



**Australian
Qualifications
Institute**

Learner Handbook

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Welcome to The Australian Qualifications Institute

Welcome to the Australian Qualifications Institute – AQI. Thank you for choosing to study with us and welcome to the AQI family.

We at AQI provide Australian vocational education and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to learners without them ever having to leave home, without having to incur the cost of travel or moving, without having to pay high fees for classrooms and other physical facilities.

At AQI we are determined to make education available to all at an affordable cost and with learning materials selected so you can work independently when and where you choose.

The benefits of studying with AQI remotely include:

- You receive a personalised plan before you enrol which includes units you can obtain Recognition for (RPL) as well as units you need to study – if any.
- You can enrol any time. You do not have to wait for the start of a term or even office hours
- The timing of study fits in and around your lifestyle
- AQI pricing is affordable
- We ensure all finances are transparent
- We recognise your current skills and knowledge to give you credit towards your qualification, through our process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Study materials are flexible, comprehensive and acknowledge that different learners study in different ways
- Our technology allows you to learn on a range of systems whether they be mobile or PCs.
- On the completion of your studies you will gain a nationally recognised Australian qualification
- Your personal, accessible, dedicated teacher, highly competent and with industry currency, will help you with whatever challenges you face in your learning
- AQI focuses on you the client

At all times we aim to provide you with strong individual support through your teacher. We work with open and honest communication in supporting you to complete your studies.

This Handbook focuses on the information and processes you need to know to achieve your educational goals. It is important that you read it all.

We have placed this Handbook in electronic format so that it is easily accessible from anywhere at any time.

We at AQI acknowledge that individuals come with a wealth of individual experience. If you believe your experience or prior studies means you have enough knowledge and skills to be credited with some of the knowledge and skills covered in the qualification you are studying please let us know. Our teachers will work with you to find if you can achieve formal recognition for previous studies or experience. While there is still a cost for this it is less than to study the material in full and saves you a lot of time. This is the process of ‘Recognition of Prior Learning’ – RPL and details can be found in this Handbook.

We intend to support you from start to finish in your learning needs so please keep your communication lines open and importantly work with us so you can enjoy your learning journey.

If you have any concerns please contact your teacher or myself.

Thank you again for choosing to study with us.

Andrea Harris
CEO
andrea@aqi.edu.au

About the Australian Qualifications Institute - AQI

The Australian Qualifications Institute - AQI was formed by Andrea Harris and Marilyn Sorbello to provide an affordable, high support learning environment leading to an Australian qualification. AQI provides this strong learning environment through comprehensive learning materials and strong relationships with teachers. Together Andrea and Marilyn have over 60 years' experience working in education and training.

As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) The Australian Qualifications Institute is regulated by the Australian Government through the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). We are registered to deliver national qualifications under our scope of registration as shown on the national register at <https://training.gov.au/Organisation/Details/40744/summary?tabindex=4>. The Australian Qualifications Institute is committed to providing high quality, affordable training and assessment and support services, compliant with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Quality Framework.

Studying with the Australian Qualifications Institute

Technology requirements for on line materials

To complete any online training with AQI using a lap top or desk top PC you need to note the following requirements:

- Web browser: For optimal viewing of the interactive content, we recommend using Firefox or Chrome browser.
- Audio: You will need speakers attached to your computer or a headset to listen to any audio files.
- Templates and forms: Documents have been prepared in Microsoft Word or are available as PDFs. You will need access to Microsoft Word or word processing software that can read Microsoft Word files.

Access to the learner e-learning centre

Your enrolment token will be emailed to you once your enrolment is finalised. Follow the instructions to activate the token and confirm your enrolment.

Contact information

Who can help me?

For help with your learning material:

Your teacher

For administrative assistance e.g. enrolment and fees:

enquiries@aqi.edu.au

To provide feedback or lodge a complaint:

Your teacher in the first instance or, if that does not resolve your issue, Andrea Harris at andrea@aqi.edu.au.

Enrolling with The Australian Qualifications Institute

General enrolment information

Enrolment checklist

When you enrol with AQI, you enter into a lawful binding agreement between yourself and the Australian Qualifications Institute which is governed by the laws of Australia. By accepting this agreement, you agree to accept and abide by the policies and processes outlined in this Handbook.

