

RTO Student Handbook

**Vision Australia**

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**Vision Australia Registered Training Organisation (RTO)**

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# WELCOME TO VISION AUSTRALIA RTO

Vision Australia Registered Training Organisation (RTO) welcomes you. We aim to provide high quality training programs and related services to clients, staff, volunteers and members of the public.

Familiarise yourself with the contents of this Student Handbook as well as your Course Handbook. You may find it useful to refer to these documents throughout your course. Alternatively, direct any queries to your Trainer or Course Coordinator.

In Vision Australia, the RTO is located within the Client Services division. The RTO is administered by the RTO Management Committee.

# TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this Student Handbook the term “student” refers to a person who is enrolled in a qualification or unit of competency on Vision Australia RTO’s scope of registration. The term “client” refers to people who have received a service from Vision Australia. Some clients may be students but all students are not necessarily clients.

Where the words “Vision Australia” precede the name of a policy or procedure within this Student Handbook, this indicates that it is a general organisational policy or procedure rather than one which is specific to the RTO. Where only the name of the policy or procedure appears, the document is one that is RTO specific.

# VISION AUSTRALIA – THE ORGANISATION

# Vision

Vision Australia is a leading national provider of blindness and low vision services in Australia. We work in partnership with Australians who are blind or have low vision to help them achieve the possibilities they choose in life.

# Mission

Vision Australia will achieve this through creating a community partnership of knowledge, skills and expertise to enrich the participation in life of people who are blind or have low vision and their families. We will ensure that the community recognises their capabilities and contributions.

**Values**

Person Centred

Accountable

Collaborative

Commercially focused

Agile

Vision Australia’s values define us as an organisation, guide our interactions with each other and govern how we work with clients.

# VISION AUSTRALIA RTO

Vision Australia RTO has the following nationally recognised qualification on its scope of registration.

Course within Client Services:

***10311NAT Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility***

Target student groups: Staff or members of the public who wish to become Orientation and Mobility Specialists – professionals who equip people who are blind or have low vision with the necessary skills and concepts to move safely, efficiently, confidently and independently.

Nationally recognised training is predominantly offered in Victoria (Kooyong and Kensington), New South Wales (Enfield) and Queensland (Coorparoo). Training programs may be offered at other metropolitan and regional areas in each state as determined by Vision Australia RTO resourcing and demand.

# Code of Practice

1. Vision Australia RTO shall at all times act with integrity in dealings with all students, staff, employers and members of the community.
2. Vision Australia RTO provides (prospective) students with clear and accurate marketing material and information to safeguard their interests. This includes the terms and conditions of student enrolment and information regarding all fees, payment details and refunds.
3. Vision Australia RTO maintains a learning environment that is conducive to the success of students. Vision Australia RTO ensures that the facilities, materials, resources and methods used for the provision of training are adequate and appropriate for the achievement of required outcomes.
4. Vision Australia RTO ensures the maintenance of relevant and up-to-date records, and security of all current and archival records. Student information is treated confidentially. Students can access their records upon request.
5. Vision Australia RTO ensures its training premises comply with all laws including Occupational Health and Safety, and provide a comfortable environment for learning.
6. Vision Australia RTO has clearly documented procedures for monitoring and managing all training operations, and reviewing stakeholder satisfaction.
7. Vision Australia RTO adheres to policies and practices which ensure quality training, assessment and related services are provided, continually improved and in accordance with:
* the VET (Vocational Education and Training) Quality Framework (VQF)
* State and Commonwealth legislation and regulatory requirements

# GUIDELINES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

(Any Vision Australia ‘guidelines, policies and procedures’ documents referred to in this handbook will be made available to enrolled students on request)

# Access and Equity

Vision Australia RTO is actively committed to access and equity principles in the delivery of its services and training environments in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth), Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth), Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth), Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW) and Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Victoria).

Vision Australia RTO aims to provide the best possible opportunities for students to access our full range of training, assessment and associated services. Students will not be denied access to services where they are deemed eligible for such a service and where the Organisation has the appropriate allocated resources to provide the service to a high quality.

Access to courses requires the prospective student to meet any prerequisite requirements as stated in the Course Flyer and Course Handbook. Selection criteria are also included in these documents and may involve applicants undertaking an interview and assessment.

Vision Australia RTO and its staff treat each prospective and enrolled student equitably and without discrimination. Staff are professional and supportive at all times in their approach.

Vision Australia RTO is committed to providing an inclusive environment where students are treated in an ethical and responsible manner. Programs are designed to enhance flexibility of delivery and assessment in order to maximise the opportunity for access, participation and support of all students. Delivery alternatives may include self-paced learning, computer-assisted learning, flexible timetabling, face-to-face tutorials and individualised learning.

