student for assessment.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offences. The Benchmark Group works to prevent plagiarism and cheating by providing students with the following information during the enrolment process:

- Definitions and examples of plagiarism and cheating
- Appropriate referencing techniques and practice
- Tips to avoid plagiarism and cheating
- Consequences of plagiarism and cheating

Students sign a declaration acknowledging that the work that they have provided as part of their assessment is their own.

The Benchmark Group will monitor assessment tasks completed by students to detect plagiarism and cheating.

An assessor who believes that the action of a student may involve cheating or plagiarism should first establish the evidence to support their allegation.

To assist in the detection of plagiarism, The Benchmark Group may:

- Conduct verbal verification of written responses provided by a student in the completion of an assessment task

- Check with a third party or student's supervisor to corroborate information provided or confirm that a student has the required skills and knowledge relevant to a unit
- Use the Grammarly online plagiarism checker.

If there is evidence to support the involvement of cheating or plagiarism the incident will be noted on the student's assessment records and they may be asked to rewrite and resubmit their work.

Repeated incidents of plagiarism or cheating will subject the individual to disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may include:

- A written warning
- Failure to achieve competency
- Exclusion from attending courses
- Cancellation of course enrolment.

Disciplinary action is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The individual will be notified in writing of the disciplinary action to be taken.

CATERING AND HEALTHY EATING

The Benchmark Group recognises and values the importance of healthy eating in promoting people's health and wellbeing.

Where catering is provided for classroom training, preference will be given to local catering suppliers that offer healthier options. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander catering services will be sourced in the first instance.

The Benchmark Group will ensure special dietary requirements are accommodated in catering, including all cultural, religious, and food and health related needs such as intolerances and allergies. The Benchmark Group will ensure individuals are provided with an opportunity to request foods which meet their special dietary requirements.

The Benchmark Group education environments are alcohol free zones.

For Further information contact:

Level 1/176 Wellington Parade
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THEBENCHMARKGROUP
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