Before enrolling must:

- have read the AQI pre-enrolment information provided in this Handbook
- have met any entry requirements outlined in qualification information
- have identified and notified AQI of any individual learning needs
- have read and understood the AQI enrolment policy and refund policy as outlined in the Learner Handbook
- have at least the specified minimum technology requirements
- are prepared to accept and abide by AQI policies and processes as outlined in the Learner Handbook
- understand that enrolment may be suspended or cancelled should you breach AQI policies
- Refer to the Heading: 'Withdrawals and Refunds' to understand what refunds are available

How and when can I enrol?

Enrolment into any available AQI qualification or unit can be completed online anytime. Alternatively, you can contact enquiries@aqi.edu.au to enrol and pay fees directly.

Once an enrolment is received, and payment finalised, a welcome letter, a receipt and login details are emailed to the learner.

It is recommended you have a conversation with an AQI staff member before you enrol in order to establish if you can gain Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of some or all units and to establish a Recognition and Study Plan for you. This conversation will also allow you to receive answers to any questions you may have.

How long do I have to complete my qualification?

The qualification brochure will show how long a learner has to complete a particular qualification or unit.

When does my study commence?

Once arrangements for payment have been finalised, learners will work through any units where they are enrolled in RPL with their allocated teacher. For the study units they will be emailed information on how to access the learner e-learning centre.

Study commences after enrolment and on the day of their first RPL conversation with their teacher or when the learners receive their e-learning centre login details, whichever is first. This date will be the learner's Study Commencement Date. Learners may work through their course work rapidly if they wish as some learners work well like this or you may work at a slower pace as long as the time allowed is not exceeded.

Enrolment extensions

If a learner requires more time to complete their study, they may apply for an extension. An extension of three months or six months may be granted. AQI reserves the right to charge an additional fee for extending the enrolment period.

Fees and charges

What do my Enrolment Fees cover?

Your Enrolment Fees cover the following:

- RPL conversations and processing of any RPL evidence
- Workbooks and other learning materials available on the learner e-learning centre
- Access to the learner e-learning centre and your teacher for your allocated enrolment period
- Three attempts at any one assessment item
- Certification documentation

AQI reserves the right to charge additional fees in the following circumstances:

- Extension of the enrolment period for either three or six months
- Following more than three attempts at any one assessment item – The unit Enrolment Fee will be payable should the learner wish to re-enrol to continue their study
- Replacement certification documentation is requested – the current fee is listed in the Fee Schedule.

How to pay

Learners can enrol in up to a specified maximum number of units at a time as outlined in the invoice. Fees for these units must be paid in advance. Payment is by bank transfer. Special arrangements can be made for payment by personal or business cheque. Cheques must be cleared before a learner commences RPL or study.

Withdrawals and refunds

A learner must give written notice of an intention to withdraw from study. There is no refund of fees for a unit available once learning material has been accessed.

If a claim is made for a fee refund, the fee refund process will be prompt and easily understood.

If a learner withdraws from a qualification due to illness or extreme hardship and would be unreasonably disadvantaged if they were not granted a refund, AQI may, at its discretion, allow a partial refund of fees. The following conditions will apply:

- The learner must produce satisfactory evidence of the circumstances of their withdrawal, for example medical certificates
- Withdrawal must take place prior to the end of their enrolment period.

If a learner withdraws from their Recognition and Study Plan, results will be provided for all units competently completed and for which fees have been paid in full.

Cancellation by AQI

Should AQI cancel a course for any reason, enrolled learners will be entitled to a full refund of the fees already paid with no administrative charges or penalties. Refunds will be processed within 14 days of cancellation. In these circumstances, AQI guarantees to promptly return Enrolment Fees to learners.

Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer

What is national recognition?

AQI recognises and accepts Australian Qualifications Framework Awards and Statements of Attainment issued by other Registered Training Organisations as evidence that a learner has gained competency in the units of competency cited in the Statement of Attainment or covered by the Award.

What is recognition of prior learning?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process that evaluates an individual's current skills and prior learning regardless of how or when the learning has occurred. In this process AQI recognises the

knowledge, skills and experience which learners have gained through their work and life experiences, or other education and training, whether this has occurred through formal or informal learning. The applicant's prior learning is matched against the competency outcomes of a nationally recognised qualification to determine whether they should be given credit towards that qualification. The prior learning must still be current.

AQI advises all learners of the opportunity to apply for RPL prior to enrolment.

AQI RPL procedure

Where possible, RPL at AQI is conducted online or by phone.

Initial Conversation: A teacher has a no obligation phone conversation with you to structure your Recognition and Study Plan and answer any questions you may have.