Vision Australia RTO takes meaningful, transparent and reasonable steps to consult, consider and implement reasonable adjustments for students including those with a disability.

Refer to the sections titled *Assessment* and *Support Services*.

# Alcohol and Other Drugs

Students are prohibited from being in an unfit state due to the use of alcohol or other drugs while undertaking training and assessment activities.

The use, possession, purchase, sale or distribution of illegal substances on the Organisation’s premises, during work placement or while undertaking training and assessment activities is not permitted and will result in the appropriate authorities being notified. Disciplinary action may also be taken by the Organisation including suspension, cancellation of enrolment or any other penalty appropriate under the circumstances.

Refer to the *Vision Australia Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy*, *RTO Student Disciplinary Policy* and *RTO Student Disciplinary Procedure*.

# Assessment

At the beginning of each unit/subject, the Trainer will provide an Assessment Plan which describes the assessment tasks you must complete and the required due dates. At times a holistic approach to assessment is taken by clustering units of competency and so an assessment task will span requirements for more than one unit. This results in a more complete job role approach rather than a focus on individual tasks.

Assessment may involve a range of methods including written documents, projects, reports, practical demonstrations, oral presentations, case studies, problem solving tasks and portfolios.

In order to be eligible to be deemed competent against a unit of competency, the student must:

* Complete/submit **all** assessment tasks as detailed in the Learning and Assessment Plan.
* Complete/submit all assessment tasks **on or before the due date** specified unless a revised date has been negotiated with the Trainer in advance.

Students must submit only their own work (refer to the section titled *Cheating and Plagiarism*), which is expected to be of a high quality in terms of both presentation and content. This includes appropriate referencing (refer to the section titled *Referencing*), syntax, punctuation and spelling.

Vision Australia RTO acknowledges the principles of assessment and is committed to validity, reliability, flexibility and fairness in assessment processes for its training programs. It is also committed to ensuring the rules of evidence including sufficiency, currency, authenticity and validity are present.

***Special Circumstances***

1. On occasions, students may be unable to attend a scheduled assessment because of illness or a personal situation. The student must notify the Trainer prior to the assessment time of their inability to attend. Where the student is ill, a medical certificate must be provided to the Trainer within one week or as agreed with the Trainer.

Missed assessments must be:

* rescheduled within five working days of the original assessment date
* completed within twenty working days of the original assessment date
1. Students requesting special consideration for extension of time to an assessment task must do so in writing. It must include the reason for the request and evidence where applicable, and be lodged prior to the assessment task due date. The request is forwarded to the Course Coordinator who will provide a response in writing within one week. Approval must be retained by the student and attached to the assignment upon submission.
2. The above timeframes may be varied at the discretion of the Course Coordinator.
3. Where conditions 1. or 2. above are not adhered to, students will be deemed Not Yet Competent.

***Request for Reassessment***

If a student completes an assessment task that is unsatisfactory, they may undertake a reassessment by contacting the Course Coordinator. This must be done within five working days of the relevant result being released. The Course Coordinator will notify the student of the reassessment details. No fee is payable.

A second request for reassessment of a task will only be granted where attendance requirements have been met and all other relevant course activities have been undertaken. A fee of $150.00 is payable to cover the costs of reassessment.

***Assessment Appeals***

All students have the right to appeal any assessment decision if they believe the assessment or process was invalid, inappropriate or unfair.

Before making an appeal, it is recommended that students firstly discuss the matter with their Trainer at a mutually agreed time. If still dissatisfied, students should speak with the Course Coordinator.

If still not satisfied, students are entitled to make a formal appeal in writing within ten working days of the result being released. The formal written appeal should be lodged with the RTO Coordinator. Once a formal appeal is lodged, a third party may be appointed in an attempt to resolve the issue. Any decision recommended by this party is not binding to either party in the dispute.

If still not satisfied, another registered provider in the same curriculum area may be appointed to arbitrate and reassess the student if necessary.

If no satisfactory solution is reached, students can lodge a complaint with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). Further details can be obtained at [Making a complaint | Australian Skills Quality Authority](http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint.html) or by telephoning the **ASQA Info Line on 1300 701 801** or by emailing enquiries@asqa.gov.au.

Students have the right to involve a support person or advocate to assist or represent them during this process.

Refer to the section titled *Complaints and Appeals*, and the *RTO Complaints and Appeals Policy* and *RTO Complaints and Appeals Procedure*.

# Assessment Task Submission

All assignments must be typed unless otherwise specified in the assessment task details. Hand written work is not acceptable. Assignments must be submitted as directed by your Trainer and the method will vary across sites. The Checklist must be attached to the assignment with the Student Declaration signed and dated which states that the written work is your own.

