



BENCHMARK COLLEGE

Student Handbook

The following handbook outlines a range of information, including a summary of relevant policies and procedures, for all Benchmark College students.

www.benchmark.edu.au

1800 286 916

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Welcome

Welcome to Benchmark College. As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO Code 90274) with over 15 years of experience. Benchmark College is a domestic training provider registered through the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA); our organisation is committed to delivering high quality education that meets the needs of both students and industry.

Benchmark College delivers nationally recognised training, which includes:

| | |
|---|--|
| BSB20115 Certificate II in Business | BSB30415 Certificate III in Business Administration |
| BSB30115 Certificate III in Business | CHC30113 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care |
| CHC30115 Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) | SIR30216 Certificate III in Retail |
| TLI31616 Certificate III in Warehousing Operations | BSB40215 Certificate IV in Business |
| BSB40515 Certificate IV in Business Administration | SIR40316 Certificate IV in Retail Management |
| TLI41816 Certificate IV in Warehousing Operations | BSB51918 Diploma of Leadership and Management |
| CHC50113 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care | BSB50215 Diploma of Business |
| Short courses: First Aid – HLTAID003 Provide First Aid First Aid – HLTAID004 Provide an emergency first aid response in an education and care setting | |

At Benchmark College, we put each student's welfare and outcomes as our number one priority. Benchmark College aims to have a life changing impact on students' future lives and careers as well as being a positive influence on all those with whom we come in contact.

We do this by:

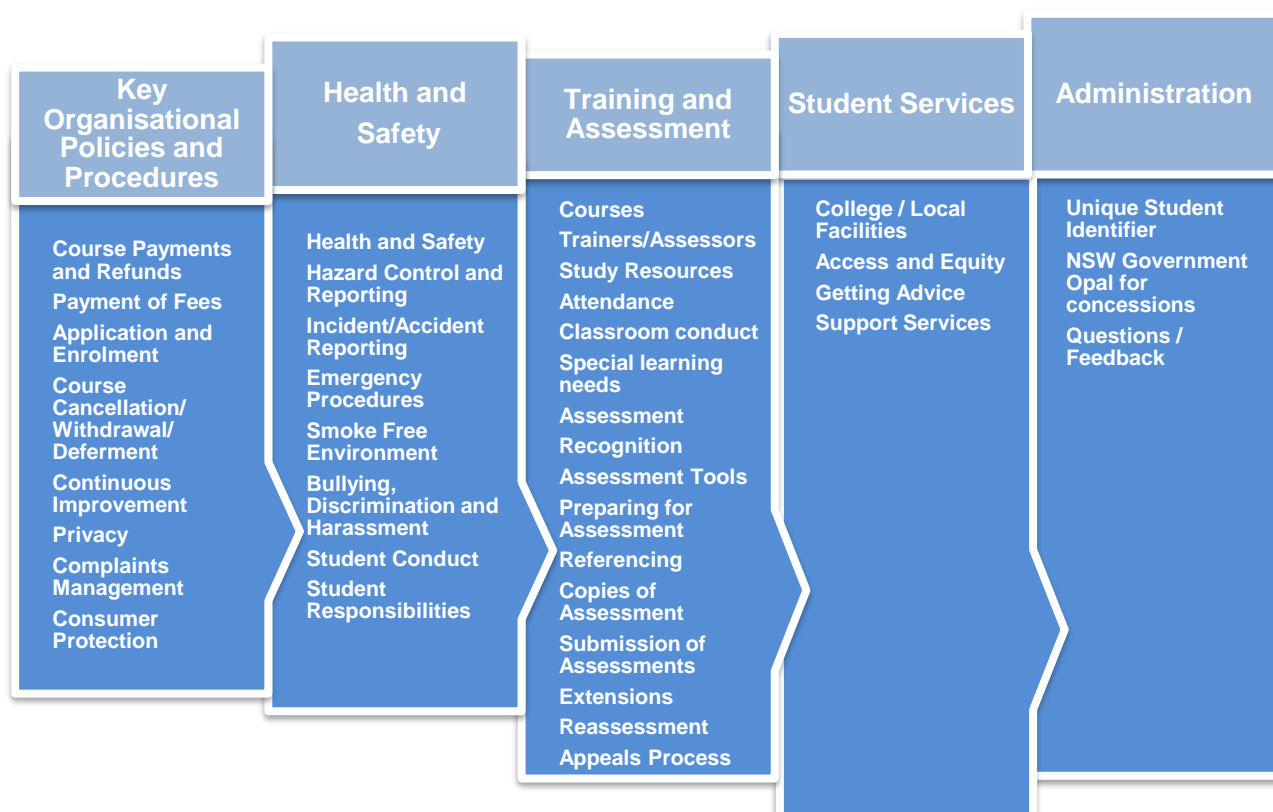
- Delivering training that is designed to be engaging, enjoyable, practical and transferrable to the workplace.
- Delivering quality training that encourages each student to apply their learning to real-life situations.
- Structuring training to achieve a focussed outcome that is linked to student and industry needs.
- Continually building our business in a systemic way that promotes teamwork, motivation and development.
- Ensuring that all our processes and systems are compliant with the '*Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*'. These standards are a component of the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) Quality Framework and are a requirement for all Registered Training Organisations under the National VET Regulator Act 2011. Students can find more information about these standards at: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2014L01377>

What is the purpose of the Student Handbook?



The following handbook provides a reference guide to Benchmark College training programs and processes. The document is divided into five sections, each designed to provide relevant information;

- to successfully complete the training
- to understand policies and procedures governing the issuing of the qualification
- to outline the rights and responsibilities of a Benchmark College student.



Students may need to refer to this handbook throughout the training. Any questions related to the training program or any of our policies and procedures, please contact the Trainer or the administration staff at Benchmark College for more information.

Contact Information

Phone: 1800 286 916 or 02 4722 3099
 Fax: 02 4722 3599
 Email: info@benchmark.edu.au
 Head Office: 144 Henry Street, PENRITH NSW 2750
 Postal Address: PO Box 4098, PENRITH NSW 2750
 Head Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9.00am-5.00pm (closed Public Holidays)
 Web: www.benchmark.edu.au



1. Key Organisational Policies and Procedures

It is important for students to be aware of the organisation's policies and procedures. This handbook summarises many of Benchmark College's formal policies and procedures, relating to students and student management. Students can access the full documents at www.benchmark.edu.au.

1.1 ADMISSION

Benchmark College is committed to ensuring that student selection and enrolment processes are fair and equitable and are consistent with workplace performance, competency level and Training Package requirements. Selection into our programs is based upon the applicant/student;

- Meeting pre-requisite qualifications or requirements and experience where required
- Obtaining a Unique Student Identifier (USI)
- Completing the required course application and enrolment forms
- Satisfying appropriate funding body eligibility criterion (if applicable)
- Completing a pre-enrolment quiz
- Meeting industry age requirements that may be in place for a particular course
- Agreement to abide by the organisation's policies and procedures
- Payment of required fees and charges.

For those students who believe they are unable to meet the specified requirements or may have an additional need please speak with Benchmark College to discuss alternative ways to reach the benchmark hours and to identify possible adjustments to training and work experience.

More information regarding the application and enrolment process is available from our website www.benchmark.edu.au.

1.1.1 UNIQUE STUDENT IDENTIFIER (USI)

From 1 January 2015 any new or continuing student must hold a unique student identifier (USI). For new or continuing students undertaking nationally recognised training, students need a USI to receive their qualification or statement of attainment. The USI is different to the enrolment number

The USI is a reference number made up of ten numbers and letters that:

- Creates a secure online record of the nationally recognised training and qualifications gained in Australia, from all training providers a student has undertaken recognised training with.
- Permits access to a student's training records and transcripts.
- Can be accessed online, anytime and anywhere.
- Is free and easy to create.
- Stays with the student for life.