1. **Step 1, Knowledge Step:** You are emailed written questions to answer on each unit selected for RPL. This is followed up by a conversation with your teacher.
2. **Step 2, Performance Step:** You provide evidence of performing the tasks required for the unit. For example, for the unit Manage meetings you may be asked to provide minutes identifying you as Chair, as well as your Job description and CV.
3. **Step 3, Third party report:** You supply the name of a supervisor to act as a referee, who will be contacted by your teacher.

What is credit transfer?

Credit transfer (CT) is a process that recognises previously completed equivalent formal training which is still current. Credit transfer is granted for an exact unit of competency already completed and assessed as competent.

AQI advises all learners of the opportunity to apply for credit transfer upon enrolment.

AQI Credit Transfer procedure

Submit certified copies of your Statement of Attainment or Academic Transcript showing the code and title of the unit(s) of competency that you wish to be recognised. Documentation must show the date of completion of the previous training. Providing temporary access to your USI Registry is an alternative to providing a certified copy of your Statement of Attainment or Academic Transcript.

Learning with AQI

Training

Competency based training

The aim of competency-based training is to train a learner to a level such that they can demonstrate a task or activity to a pre-determined level of success. Competence is not graded and learners are not judged in relation to other learners. Learners are either competent or not yet competent.

Training packages

Training packages form the basis for most training delivered in the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. A training package is a set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications used to recognise and assess the skills and knowledge people need to perform effectively in the workplace. Training packages are developed with input from industry to meet the training needs of industry.

Where do I go if I need help?

At AQI we provide a supportive learning environment so that learners are able to achieve their learning goals. If you are having difficulties that are interfering with your learning please just contact your teacher.

Teachers are available for contact via email and phone. AQI aims to respond to all requests within 24 hours work days and will endeavour to assist in whatever way we can.

AQI provides helpful information to learners through the AQI website and this Learner Handbook.

Language, literacy and numeracy support services available

Learners are asked to identify their current literacy and numeracy skill levels in the development of their individual Recognition and Study Plan. Where teachers identify a learner who may need support in these areas, those learners will be contacted to discuss further their particular circumstances. Learners who feel they need extra help with language, literacy or numeracy are asked to contact their teacher to discuss available options.

Assessment

Competency based assessment

The pre-enrolment conversation and development of the Recognition and Study Plan will provide clarification and answers to any questions you may still have. In the case of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) your teacher will establish RPL opportunities with you during the development of this Plan. If a further opportunity for RPL arises through your study then the enrolment and enrolment fees will be adjusted accordingly.

In the case of study your learning material will clearly show you the assessment requirements of each unit. It will explain the evidence required to demonstrate competence and how that evidence is to be gathered. Some units may be assessed in combination with other units. If this is the case, your learning material will show this clearly. If you have any queries about what is required from you, please contact your teacher.

All assessment is conducted in compliance with the requirements of the relevant Training Package and complies with the principles of competency-based assessment.

Teachers ensure assessment is valid, reliable, flexible and fair. Teachers ensure the rules of evidence are met in all assessments, that is, assessments are valid, sufficient, current and authentic. All teachers are kept current in changes to training packages and there is regular review and validation of assessment tools and completed assessments.

Learners are asked to complete an Assessment Declaration, stating that the work being submitted is their own. Staff have check systems to help ensure learner assessment is their own work.

If learners are able to demonstrate the required level of skills and knowledge in a Unit of Competency, as outlined in the Training Package guidelines, they receive an assessment of “Competent”; otherwise they receive an assessment of “Not Yet Competent”.

Learners are allowed three attempts at each assessment to achieve a ‘satisfactory’ result except in exceptional circumstances when a teacher may allow more than three attempts. AQI reserves the right to charge fees for re-enrolment following an inability to reach ‘satisfactory’ after three attempts.

Learners have timely access to all results of assessment and feedback from teachers so that they can track their academic progress. Results are available via the learner learning web page.

Learner academic misconduct

AQI is committed to promoting high academic standards where each learner prepares and submits work for assessment which is their own; which acknowledges the work and contribution of others; and which is in accordance with the laws of copyright and guidelines set down for assessments.

Copyright laws give creators and owners of literary and other material works eg books, photos, and DVDs, the exclusive right to deal with those works. Copyright laws also cover digital material found on the internet. A breach of copyright occurs when someone other than the owner illegally obtains a copy of the work. For example, if a learner were to make a photocopy of a whole book instead of buying the book, that would be a breach of copyright. Learners may reproduce a small portion of a work to use in private research and study.