Written work must be submitted in hard copy (paper) or via email as specified by the Trainer. In general, assignments may not be submitted by fax or on a memory stick.

Always keep a copy of any work that you submit. Remember that if your copy is stored electronically, making a backup copy is good practice. The inability to retrieve a file is both extremely frustrating and an unacceptable reason for being unable to submit work. It is your responsibility to resubmit any work if requested. Vision Australia RTO does not accept responsibility for work that cannot be located.

If you are having difficulties with an assignment, speak to the Trainer **before** the due date so the situation can be addressed. One day prior to the due date will not necessarily allow sufficient time to speak with the Trainer and do the work required to enable successful completion.

# Attendance

Attendance is an essential element of training programs. It is important that students attend all classes, practical sessions and work placement days. All courses have a minimum attendance requirement of 95%.

Students should arrive on time, including returning from breaks, to all sessions regardless of type. Lateness interrupts others and valuable work is missed.

Where work placements are undertaken, students are required to be flexible as the host organisation may require attendance at times which vary from your typical class schedule.

Classes, practical sessions or work placements (including time allocated for self paced or online studies) will not be scheduled:

* for more than eight hours in any one day

or

* outside of 8.00am and 10.00pm on any day for full time students

An Attendance List is used to record attendance and absence at each session. If you arrive late you will be marked absent for the amount of time missed.

Students should notify their Trainer if they are unable to attend a scheduled class, practical session or work placement prior to its commencement. If absence occurs during a work placement, the Supervisor must also be contacted. If an absence is due to illness, you are requested to provide a medical certificate upon your return. Where an assessment is missed, a medical certificate is required to allow you to reschedule the assessment. (Refer to Special Circumstances in the section titled *Assessment*.)

A medical certificate does not exempt the student from undertaking work or activities for that day and additional tasks may also need to be successfully completed to compensate for the absence. The student must accept responsibility for any absence or lateness and do what is necessary to catch up.

At times, people experience extreme personal difficulties or illness and consequently their attendance is impacted for an extended period of time. If you find yourself in this situation, it is essential you contact your Trainer or Course Coordinator so alternative arrangements can be made. (Refer to the section titled *Course Requirements*.)

# Certificates

Upon completion of your course, you will receive a Certificate with the Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo. The NRT logo certifies national vocational education and training leading to Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications or statements of attainment. A statement of attainment is issued when an individual completes one or more units of competency from a nationally recognised qualification.

Where a student withdraws or transfers from a course, or their enrolment is cancelled, a statement of attainment will be issued for units of competency completed. All Certificates are issued within six weeks of completing or ceasing a course providing any fees related to the Certificate have been paid in full.

Store your Certificate in a safe place. A replacement Certificate can be obtained by forwarding your request including your full name, address, telephone number, course completed and the date completed (if known) to rto@visionaustralia.org. There is no fee charged for replacement Certificates. Allow ten working days for processing.

# Change of Enrolment

Change of enrolment is subject to program availability. It will not normally be considered after the program starts unless there is a compelling reason for the change. Change of enrolment may occur if the Course Coordinator and student agree on the benefits of the change and it does not disrupt other students. Refunds can only be made as a result of changes to enrolment subject to the Refund Policy.

Refer to the section titled *Refunds*, and the *RTO Fees, Charges and Refund Policy*.

# Changes to Personal Details

If there are changes to your personal details, notify the Course Coordinator in writing within seven working days. Important information and your Certificate may not reach you if the RTO does not have your current contact details.

# Cheating and Plagiarism

Vision Australia RTO does not tolerate cheating or plagiarism, and a penalty may be imposed where either occurs. Cheating is to act dishonestly in any way where you present work to a Trainer or Assessor as genuinely representing your understanding of, and ability in, the subject concerned. Plagiarism is to copy work without acknowledging the source and is a form of cheating.

Cheating includes but is not limited to:

* using notes or other resources without permission during formal testing
* stealing an examination or marking guide
* submitting someone else’s work as your own (regardless of whether or not you have the person’s permission)
* submitting an assignment that has been duplicated with or without modifications from another source including the internet
* permitting another student to submit your work as their own
* having more than one person work on a task and each student submitting a copy as individual work
* using any part of someone else’s work without proper acknowledgement

Cheating does not include:

* discussing course content and assessment tasks to better understand the subject and what is required with your Trainer or other students
* submitting work completed independently or with the support of your Trainer
* obtaining help to correct minor errors in spelling, grammar or syntax
* submitting one assignment from a group of students where this is explicitly permitted or required
* using other people’s ideas where they are acknowledged in the appropriate way by referencing (Refer to the section titled *Referencing*.)