There are two ways to create a USI:

a. The student creates a USI

This can be done by a student going to the Unique Student Identifier Website and following some simple steps. To create a USI, students will be required to visit <https://www.usi.gov.au/students/create-usi> and complete the online form with the following:

- Personal information – name, date of birth, gender, country of birth and town/city of birth etc.
- Contact Information – at least one method of contact e-mail, mobile or mail
- Form of ID: Either a Driver License, Medicare card, Australian Passport, Visa (with Non-Australian passport) for international students, Birth Certificate (Australian), Certificate of Registration by Descent, Citizenship Certificate, Immicard.

b. A USI is created and accessed on a student's behalf.

For Benchmark College to be able to create a USI on a person's behalf, students will need to complete a USI Application Consent form giving permission for Benchmark College to create their USI, the student will also need to include their personal information, contact information and acceptable forms of ID as mentioned above.

Please speak to a staff member or visit our website www.benchmark.edu.au for more information on the Unique Student Identifier.

1.1.2 SMART AND SKILLED

Smart and Skilled is a reform of the NSW Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. It's helping people in NSW get the skills they need to find a job and advance their careers. This training is subsidised by the NSW Government.

Students can find more information about the Smart and Skilled program on the Smart and Skilled website: <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/>

Smart and Skilled provides eligible students with:

- An entitlement to government-subsidised training up to and including Certificate III.
- Government funding for higher-level courses (Certificate IV and above) in targeted priority areas.

Benchmark College is an approved Smart and Skilled Training provider.

Each Smart and Skilled program provides subsidises to eligible students who meet the enrolment criteria and conditions, as set by the Fee Administration Policy and Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines.

1.1.3 SMART AND SKILLED NOTIFICATION OF ENROLMENT

a. Pre-enrolment information:

Prior to enrolment students will be provided with the following information:

- Information about the Course, course location and course dates
- Information about USI or request Benchmark College to apply on student's behalf
- Student rights and responsibilities
- Smart and Skilled eligibility criteria and evidence which will need to be provided

- Student fees, other costs, payment options and evidence required if student want to apply for concession and exemption of student fee
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer (CT) information
- Information on Consumer protection, fee protection and refunds
- Information on complaints and appeals
- Work experience
- Student Support
- Contact details for any support services provided and the procedures required if students want to defer or discontinue training
- Pre-enrolment (LLN) quiz

b. Check eligibility:

Upon receipt of the Course Application form, Benchmark College will check whether a student is eligible for a Smart and Skilled program.

Students can also check out their eligibility on the Eligibility Checker on the Smart and Skilled website at <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/are-you-eligible> and use the course finder which can also give an indication of the student fee for an approved qualification.

To be eligible for Smart and Skilled subsidised training a student must meet the following criteria:

- Aged 15 years or older.
- No longer at school or equivalent (A home schooled student is eligible).
- Live or work in New South Wales (NSW).
- Be an Australian citizen, Permanent Australian Resident, Humanitarian Visa holder, New Zealand Citizen or be an Asylum Seeker or Refugee who holds one of the Visas listed below.
 - Permanent Visa, Temporary Visa and Bridging Visa holders to be checked against the Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy and The Dept. of Immigration and Border Protection's Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO)

c. Identity evidence required:

Students must provide evidence to Benchmark College to provide evidence of living address, Australian Citizenship or Permanent Residency or Immigration status, in the form of the following examples:

- Commonwealth or NSW Government issued document e.g. Drivers Licence and Proof of age card.
- Green Medicare Card;
- Current Australian Passport or New Zealand Passport
- Australian Birth Certificate
- Certificate of Australian Citizenship
- Certificate of Registration by Descent.
- Immicard
- Pensioner Concession card.

If a student does not live or work in NSW, the student can produce an employer issued document confirming employment in NSW.

If a student is home schooled, the student can provide a current certificate of home-schooling registration.

d. Fee Categories:

Please be aware that the student fees are set by the NSW Department of Industry. Students will be informed at the information session of all potential fees, schedule of payments, refunds for withdrawal or deferment.

First or subsequent qualification

The student fee will differ depending on whether a student has completed other qualifications since leaving school and not applying for concession or exemption. Students who hold other qualifications could be charged the subsequent student fee.

Concession or Fee Exemption

For Qualifications up to and including Certificate IV, students could be entitled to a concession or exemption of fees if a student receives a Commonwealth Benefit or are the dependent of someone on such a recognised benefit.

- Concession: Welfare recipient: Centrelink Evidence – proof of benefit or Centrelink Evidence – dependent child of a specified welfare recipient
- Exemption: Aboriginal descent: Participant declaration and signature or Community identification
- Concession/Exemption: Disability: Centrelink Evidence: proof of Disability Support Pension, also Documentary evidence of training support needs due to disability. A letter or statement from: A medical practitioner, an appropriate government agency or Relevant specialist allied health professional or Centrelink evidence – dependent child of a recipient of a Disability Support Pension
- Exemption: Social Housing recipient (aged 15 – 30): Participant declaration and signature also Evidence of Commonwealth Welfare Recipient Status.

Traineeship fees

- From 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023 the NSW Government under the Fee Free Traineeships Initiative is removing traineeship fees for those who are eligible under Smart and Skilled. An individual is entitled to no more than three fee free traineeship commencements under this initiative. Eligible trainees that commence their training on or after 1 January 2020 will not pay the student fee. The following four groups are eligible:
 - a. Trainees who commence subsidised training for the first time on or after 1 January 2020.
 - b. Trainees whose traineeship is cancelled and subsequently recommence a traineeship in the same vocation with a different employer and recommence subsidised training on or after 1 January 2020.
 - c. Trainees whose traineeship is cancelled and subsequently commence a new traineeship in a new vocation with the same/different employer and commence in subsidised training on or after 1 January 2020.
 - d. A Trainee who has completed a traineeship and is undertaking a subsequent traineeship and is commencing the subsidised training in the subsequent traineeship on or after 1 January 2020.
- The student fee for a qualification delivered to a trainee under a traineeship pathway is lower than for a non-traineeship pathway. Student fees for traineeship qualifications are capped at \$1,000.

e. Declarations:

Students will also be required to sign the following documents:

- Consent to Use and Disclosure of Personal Information as outlined in the Course Application form – for Benchmark College to disclose a student's Personal Information to the NSW Department of Industry and other Government agencies for them to use.
 - please read it carefully before signing the declaration as part of the enrolment process
 - If the Student does not provide their consent, Benchmark College cannot proceed with the notification of enrolment process.
- USI Application Consent form for Benchmark College to apply for USI on a student's behalf

f. Credit Transfer and RPL:

If applying for Credit Transfer or RPL for any units, it is best to apply before commencing the course as this will reduce unnecessary training and possibly affect the student fee. Students can still apply during the course and may be eligible for a refund.

g. Notification to Department:

Details are to be entered in to the Smart and Skilled Provider Calculator to validate eligibility, concession or exemption requests, details of credit transfer and recognition of prior learning attained and to generate details of the fee applicable with a quote being generated.

h. Completion of the Notification of Enrolment Process will result in a student's Commitment ID, the Notification of Enrolment Report will be generated and a copy kept on their student file, students will also be given a copy of the Notification of Enrolment Report and the details of the fees applicable.

i. Training Plan: We will discuss the training plan during enrolment, students will need to acknowledge and sign the agreement and be given a copy of the completed Training Plan.

Any questions with regard to the Notification of Enrolment Process, please do not hesitate to contact Benchmark College on 1800 286 916.

1.2 COURSE PAYMENTS

Course fees will vary depending on the course students are enrol into. Course fees are determined on how the course is delivered and its duration. Fees are generally for items such as tuition and enrolment fees, course materials, textbooks, student services and other related training and assessment services. Click [HERE](#) to view the Benchmark College NSW Fee Schedule.

Under Smart and Skilled, student fees are determined on eligibility criteria and the student fees are set by the NSW Department of Industry. Students can check their eligibility for Smart and Skilled training at <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/are-you-eligible>. Students can get an estimate of the fee for their preferred course in the course finder <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/sands/find-a-course>.