Academic misconduct occurs through deception or when you present another person’s work as your own in an assessment. This can occur for example through cheating or plagiarism.

Cheating occurs when a learner uses some form of deception in their assessment work. For example, they have paid someone else to write an answer to a piece of assessment and submitted it as their own work. Cheating also occurs if a learner copies another learner’s answer and submits it as their own.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It occurs when you copy the words or ideas of another person and use them in an assessment as though you thought up the words or ideas yourself. You can avoid plagiarism by properly acknowledging the source of your words and ideas using academic referencing.

Breach of copyright, cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable forms of learner behaviour.

All suspected instances of cheating and plagiarism and other forms of academic learner misconduct will be investigated and, if proven, will result in penalties including suspension or cancellation of a learner’s enrolment.

Learners will be given an opportunity to respond to any allegations of misconduct and will be able to appeal a decision. Refer to the section on assessment appeals for more information on this process.

Assessment appeals

Learners have the right to appeal an assessment result if they are not satisfied that the result reflects their assessment. Learners must submit an Assessment Appeal within 14 days of receiving a result.

In the first instance, learners should ask for feedback and discuss the result with their teacher.

If the learner is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they should complete an Assessment Appeal and submit it to the Director of Education within 14 days of receiving the outcome. The Director of Education will respond to the learner within 14 days.

Interacting with AQI

Learner entitlements and responsibilities

Access and equity

At AQI we celebrate individuality and cultural diversity and are committed to the principles of access and equity and non-discrimination. We will not tolerate harassment nor discriminatory behaviour by, or towards, learners or staff.

We provide training and assessment services to all potential participants on an equitable basis, irrespective of their cultural background, their religion, socio-economic status, gender or age. All applicants and learners are treated fairly and without discrimination.

We identify the training needs of our clients and provide responsive and appropriate learning and assessment strategies and support services to help learners progress through their study.

Our teachers provide an inclusive learning environment and make reasonable adjustments as required to meet learner needs. Learning materials do not contain discriminatory content.

Access to learner records

Learners are able to have access to their personal records and are required to keep their personal information up to date.

Learners have timely access to all results of assessment through their teacher or through, in the case of study programs, the learner e-learning centre so that they can effectively track their academic progress.

Privacy of personal information

We understand that your privacy is very important and we are committed to protecting your personal information.

AQI collects and keeps personal information on prospective clients and learners including contact details and enrolment records as well as training, assessment and qualification records.

AQI collects personal information directly from prospective clients and learners and via interactions with staff members, teachers and other partners delivering training, assessment and support services.

AQI only collects, uses and discloses personal information to provide training and assessment and support services. This includes exchanging information within AQI and with its partners involved in delivering training and assessment services.

Where a learner has special needs, we may also collect other personal details that are specifically required to deliver tailored services to meet those individual needs.

Except in circumstances required by law, personal information will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent. We take the security of personal information very seriously and we protect personal information from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

AQI takes all reasonable precautions to ensure that the personal information collected, used and disclosed is accurate, complete and up-to-date. However, the accuracy of the information depends on clients and learners advising us if there are any errors in personal information and keeping us up-to-date with any changes such as contact details.

Learners have a right to access their own personal information that we hold.

Complaints process

AQI is committed to providing the best possible training, in a supportive learning environment, using quality learning materials and dedicated teachers. If, however learners are dissatisfied with some aspect of AQI's

training, assessment or support services, they should raise it with an AQI staff member or teacher who will act positively and proactively to resolve the issue.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with AQI's initial response, they may lodge a complaint in writing, outlining the nature of the grievance and any AQI staff or teachers implicated in the complaint.

AQI undertakes to deal with all complaints fairly and promptly, independently and to respond to learners in a timely manner.

Outcomes from investigations into complaints are included in continuous improvement reviews conducted on a regular basis.

The process must be completed within 60 days and the learner is kept abreast of progress through this time.

Learner code of conduct

At AQI our core values include strong social responsibility and trust as well as the highest levels of integrity and accountability. These values underpin all of our business activities and we would hope that these values underpin your study at AQI. By enrolling at AQI, learners agree to abide by AQI's policies and procedures and this Learner Code of Conduct. Enrolment can be suspended or cancelled if learners breach AQI policies or the principles outlined in this Learner Handbook. This includes that you:

Identity

Make only truthful statements with regard to your identity and your status as a learner.