1.2.1 PERSONAL COSTS

Students need to be aware of the other costs which are not covered by the Student fee. These costs relate to:

- Lunch and drinks
- Travel to class and work experience
- Work related clothing for work experience e.g. shirt, black pants and shoes.

Should students have any questions or need further information, please speak to the administration staff.

1.2.2 FEE PROTECTION

Benchmark College is aware of our obligations as Registered Training Organisation to protect any student fees paid in advance. This is achieved by not collecting fees in advance of more than \$1,500.

1.3 PAYMENT OF FEES

To ensure students are well informed of the financial considerations of their enrolment, Benchmark College provides fee information to each student prior to enrolment. If students have any questions in relation to fees and charges, please contact the administration team for more information on 1800 286 916.

In general, the following payment methods are accepted: credit card (VISA, MasterCard), EFTPOS, Cheque, money order and direct deposit. VET Student Loans* may be available to eligible students for selected Diploma courses. *Fees and charges apply.

1.3.2 VET STUDENT LOANS¹

VET Student Loans commenced on 1 January 2017. This new student loans program replaces the VET FEE-HELP scheme, to give eligible students access to quality higher level VET qualifications, particularly those students who could not otherwise afford to pay upfront.

There are specific criteria students must meet to be eligible for a loan through VET Student Loans. Students must have been **assessed as academically suited** to undertake an eligible course and their FEE-HELP balance must be greater than zero. Please contact the College for more information on eligibility, or go to:

- www.education.gov.au/vet-student-loans
- <https://www.benchmark.edu.au/vet-student-loans>

Also, a student must be:

- An Australian citizen; or Hold a permanent humanitarian visa and usually reside in Australia; or Be a qualifying New Zealand citizen.
- Be studying an approved course delivered primarily at a campus in Australia.
- Apply to the government using the eCAF form and providing all relevant information.
- Meet the enrolment and loan application requirements.

¹ Australian Government, VET Student Loans, *Information for students*

A range of measures have been implemented that will affect students hoping to access income contingent loans to pay for their course fees.

Loan caps

- Eligible students will be entitled for loans up to a capped amount.
- Benchmark College may charge above this cap for a course, and if so, students will be expected to pay for the difference according to the Colleges payment arrangements.

Eligible courses and Training Providers

- Approved Diplomas are eligible for VET Student Loans that are linked to industry needs and employment outcomes.
- If students wish to access a loan to study a higher-level VET course, please select one of the eligible courses.
- A list of eligible courses will be published by the Government at www.education.gov.au/vet-student-loans and will be updated annually.

Repayment

- Repaying the loan is required when the income reaches the repayment threshold, via the Australian Taxation System. The threshold can be found at www.studyassist.gov.au

Engagement

- Students will be required to demonstrate they are progressing throughout the course. Students may be requested to complete a progression form three times in a calendar year during the length of the course in February, June and October. Students have two weeks to submit the progression form in the eCAF system to confirm their continuity as a genuine student.

Eligible students will be required to log in online and acknowledge that they accept the loan they will receive for the course. Any questions, concerns, or for more information regarding VET Student Loans contact the Department of Education and Training HELP Student Enquiry line on 1800 020 108 or email VETStudentLoans@education.gov.au

1.4 REPLACEMENTS AND COPIES

1.4.1 REPLACEMENT OF TEXT AND TRAINING WORKBOOKS

If students require replacement of issued text or training workbooks students will be liable for additional charges to cover the cost of the replacement. If students have purchased a textbook or training work booklets and subsequently cancel their enrolment, Benchmark College will not refund any monies.

1.4.2 CERTIFICATE REPRINTS

The fee to reproduce an issued Certificate or Transcript is \$40.00.

1.4.3 SCANNING STUDENT ASSESSMENT TASKS

Where a student has requested a copy of their assessment task after submission, the fee is \$10.00 for each unit of competency requested. Assessments will be emailed to students in soft copy only.

1.4.4 REPLACEMENT STUDENT CARDS

Where a student has lost or misplaced a Student Card issued by Benchmark College: The fee to issue a replacement card is \$40.00.

NOTE: The College reserves the right not to mark student assessments or to withhold results if there are fees outstanding.

1.5 COURSE CANCELLATION / WITHDRAWAL /DEFERMENT

If students are having difficulty with the training and are considering withdrawing or deferring, please speak to the Trainer/Assessor, the Training Manager or College Management as they can provide help and put a plan in place to support students with the goal to complete the course.

Benchmark College reserves the right to cancel a student's short course enrolment, when the student's agreed payments are not being maintained. Notification of nonattendance is required two (2) business days prior to the course unless a Doctors certificate is provided. A new fee may be required to be paid to attend the next course if the above requirements are not met, depending on the individual's circumstances. Students who have paid the course fee and who still do not attend without notification will not be eligible for a refund.

If a student needs to defer or suspend their studies, please complete a 'Withdrawal/Deferment Form'. For those enrolled in a Traineeship program the Apprenticeship Centre will need to be notified by the student of their intention to suspend a traineeship.

If a student is funded under NSW Department of Industry (Smart and Skilled), students may be able to defer their training for a period of no more than six months from the date the Withdrawal/Deferment Form is lodged with Benchmark College. There are fee implications of deferring subsidised training; Benchmark College will advise the student of these fees at the time of deferment. An enrolled student may only defer from subsidised training up to 12 months from the date of written notice to Benchmark College.

1.5.1 REFUNDS

Full details regarding the refund of course fees are provided in Benchmark College's Refund Policy, which is available at <https://www.benchmark.edu.au/policies---procedures>. We strongly encourage students to read this policy before deciding to enrol.

To request a refund students/employer are required to download and complete the Refund Request Form and submit to the Finance Manager for consideration and approval. Alternatively, students can also request a refund by contacting Benchmark College's Finance Manager on:

- Email: Accounts@benchmark.edu.au
- Telephone: 1800 286 916

1.6 ENROLMENT VARIATIONS

Where training is work-based, the employer may wish to vary the elective units previously selected. Affected students will need to speak to their trainer to gain approval prior to any change in the enrolment and training plan. If the employer wishes to vary the units, this must be approved by Benchmark College prior to any change.

1.7 TRANSFERRING STUDENTS

1.7.1 TRANSFER TO BENCHMARK COLLEGE

Students who are full fee-paying or funded under NSW Smart and Skilled, can withdraw from a qualification from another Smart and Skilled Training Provider and transfer to Benchmark College. Depending on the reason for the transfer, the student fee may change. Benchmark College will be able to calculate any changes to the student fee. The student will be required to complete the admission process outlined in this handbook.

1.7.2 TRANSFER FROM BENCHMARK COLLEGE

Students who are full fee-paying or funded under NSW Smart and Skilled, may withdraw from a qualification from Benchmark College and transfer to another Smart and Skilled Training Provider. Students will need to complete the Withdrawal/ Deferment Form. Depending on the reason for the transfer, the student fee payable may change. The new Training Provider should be able to calculate any changes to the student fee.

1.8 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

To improve the service, we provide and better meet the needs of our students and industry, Benchmark College encourages students to provide feedback about the quality of our programs, facilities and resources.

Students can provide feedback throughout the training by:

- Verbal communication to the Trainer/Assessor, administration staff or Training Manager
- Evaluation questionnaires supplied at completion of a course
- Via email to info@benchmark.edu.au

We look forward to receiving feedback about our service and the training provided.

1.9 PRIVACY

Benchmark College collects personal information to properly and efficiently carry out its functions. Benchmark College only collects personal information that is required for the purposes of employment or education, requests for Australian Government fee assistance or to meet government reporting requirements.

Benchmark policies and procedures abide by the Australian Privacy Principles and outline reasonable measures taken to protect the privacy of individuals and staff in line with state and federal legislation. More information can be found at www.oaic.gov.au or www.privacy.org.au.

Records held by Benchmark College include:

- Information students provide on the Course Application and Enrolment Forms
- Identification details (including USI) and Identification documents.
- Training / work experience / employment details, including assessment evidence and outcomes
- Copies of any supplied evidence relating to recognition of prior learning or credit transfers
- Copies of certificates or qualifications
- Payment information
- Complaints or appeals lodged (if applicable) including reports and outcomes.

Information collected or held by Benchmark College will only be disclosed to third parties after written consent has been obtained by the individual using the *Information Release Form*, the *Enrolment form* or where required by law. This may include:

- The individual's authorised representative or legal advisors
- Training fee 'credit providers' for credit application related functions i.e. VET Student Loans
- Government and Statutory Authorities where required by law
- National VET Regulator auditing purposes
- Employment Service Providers / Employers & Apprenticeship Centre's (per the trainees Training Contract)

Benchmark College will store securely all records containing personal information and take all reasonable security measures to protect personal information collected, from unauthorised access, misuse or disclosure. Hard copy records are kept onsite for 1 year and are then stored offsite in a secure storage facility until they are destroyed. Electronic records are kept for a period of 30 years.

A student can request access to the personal information held and may also make requests to correct personal information if it is not accurate, up-to-date or complete. Personal details can be amended by contacting our administration team.

A student can request access to their personal information by calling us during office hours or sending a written request to Benchmark College by email, facsimile or post (see Contact Information section of this handbook). To protect the privacy of our students/clients and the privacy of others, Benchmark College will ask for evidence of identity before the College can grant access to information or change it. Once a student's identity has been verified, access will be provided in an appropriate manner within 30 days.

A mechanism exists in which a student can raise a complaint in relation to how their personal information is handled. There are three stages in the complaint-handling process:

1. The complaint is made directly to Benchmark College in the first instance
2. The complaint may be taken to a recognised external dispute resolutions scheme (if applicable), and lastly
3. The complaint may be taken to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

A student can contact Benchmark College by phone, email, fax, and drop into our office or send a request or complaint to the College address (refer to the Contact Information section of this handbook). The College undertakes to respond to the complainant within 30 days. If the request or complaint takes longer to resolve, the College provides individuals with a date by which they can expect a response.

All policies and procedures, including the Privacy Policy and Procedure are available on the Benchmark College website.

1.10 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Benchmark College is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system, which is based on procedural fairness, the principles of natural justice and is easily accessible and offered to students/clients at no charge.

Wherever possible, students, clients and staff are encouraged to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned. There are Trainers/assessors, administration team and management staff available to assist students in resolving issues at this level. If a student is unable to resolve the issue at this level, a formal grievance can be lodged.

A summary of complaints handling process is as follows (the complete [Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure](#) is available on Benchmark College website) :

1. The individual should make the complaint in writing to Benchmark College, including as much detail about the issue as possible, and address to:

Consumer Protection Officer

Training Manager

☎: 1800 286 916

💻: trainingmanager@benchmark.edu.au

✉: Benchmark College

PO Box 4098

Penrith NSW 2750

2. Benchmark College will investigate the circumstances included in the complaint and respond to the individual as soon as possible regarding its findings and actions following this investigation (if more than 60 calendar days are required, the complainant will be notified in writing explaining the reasons for this).
3. If the individual is unsatisfied with the response from Benchmark College, they can ask for their complaint to be reviewed by the Continuous Improvement and Management Committee (request made via the Consumer Protection Officer). The Continuous Improvement and Management Committee will conduct all necessary consultations and will decide the outcome of the review.
4. If the individual is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint review, they may request (via the Consumer Protection Officer) that the matter be referred to an external dispute resolution process by a body appointed for this purpose by Benchmark College. A mediator can be provided by the Resolution Institute. Benchmark College agrees to pay the cost of one mediation session of up to two hours and advises that, should the matter require further mediation, it will be at the cost of the complainant or appellant (excludes VET Student Loans applicants).

5. If the individual is still not satisfied following external mediation, they may escalate their complaint directly to the relevant *Consumer Protection Agency* for investigation:

| Jurisdiction | Contact Details |
|-----------------|---|
| New South Wales | <p>NSW Office of Fair Trading 13 32 20 www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au</p> <p><i>Smart & Skilled Subsidised Students</i> Smart & Skilled Subsidised Students can also contact the Smart and Skilled customer support centre to seek assistance, ask for advice, make a complaint or provide feedback. 13 28 11 or 1300 77 21 04 enquiries@smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au Support is also available in person at a State Training Services Centre: www.training.nsw.gov.au/about_us/sts_contacts.html</p> |

6. Alternatively, a complaint may also be lodged with the ASQA complaints handling service for complaints against RTOs:
- Australian Skills Quality Authority
www.asqa.gov.au
Phone: 1300 701 801

1.10.1 CONSUMER PROTECTION

Benchmark College Consumer Protection Policy provides information about the rights of our students and employers in the following areas:

- Ethical and accurate marketing
- Providing student information prior to enrolment
- Quality training and assessment
- Protecting fees paid in advance
- Complaints and appeals
- Privacy
- Continuous Improvement of products and services

For more information, students can request a copy of Benchmark College's Consumer Protection Policy and Complaints and Appeals Policy by calling 02 4722 3099 or view a copy on the College website www.benchmark.edu.au. If students are a NSW Government funded student, students can contact Training Services NSW phone 1300 772 104 or go to www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au

1.11 CHANGES TO AGREED SERVICES

Students will be notified as soon as reasonably practicable if any changes occur to the following:

- educational services identified in Section 3 of this handbook;
- support services identified Section 4.4 of this handbook;
- any change in ownership of Benchmark College;
- any changes to, or new, third-party arrangements for the delivery of training and/or assessment²;
 - a 'third party' is any party that provides services on behalf of the RTO
 - services mean training, assessment, related educational and support services and student recruitment services.

2. Health and Safety

Benchmark College is committed to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees, students and visitors. Following the Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011 and Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017, we take reasonable care of the health and safety of others by:

- A workplace that is safe to work in, with working procedures or safe work method statements to inform staff and students on safe working procedures.
- Ensuring that the organisation has policies and procedures that advocate a zero tolerance for bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- Ensuring any student-related practical task is adequately managed for risk.
- The provision of facilities, tools and equipment that are properly maintained.
- Ensuring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, are worn where required.
- Training Benchmark College personnel in areas such as safe work procedures.

2.1 GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Students and staff should avoid whenever possible, or otherwise carry out carefully and correctly, any lifting.
- Students should not leave items/cords or obstructions in walkways or passageways.
- Students should wear footwear appropriate for the activities that they expect to undertake.

2.2 HAZARD CONTROL AND REPORTING

Anyone who sees a potential or existing hazard should:

- Assess if they can safely remove or reduce the hazard themselves without undertaking any unnecessary risks
- Act to signal or warn of the hazard to those who may be near
- Report the hazard to the Trainer or staff member who will arrange any further control of the hazard required.

² ASQA Fact Sheet – Third-party arrangements, updated September 2016

https://www.asqa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net2166/t/Fact_sheet_-_Third_party_arrangements.pdf

2.3 INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTING

Benchmark College recognises the duty of care owed to its students and that planning for the management of a critical incident is essential.

A critical incident is defined as 'a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'. The College has in place efficient, sensitive and supportive strategies for dealing with a critical incident and provides support to members of staff, students and others in the community who are involved.

If the incident is on the College premises, the first action will be to contact the emergency services - fire, ambulance or police – as would be the case with other WHS matters. The Chief Executive Officer is contacted immediately when an incident involves death, serious injury or a threat to life or property.

If the critical incident involves a student or staff member and is off campus, the person receiving the information must immediately contact Head Office who will communicate with other staff as appropriate.

All accidents and injuries must be reported to Head Office. Staff will follow the Procedure for Hazard/Incident Reporting outlined in the Workplace Health, Safety and Environment Policy and Procedures (available at www.benchmark.edu.au). The aim of the reporting system is to prevent accidents from recurring by identifying the problem or hazard.