Cheating

Always submit only your own work for assessment.

Copyright and plagiarism

Avoid plagiarism by acknowledging the original author when referring to or presenting the ideas and writings of others.

Follow any expressed copyright requirements and where necessary request permission from the copyright owner to use a work.

System security

Never give your system username and password to another person.

Immediately notify administration staff if you identify a security problem.

Avoid spreading computer viruses by following good computer security protocols.

Privacy

Do not share information of a private or confidential nature or publish personal contact information, including names and pictures, without permission.

Do not forward email messages without the permission of the sender.

Illegal or destructive activity

Do not attempt to gain unauthorised access to the AQI network beyond your authorised access.

Do not use the AQI network to engage in any illegal activities.

Do not publish information, which if acted upon may cause harm to others.

Do not act in a way that is detrimental to AQI.

Online communication

Online communication can easily lead to miscommunication. Netiquette (or internet etiquette) provides the social code for how to communicate using online communication tools, including emails, online forums and live chat. All learners are expected to adhere to the following netiquette rules:

Respect others

- Be respectful and considerate of other users

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- Be sensitive to opinions which may be different from yours
- Be slow to criticise - remember you may be misinterpreting what they are trying to say

Be careful in your use of language

- Be clear and succinct in your use of language - avoid rambling
- Make your communication appropriate and relevant – stay on topic; avoid hijacking a discussion
- Think twice before reacting and use moderate language if you disagree with someone or if you feel you must correct a mistake someone has made in what they have said or posted
- Don't engage in personal attacks or use hostile, insulting, or discriminatory language - use capital letters sparingly
- Review your words before you send or post to make sure you are saying what you mean to say

Avoid inappropriate use of electronic communications

- Don't send electronic junk mail such as spam or chain emails
- Use distribution lists thoughtfully and appropriately

Protect your reputation

- Everything you post on the internet becomes a record which reflects on you – only post content that you are happy to be permanently recorded
- Be careful how you respond to a personal attack on yourself – it is often best to ignore
- Share your knowledge freely so that others may learn from you

A breach of netiquette which could be considered to be electronic harassment may constitute misconduct. Please contact your teacher or the Director of Education to report incidents of electronic harassment or misconduct.

WH&S in study and assessment

Sitting at a desk or working on a computer for lengthy periods can be detrimental to health unless certain precautions are taken. All learners are reminded of the following good practices that will help to avoid poor posture and other work habits that may lead to ill health:

- Sit in an upright chair that provides good support to your back
- If your feet don't naturally sit flat on the floor, provide a support for your feet so that your knees are at right angles and are supported
- Arrange your keyboard and chair position so that your wrists are comfortably held straight while working on a keyboard
- Arrange your monitor height and distance so that you are looking slightly downwards as you work
- Take regular breaks from the computer; stand up, move around and change your focus from time to time.

All assessment must be conducted in a safe environment. If relevant to the unit you are doing, you will be asked to complete a WHS pre-assessment checklist to confirm that you are conducting your assessment activities in a safe environment. Learner awards

RTO (Registered Training Organisations) Closures

While this happens rarely training providers may close for a range of reasons. ASQA (Australian Skills Quality Authority) provides advice should this occur on <https://www.asqa.gov.au/learners/provider-closures>.

Issuing and re-issuing certification documents

AQI ensures all requirements of the relevant Training Package are met before an Award or a Statement of Attainment is issued.

Learners who complete all requirements of a qualification (including payment of all fees and charges) are issued with an Award and an Academic Transcript within 21 days of qualification completion.

Learners who complete part of the requirements of a qualification (including payment of all fees and charges) receive a Statement of Attainment showing units of competency for which all outcomes have been met.

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There is no charge for the initial certification documentation. However, if replacement documentation is requested AQI will charge a fee to issue a copy. The current fee is listed in the Fee Schedule.

Learner feedback and surveys

AQI welcomes suggestions and feedback from learners. Suggestions may be submitted via email at any time. They are given due consideration and included in continuous improvement reviews conducted on a regular basis.

In addition, AQI conducts learner engagement surveys and, where applicable, employer satisfaction surveys, on an annual basis. Survey responses are analysed and resultant data is included in AQI's continuous improvement reviews. Survey response data is also included in AQI's annual report to the Australian Skills Quality Authority which regulates its registration as an RTO.

We hope to make your study with The Australian Qualifications Institute (AQI) an enjoyable and successful experience.

Andrea Harris and Marilyn Sorbello

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