2.4 FIRST AID

A First Aid kit is located at each campus site. Benchmark College is not permitted to administer medication to any student. All injuries requiring first aid are reported, treated and recorded as outlined in the Procedure for Hazard/Incident Reporting.

2.5 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the Event of Fire

1. Raise the alarm – contact Fire & Rescue (000)
2. Alert other occupants
3. Notify the Chief Warden of the Building and the Trainer
4. Evacuate the immediate area
5. Assemble as directed by the floor wardens and Trainers
6. When instructed, evacuate the building.

Evacuation

1. Move to the Assembly Point as directed by floor wardens and Trainers
2. When instructed to evacuate, leave by the Fire Stairs/Exits
DO NOT USE LIFTS (if applicable)
3. Move quietly and calmly to the Assembly Area
4. Await instructions.

Building Alarms and Other Emergencies

If the building fire alarm rings or if students are advised that there is an emergency in the building:

1. Stay calm
2. Follow the directions of floor wardens and Trainers
3. Follow the evacuation procedure if required.

2.6 DRUG FREE ENVIRONMENT

Under the *Smoke-free Environment Act 2000* smoking is prohibited within all Benchmark College premises. We have a legal obligation to enforce this law.

The *Smoke-free Environment Act 2000*. Section 6A(1)(i) bans smoking within 4 metres of a pedestrian access point to a public building³.

Students who attend class under the influence of prohibited drugs will be asked to leave the premises and may face disciplinary action.

2.7 BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Benchmark College operates without bias, discrimination or harassment, and expect the same from all participants in our courses.

We do not behave in ways that are unwelcome, demeaning, unreciprocated and/or offensive to an individual or group of people, and we require the same from our students. Students have the right to feel safe and to have full opportunity to achieve their potential. If students are being harassed seek help immediately.

There are several options. Choose the course of action which students feel most comfortable with. Do not ignore discrimination or sexual harassment, thinking it will go away – often discrimination just gets worse and silence may give the impression that discrimination or sexual harassment is acceptable.

Students may:

- Tell the person to stop; or
- Make a complaint to one of the staff from Benchmark College; or
- Make a complaint under Anti-Discrimination Legislation to:
Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW
<http://www.antidiscrimination.justice.nsw.gov.au>

2.8 STUDENT CONDUCT

All students must comply with the Student Behaviour and Misconduct Policy and Procedures and any lawful direction given by their Trainer or other staff member. Benchmark College reserves the right to remove any student who breaches any aspect of the Student Behaviour and Misconduct Policy and Procedures. Repeated instances could result in cancellation of a student's enrolment.

Students who attend Benchmark College under the auspices of their employer are required to adhere to the policies and procedures of their employer and any unacceptable behaviour will be reported back to their employer.

If a student's enrolment is cancelled by the College, the student has 20 working days to access the Complaints and Appeals process. The student's enrolment status will not be affected during the internal complaints and appeals process.

³ NSW Government, Department of Health, *SMOKE-FREE GUIDE*

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Document Location: G:\My Drive\S Drive\ASQA\FINAL_Policies_Documents\All Policy-Related Documents

The following is **not** acceptable:

- Sexual harassment
- Disruption to the class or other students
- Actions which are unsafe or puts others at risk
- Refusal to take part in group learning activities
- Lack of personal hygiene
- Use of the College computers (or data/telephone points) to send, broadcast, search or download inappropriate, offensive, defamatory or illegal material
- Other behaviour deemed by the Trainer or other students as objectionable
- Dishonesty or misconduct in examinations or assessments such as plagiarism, collusion or cheating.
- Threatening or intimidating actions or language
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Repeated lateness or failure to attend classes
- Smoking anywhere within the college
- Litter the college premises, the entrances to the college premises or on the pedestrian thoroughfares within the vicinity of the College premises
- Damage, steal, modify or misuse College property.

2.9 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Benchmark College Student, students are required to;

- Be responsible for both their own health and safety and the health and safety of others and have a duty to **immediately report any unsafe conditions or hazards** to the Trainer or another Benchmark College staff member.
- NOT to act in a manner that jeopardises the health and safety of themselves or any other person.
- Treat all other students and staff with courtesy, fairness and respect.
- Refrain from participating in, condoning or approving conduct, which is harassing, discriminatory or unfair.
- Follow safe working practices and comply with all safety directions given by the Trainer or other Benchmark College staff.
- Inform the College of any changes to personal details, contact information or enrolment status.
- If applicable attend each day of work experience.
- Wear appropriate workplace clothing whilst on work experience where necessary, for example:
 - Students enrolled in TLI31616 Certificate III in Warehousing Operations: will be required to wear enclosed shoes whilst on work experience. Some workplaces also require steel capped shoes/boots.
 - Students enrolled in CHC30113 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care: will be required to wear sun smart clothing, a hat (when outdoors) and provide the workplace with a Working with Children Check.
 - Students enrolled in CHC30115 Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing): the workplace may require students to wear the same polo shirts (if there are many students at one facility), students are also required to wear a Student Identification Card (the College will provide this).
 - The Trainer or Placement coordinator will advise students of any other workplace requirements.

- Comply with State and Commonwealth laws relating to health & safety, crimes, harassment, discrimination and copyright.

2.10 STUDENT RIGHTS

As a Benchmark College Student, students have the right to:

- Be treated fairly and with respect by Trainers, other staff and students
- Learn in an environment free of bullying, discrimination and harassment
- Complete the course in a supportive and stimulating learning environment
- Have their training records and personal information stored, kept in confidence and secure
- Receive feedback about assessment outcomes and progress
- Modify the training plan if circumstances change, in consultation with the Trainer and head office staff
- Provide the College with information regarding recognition of prior learning (RPL) and/or credit transfer (CT) at the commencement and/or during the course
- Defer or withdraw from the course in writing using Benchmark College required documentation.

2.11 PROTECTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In accordance with Benchmark College's Person at Risk Policy and Procedures and NSW Government legislation, the College is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people (under the age of 18 years).

In some jurisdictions, but not all, it is a legal requirement for Benchmark College representatives to report child abuse or victimisation if it is observed or suspected.

2.12 CEASING OPERATIONS

In the unlikely event that Benchmark College ceases to operate in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 we will;

- Notify all students within a reasonable period of time that our training organisation is ceasing to operate and what date this will take effect.
- Provide students with a Statement of Attainment for all units successfully completed.
- Provide students with information on an alternative training provider in which to transfer their enrolment.
- Work with the alternate training provider to transfer student's enrolment providing all relevant documentation to assist in a successful and seamless transition.
- Send all relevant records and awards to the Australian Skills Quality Authority (all records will be stored in accordance with legislative and contractual requirements).

3. Learning and Assessment

3.1 THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The College has policies, procedures and information to help create a working and learning environment that is safe and healthy, culturally diverse, friendly and non-discriminatory. We encourage students to visit the student section of our website to view all relevant policies and procedures. Students can access these documents by going to www.benchmark.edu.au selecting the 'Student' tab, then 'Policies & Procedures.'

3.2 THE COURSES

All Nationally Recognised Qualifications that Benchmark College are approved to deliver are located at <http://training.gov.au/Organisation/Details/90274>.

Our courses are offered in various modes of delivery which include classroom and traineeship (workplace).

- Classroom – is when a student receives face to face training delivered at a Benchmark College training room, where learning and assessment materials are provided.
- Traineeship – is when a student receives training delivered at the employer's premises or off the job by a Benchmark College Trainer and Assessor and is provided with learning materials and assessment tools.

3.3 THE TRAINERS AND ASSESSORS

Benchmark College staff are an integral part of our student's journey towards growth. From the time students apply to the time that students graduate, students will be assisted by staff who provide a quality service.

Trainer/Assessors are highly qualified and experienced industry professionals. They are committed to instructing and supporting students to meet the requirements of the course. All Trainer/Assessors undergo continuing professional development.

3.4 STUDY RESOURCES

Students will be supplied learning resources on commencement of training. These resources will be useful in the understanding of course content and completion of assessment tasks.

Some qualifications may require a student to purchase additional textbooks. Students may be able to buy allocated textbooks directly from the college or from local/online bookstores. Benchmark College will not provide refunds for textbooks see '*Refund Policy and Procedures*'.

3.5 WORK EXPERIENCE

Participating in Work Experience provides students a chance to:

- Practice newly learnt skills and apply theory learnt in the classroom.
- Build the skills that employers want like teamwork, communication and reliability.
- Increase confidence and show individuals that students are ready for work.
- Meet new people and make useful contacts who may act as a referee when the time comes to apply for jobs.

Students that have specified requirements set by Government departments should discuss with Benchmark College for alternative arrangements to be put in place while still meeting the work experience requirements.

Benchmark College will organise work experience for all classroom-based students and will provide them with insurance and support in the workplace. Students will be visited at least once by the allocated Trainer/Assessor. Students on work experience are supernumerary and are given a range of activities to guide their learning and practice the key skills required to become work ready.

How much work experience depends on the course that students are enrolled in. Benchmark College but is usually around 4 weeks and is undertaken in two, 2-week blocks. Hours are Monday to Friday from 9am to 5 pm although this may change depending on the normal shifts of that particular industry.

Students are also required to dress appropriately for that industry. More targeted information on the logistics and details of the work experience will be provided by the placement coordinator.

Students must be able to travel to the Host Employer for work experience (where possible, we arrange work experience close to home however this is not always possible, and some students may be required to travel up to 60 minutes).

Students who are enrolled in a traineeship do not have work experience arranged, as they are already working in the industry in which they are studying.

3.6 ATTENDANCE

To maximise the benefits of study and achieve academic success, all students who are enrolled in a classroom-based learning program are required to regularly attend their scheduled classes. Any absence is required to be supported with documentary evidence (e.g. medical certificate) within 7 days of the student's return. Where a student has missed greater than 20% of the required attendance, they will be required to meet with either the Training Manager or another representative from College management. Course completion and the College's ability to issue an award may be affected if a student has significant absences noted.

Where a student is on work experience, they **MUST** notify the College and their work experience host of their inability to attend. Documentary evidence will be required for any absences.

3.7 CLASSROOM CONDUCT

A mature attitude in respect to classroom conduct is expected of all students. Students are expected to be punctual for lessons.

Students are not allowed to bring unsealed food or drinks into any of the computer laboratories or any other classroom on College premises or consume any food or drink in any such laboratory or classroom. There are designated areas for students to consume food and drinks in the allocated break times on the premises.

Mobile telephones must be switched off during class. Students may receive or make a telephone call only during a break.

3.8 SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS

If a student has any special needs in relation to their learning, assessment, preparing for assessment, or understanding the assessment plan, please notify Benchmark College of this during enrolment and tell the Trainer/assessor about this for the purposes of training. Students need to provide Benchmark College sufficient notice so that a suitable assessment plan can be developed.

Ideally, inform the Trainer of this when joining the class and remind them two weeks before the assessment event.

Examples of special needs catered for are:

- Coloured paper (for some forms of dyslexia)
- A laptop to use while in class for students who have difficulty writing.

Other needs where students can request some advantage, such as extra time, may have to be assessed by the Training Manager so students should provide sufficient time and evidence for this request to be considered.

To support student's special needs Benchmark College has developed referral pathways to a variety of different Support Services (see the next section for more information).

3.9 ASSESSMENT

The training provided includes assessment tasks which students must complete and submit as part of the ongoing assessment of their training and progress. Failure to complete assessment tasks will be recorded on the student's records and taken into consideration when results are being reviewed.

'Assessment is the process of forming and recording a judgement about a person's skill and knowledge' (Blackwater: 2010:11). For a student to complete their qualification they will be required, through our assessment processes, to provide evidence of competence.

Evidence is the term used to describe the information the assessor will use to assess whether a student has demonstrated the skills and knowledge consistently and in a variety of situations against a unit of competency

Each qualification will offer several different assessment pathways that may be utilised depending on the individual. These pathways include the 'Recognition of Prior Learning pathway' (see section 3.9 of this Handbook) and 'Training and Assessment pathway.'

Training and Assessment Pathway means that to undertake the qualification students are required to complete set assessment tasks⁴.

3.10 RECOGNITION

What is recognition?

Recognition is a way that a student's knowledge and skills are assessed against a Nationally Recognised Qualification or specific Units of Competency. During a person's life, they may have:

- Gained extensive experience, knowledge and skills from previous job roles.
- Undertaken community and volunteer work.
- Completed formal or informal training (in the workplace, at a Registered Training Organisation or at a University).

Benchmark College provides the opportunity for all students to apply to have prior learning and experience recognised toward a qualification or units of competence for which they are enrolled.

Recognition generally takes two forms: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer.

⁴ Blackwater Projects: 2010:7

RPL - Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL is a type of assessment that recognises a person's skills and knowledge because of previous work and/or life experience. RPL assesses this unrecognised learning against the requirements of a unit of competence and removes the need for duplication of learning. A participant is required to provide evidence to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in a unit of competence. This process is assessed in the same manner as any other assessment and is mapped to the standard under the same guidelines according to the relevant training package.

CT - Credit Transfer

Credit transfer is the recognition of learning achieved through formal education and training. This means that if a student has successfully completed a nationally recognised unit of competence at another Registered Training Organisation that is relevant to the enrolled course and which is equivalent, a student does not have to complete training and assessment for that unit again.

An application for credit transfer must include copies of certificates/transcripts which outline the units in which credit transfer is being sought. Benchmark College will only provide transfer on equivalent units that have been verified with the issuing Registered Training Organisation or the USI Transcript Service.

How to apply for Credit Transfer or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Students can apply for Credit Transfer or RPL at any time, however, it is best to apply before commencing a training program as this will reduce unnecessary training and possibly affect the student fee.

Credit Transfer

Any documents provided to us from students to assess and determine competency must be either the originals or valid copies of the original transcript. Benchmark College will make copies of the submitted documents and return the originals. We will also ask a student to complete an application for credit transfer and a consent to verify the issued credentials with the issuing Registered Training Organisation. To download this form [CLICK HERE](#) and follow the instructions contained on the form.

RPL

To receive Recognition of Prior learning we must be able to ensure that a student has submitted a portfolio of evidence which states:

- They have met the requirements of each Unit of Competency contained within the qualification
- They have met any relevant regulatory requirements
- The evidence submitted is their own work and can be verified or authenticated.
- They can demonstrate recent competency, reliably and consistently and to a standard required by the industry
- That the evidence provided is relevant to the units of competency applying for sufficient to make a judgement.

For information on how to apply for recognition, please call Benchmark College on 02 4722 3099 or visit our website to download the [Recognition flyer](#).

3.11 ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Assessment tools are used to gather evidence about a student's competence. All developed assessment tools support the assessment of applicable units of competence in accordance with the requirements of industry Training Packages and fit with the requirements of the target industry and enterprise.

The following are examples of assessment methods which may be used to assess a student:

- Direct observation checklist
- Case studies, simulation exercises or role-plays
- Written questionnaires
- Portfolios, for example collections of work samples by the student
- Workplace samples/products
- Project outlines and explanation sheets
- Workplace templates
- Verbal questionnaires
- Product with supporting documentation or journal/logbook
- Industry/workplace evidence reports

3.12 PREPARING FOR ASSESSMENT

To maximise performance in assessments students should;

- Be prepared for the assessment
- Ask the Trainer/assessor to clarify any questions or tasks of which are unsure
- Advise the Trainer/assessor immediately if there is any factor which will affect their performance in the assessment or if a student has any special need;
- Read the instructions on the assessment task and complete all the identification details;
- Type or write legibly; and clearly.

3.13 REFERENCING / COPYING OF WORK

Referencing is required to acknowledge information from other sources when students are writing. If students fail to reference another person's ideas, theories or data students will be in breach of copyright or may be accused of plagiarism. Examples of sources used in the assessment will need to be referenced, examples of source include textbooks, reference journals, website information and conference notes.

Benchmark College requires students to use referencing when quoting another person's ideas, theories or data. It is imperative when submitting all assessment tasks to not use another person's ideas, thoughts and data without appropriate referencing.

If unclear on how to reference, a resource is available from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research. This resource explains how to reference using the Harvard system of referencing. In a web browser type the following:

- Referencing guide: author/date style - National Centre for Vocational Education Research
- Then download the PDF.

Any questions regarding how to reference, please ask the Trainer.

Copying of another students' work is **not** permitted. Disciplinary action may be taken if a student is suspected of using another student's work.

All work submitted is required to include a signed declaration from a student to verify that it is a product of their own. Any assignments and assessments **MUST** be a student's original work. Failure to do this could result in the assignment/assessment being deemed 'not yet competent' by the assessor, requiring additional work and assessment to be submitted before any Statements of Attainment or Qualifications will be issued.

3.14 COPIES OF ASSESSMENTS

For record keeping requirements, all work that is submitted will be kept in the student's file. A student's work will only be returned upon written request for a fee and we will not be responsible for any submissions which have been lost, stolen or destroyed. Students need to keep duplicate copies of their work.

3.15 SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENTS

In general, all assessments are to be submitted directly to the allocated Trainer/assessor. They can also be submitted at Head Office. The Trainer will advise on assessment due dates and the format required for submitting assessments. All assessment tasks will be required to contain an Assessment Submission Sheet. The Trainer will provide copies of this. If a student requires further copies, speak to the Trainer or the administration staff.

3.16 ASSESSMENT EXTENSIONS

Requests for an extension may be granted if prior notice and sufficient reason is present. If illness is the reason for an extension, a Doctors certificate will be required. Extensions will not be granted the day prior to due date. In the event of the weekend, the last date for request for extension is the close of business Friday.

Extensions need to be in writing and addressed to the allocated Trainer/assessor. In the event this cannot occur a written request must be submitted the next day at the College.

3.17 FAILURE TO ATTEMPT AN ASSESSMENT

As there are several different assessment tasks for each subject, students who do not attempt an assessment task without a valid reason will risk a withdrawal result for the unit being assessed. This means that failure to complete an assessment task could jeopardise a student to complete their qualification.

However, the College understands that there may be valid reasons why a student may not attempt an assessment task. Students may apply for an alternative assessment or special consideration if, because of illness or other circumstances (not work-related) beyond their control, they;

- Miss a formal assessment
- Attend an assessment but are forced to leave before the allocated time has expired
- Finish an assessment, but believe that their performance was affected
- Have difficulty in completing an assessment task.

To be considered, the students must:

- Inform the College as soon as is practicable and no later than two working days after the assessment; or
- Inform their Trainer/Assessor at the time, if they attempted any part of the assessment; **and**
- Provide external independent evidence of the illness or misadventure in the form of a doctor's certificate from a registered medical practitioner or a Police Report or any other documentation that will support their application.

3.18 REASSESSMENT

For numerous different reasons, some students may not complete an assessment task satisfactorily. At Benchmark College, our approach to these situations is to work with students in preparation for additional assessment.

In some rare circumstances, students may find it difficult to develop the necessary skills and knowledge within the constraints of the programs schedule. When this occurs, arrangements may be agreed to allow the student to undertake additional learning in their own time and return for reassessment later.

The student fee includes two assessment attempts. This means if a student is found Not Yet Satisfactory (NYS) for an assessment task, students can re-submit the assessment task a second time without charge. Further assessment attempts will incur a fee for each assessment re-submission. Please refer to the Benchmark College Fees and Charges Policy for more information at www.benchmark.edu.au

As a general guide, assessors will make alternative arrangements to provide opportunities for assessment within the constraints of available time and resources. In all circumstances, the assessment is to be a planned activity that is conducted in accordance with Benchmark College assessment procedures. In some cases, after alternative arrangements have been applied, a student may be deemed not-yet-competent.

3.19 QUALITY CONTROL

Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a training package or VET accredited course⁵.

Validation is the quality review of the assessment process. Validation involves checking that the assessment tool/s produce/s valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of the training package or VET accredited courses are met. It includes reviewing a random sample of student's assessments and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes and acting upon such recommendations⁶.

⁵ Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

⁶ Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

Benchmark College is required to validate the assessor's decision of a student's assessment task. This may mean, that from time to time, submitted assessment/s may be reviewed as part of this quality control process. The validation selection process includes assessments that have already been deemed competent by the Trainer/assessor. Students need to be aware that where units have been deemed competent previously and their assessments have been chosen for validation there may be an obligation for them to undertake rework or additional work to meet the requirements of the training package.

3.20 APPEALS PROCESS

An appeal procedure is available to students who believe the assessment process, or any assessment event was inappropriately or ineffectively carried out and therefore resulted in an inappropriate assessment or decision being made.

The steps are as follows:

1. If possible, speak to the Trainer/assessor or the Training Manager to discuss concerns about the assessment process and the assessment outcome;
2. If this does not resolve the student's concerns, a student can appeal against the assessment decision within 28 days of receiving their result. To do this a student will need to contact the CEO either by making an appointment in person or by email who will organise a meeting to discuss;
3. Arrangements will be made for an assessor independent of a student's training and assessment, or a validation team to assess the evidence submitted by the student and outcome recorded;
4. Once review/moderation of the assessment has taken place the student will be contacted within 7 days of the decision;
5. If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome, Benchmark College will arrange an independent third party to review the appeal.

(The complete [Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure](#) is available on the Benchmark College website)

3.21 CHANGES TO THE QUALIFICATION

From time to time, qualifications and units of competency (units) are changed due to emerging industry requirements. When qualifications or units are upgraded, the 'old' qualification/unit is called 'superseded'. RTOs are not allowed to enrol students into superseded qualifications. If students are wanting to enrol in a qualification that is superseded and is in its transition period, we will provide students with all the information needed to make an informed decision as to if this is the right qualification.

If the chosen qualification or some of the units of competency have become superseded during the course, Benchmark College will offer and encourage affected students to transfer to the new qualification/unit and implement a new training plan (once the new qualification/unit is on the Benchmark College scope of registration). This process is called 'transitioning.'

4. Student Services

4.1 COLLEGE / LOCAL FACILITIES

Benchmark College training facilities have:

- Classrooms equipped with whiteboards and access to data projectors
- Computer labs with printers and internet access
- Student lounge equipped with kitchen facilities and a microwave.

Note: Whilst all of our Training Rooms are wheelchair accessible, we do not have wheelchair access in our bathrooms.

Students are not allowed to eat or drink on College premises except in the designated student lounge. This is to ensure that a healthy, pest-free working and learning environment is maintained. This policy also ensures that computer hardware and other equipment/furniture are not damaged by accidental spillage.

Computer laboratories can be booked for use outside of classroom hours. This must be arranged with the allocated Trainer, College administration or the Training Manager.

Any unauthorised use of the computers (or data/telephone points) or unauthorised installation or downloading of computer software including games and screensavers will lead to disciplinary action which may include expulsion. Copyright infringements arising from unauthorised copying, installation or downloading of computer software may also lead to criminal charges being laid.

Facilities closely located to the College include public transport, numerous food outlets, supermarkets, post offices, banks, libraries, medical centres, clubs and cinemas.

4.2 ACCESS AND EQUITY

Benchmark College is committed to ensuring that all eligible students have access to educational opportunities. We do this by identifying special needs and, where appropriate, making reasonable adjustments to the learning and assessment environment. Examples of reasonable adjustment may include large print, extra time, additional tutorial support etc.

Student can advise Benchmark College on the Course Application or Enrolment form or also can discuss their needs with a Benchmark College staff member before enrolling in a course. Students can call us directly on 02 4722 3099. All discussions are treated in the strictest of confidence

If a student has a special need, please discuss these needs with the allocated Trainer or our administrative staff. Once we know what a student needs are, we can put in place a plan to help students to participate in training and complete their course.



4.3 GETTING ADVICE

Benchmark College aims to ensure that all students are provided with the support needed to successfully complete their qualification. If students require help or just need to ask a question, we would encourage students to talk with their Trainer or Training Manager as soon as possible.

Problems or difficulties may occur from time to time. In such circumstances, a student will need to discuss the situation so that we can put suitable strategies in place.

If students have a problem, please:

- × Don't 'pull out' or 'give up' on the course, even if things are not going to plan. They can usually be fixed.
- ✓ Talk immediately to the Trainer or the Training Manager.

Remember, training can be the best start to a rewarding career. Let us help to identify a solution!

4.4 SUPPORT SERVICES

It is important to Benchmark College that students have the support that they need to complete their training course. Benchmark College has a range of support services available, such as:

- internal support: the Trainer/Assessor; Training Manager; and other administration staff;
- study support – if a student is new to studying, or it's been a while since they have studied, ask the Trainer/Assessor for advice about how to get back in to study. Such as organising time for study; identifying the personal learning style (e.g. visual, auditory, kinaesthetic); computer skills for internet searching and goal setting;
- learning materials in alternative formats, e.g. in large print; resources in coloured paper;
- learning and assessment programs contextualised to the workplace;
- identifying language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills required for learning or referrals to LLN programs.
- referrals to mediation &/or counselling services, refer to the next page for more information.

For a range of services and professional associations including counselling services – see Table 1. For most services listed, students can self-refer, or Benchmark College can contact the provider on the student's behalf. If a student requires Benchmark College to contact one of the services listed on their behalf, please speak to the allocated Trainer/Assessor or contact the Training Manager on 02 4722 3099.

- Please be aware that there may be **costs** associated with external support services (e.g. such as mediation or counselling). Students will be made aware of those costs prior to referral (as external provider costs are subject to change).

Table 1: Support Service Contact Numbers

| | |
|---|--|
| READING WRITING HOTLINE (AUSTRALIA) Phone: 1300 655 506 Website: http://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au/ Email: rwhotline@det.nsw.edu.au | TAFE NSW WESTERN SYDNEY INSTITUTE English for Speakers of Other Languages Phone: 131 870 Website: http://wsi.tafensw.edu.au/courses-and-careers/english-language/ |
| CENTRELINK SKILLS FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (SEE) Phone: 132 850 Website: http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/skills-for-education-and-employment | NAVITAS ENGLISH Level 4, 11 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000 Australia Phone: 1300 730 466 Fax: +61 2 8252 2822 Email: info.attc@navitas.com Website: http://navitasenglish.com/ |
| PENRITH DISABILITIES RESOURCE CENTRE INC. Information, advocacy and referral service Phone: (02) 4732 2363 Email: info@pdrc.org.au Website: http://www.pdrc.org.au | ABILITY OPTIONS Phone: (02) 88 111 777 Email: admin@abilityoptions.org.au Website: www.abilityoptions.org.au |
| PHYSICAL DISABILITY COUNCIL OF NSW Phone: 1800 688 831 Email: admin@pdcnsw.org.au Website: www.pdcnsw.org.au | MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS TEAM Community Assessment and Liaison Centre Phone: 1800 011 511 Website: http://www.nbmlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/mental-health |
| BEYONDBLUE Beyondblue provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live. Phone: 1300 22 4636 Website: www.beyondblue.org.au Email: infoline@beyondblue.org.au | SALVATION ARMY COUNSELLING SERVICE Cnr Lethbridge & Castlereagh St Suite 15, Lethbridge Court PENRITH NSW 2751 Ph. (02) 4731 1554 Website: http://salvoscounselling.salvos.org.au/ |
| HOMELESS PERSONS INFO LINE Phone: 1800 234 566 Website: http://www.homelessnessnsw.org.au/ | DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS 24 HRS Phone: 1800 656 463 Website: http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents,-carers-and-families/domestic-and-family-violence |

5. Administrative Matters

5.1 CHANGE OF PERSONAL DETAILS

Students must inform the College, in writing, as soon as practicable but not later than 7 days following the change of any change in the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Mobile/landline telephone number(s)
- Email address
- Emergency contact details

5.2 USE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Benchmark College only collects personal information that is required for the purposes of employment or education, requests for Australian Government fee assistance or to meet government reporting requirements.

The type of information collected and held by Benchmark College includes personally identifiable information, including sensitive information, about students (and guardians, where a trainee is under 16 years of age) before, during and after the completion of training. Consent for the collection of student information is gained at application via the application and enrolment form. For more information about privacy, see section 1.9 of this handbook.

5.3 GETTING RESULTS / QUALIFICATION

Benchmark College will only issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment that are within its scope of registration.

If students have successfully completed all requirements for a qualification, a student will receive a certificate including a competency statement which lists all units completed. If students have not successfully completed all requirements for a qualification or only enrolled in a partial qualification, a student will be issued with a statement of attainment that includes all units that a student has successfully completed.

Students will need to allow approximately four weeks from course completion for the qualification or statement of attainment to be issued. Any certificates or statements of attainment will be put on hold if a student has any outstanding fees.

If a student requires their certification to be re-issued due to loss or damage, a student can request this by emailing info@benchmark.com.au. There will be an administrative charge of \$40.00 for the re-issue of their Statement of Attainment or Qualification.

5.4 STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

If a student completes a full-time program in Early Childhood Education and Care or Individual Support with Benchmark College will be provided with a Photo Student Identification Card. A Photo Student Identification Card is to be worn at all times whilst on work experience and on excursions. A replacement fee of \$40.00 applies to replace the issued Student Card.

5.5 NSW TERTIARY STUDENT TRANSPORT CONCESSION

Concession Opal card⁷

The Concession Opal card gives eligible students all the convenience and flexibility of Opal, with fares at half the price of the Adult Opal card for travel on transport services including:

Who is eligible?

Eligible Trainees and Apprentices

Students are eligible to apply for a Concession Opal card if they:

- Are a 1st, 2nd or 3rd year apprentice or a new entrant trainee currently registered with Training Services NSW under the *NSW Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*
- Have a TCID number by Training Services NSW, Department of Industry

Job seekers and other approved Centrelink customers

All Centrelink customers who are NSW residents and are receiving the maximum rate of benefit and are:

Registered as looking for work and receiving one of the following Centrelink benefits:

- Newstart Allowance
- Youth Allowance (job seekers only)
- Parenting Payment (partnered)
- Partner Allowance
- Widow Allowance
- Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment
- Farm Household Allowance

Or

Receiving one of the following Centrelink benefits:

- Newstart Allowance (incapacitated)
- Youth Allowance (incapacitated)
- Special Benefit
- Sickness Allowance

Or

Registered for employment services and receiving one of the following Centrelink benefits:

- Partner Allowance
- Widow Allowance
- Parenting Payment (partnered)

For further information telephone please call Opal Customer Care on **13 67 25 (13 OPAL)** or go to <https://www.opal.com.au>

⁷ NSW Government, Opal for concessions https://www.opal.com.au/en/about-opal/opal_for_concessions/

5.6 QUESTIONS OR FEEDBACK?

Every effort has been made to ensure that information included in this handbook is correct at the time of publication.

Any questions or feedback about the information in this handbook, please speak to the Trainer or administration staff.

Any updates to the student handbook, policies or procedures will be available for download from our website www.benchmark.edu.au so please ensure to view this regularly.

Please note this handbook may be updated from time to time to cover any changes to Government funding or RTO regulations, policies and practices. We suggest you refer back to the handbook on the Benchmark website every 3 months for any updates.