The integrity of a group project is the responsibility of all members of the group. Therefore, if cheating of any kind is found in a group project, all members of the group will be held responsible and will be subject to the disciplinary process.

Any RTO staff member or student who suspects an incidence of cheating or plagiarism is responsible for reporting the situation to the Course Coordinator who will complete the RTO Complaints Form. The Course Coordinator will investigate the matter ad determine what further action, if any, should be taken. The RTO Coordinator may be involved in this process.

The penalties for academic misconduct include:

* assigning Not Satisfactorily Completed to an assessment task
* awarding of Not Yet Competent for a unit of competency
* suspension from the course
* cancellation of enrolment

Refer to the *Cheating and Plagiarism Policy*, *Cheating and Plagiarism Procedure*, *RTO Student Disciplinary Policy* and *RTO Student Disciplinary Procedure*.

# Code of Conduct of Students

All students are expected to behave in a considerate and courteous manner when dealing with staff and other students.

You can expect Vision Australia RTO staff to treat people in a fair and non-discriminatory way and at all times be professional in performing their duties.

All students and staff have the right to train and work in an environment free from harassment, discrimination or threatening behaviour.

Vision Australia RTO strives to provide a challenging and interesting training environment. Students must not interfere directly or indirectly with the learning of others or hinder staff from carrying out their duties.

It is expected that students will take reasonable care of Vision Australia’s premises, property and equipment.

Students should bear in mind the organisations they attend during work placements could be prospective employers. Students are expected to act in accordance with the work placement organisation’s policies, procedures and code of conduct.

# Complaints and Appeals

Vision Australia RTO recognises that differences can arise.

All complaints will be handled professionally and confidentially in order to achieve a satisfactory resolution. They will be managed fairly, equitably and efficiently. All parties will have a clear understanding of the steps involved as detailed in the *RTO Complaints and Appeals Procedure*. Complaints should not be discussed openly throughout the Organisation.

Students are encouraged to raise any matters of concern including those that relate to training delivery and assessment, the quality of teaching, student amenities, discrimination and sexual harassment. In the first instance, discuss issues relating to a subject with the relevant Trainer where possible. Other points of contact for discussing issues are the Course Coordinator or RTO Coordinator.

If you remain dissatisfied after following this informal process, you may lodge a formal complaint using the *RTO Complaints Form* or a formal appeal in writing. All documents must be submitted to rto@visionaustralia.org and reference to the *RTO Complaints and Appeals Procedure* should be made for further details. Students are encouraged to resolve complaints and appeals through the mechanisms in this procedure.

Where a student remains dissatisfied, they may request the matter be further reviewed by an external dispute resolution process, by Dispute Resolution Centre of Victoria who is appointed by Vision Australia for this purpose. The contact details of this external body are:

Dispute Assessment Officer

Dispute Resolution Centre of Victoria

Level 4, 456 Lonsdale Street

Melbourne VIC 3000

T 03 9603 8370

W <http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/>

If a student remains dissatisfied, they can refer the matter to the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). Further details can be obtained at [Making a complaint | Australian Skills Quality Authority](http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint.html) or by telephoning the ASQA Info Line on 1300 701 801 or by emailing enquiries@asqa.gov.au.

Refer to the *RTO Complaints and Appeals Policy* and *RTO Complaints and Appeals Procedure*.

# Course Requirements

Students must meet course requirements for each unit of competency in which they are enrolled. This involves attending scheduled classes, practical sessions and work placements as applicable, and satisfactorily completing each assessment task.

The Course Coordinator will monitor your attendance and performance. Where there are concerns, a Meeting Request Letter will be sent to your home address asking you to contact the nominated staff member within five working days to arrange a time to meet with them. If you do not make contact within five working days, a second and final letter will be sent and once again you will be requested to contact the staff member stated. If there is no response within five working days to the second letter, Vision Australia RTO may cancel your enrolment and Centrelink payments may be affected.

The purpose of requesting a meeting is to discuss possible options and strategies which might be implemented to support you in achieving your goals.

In order to stay enrolled, it is essential that you:

* Notify your Course Coordinator in writing within seven working days if you change your address or phone number. (Refer to section titled *Changes to Personal Details*.)
* Speak with your Trainer or Course Coordinator if you are experiencing difficulties meeting your course requirements.

# Credit Transfer

Credit transfer is the recognition of learning achieved through formal education and training. Vision Australia RTO recognises the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by all other RTOs. Credit transfer allows units of competency previously achieved by a student to be recognised when they are enrolling in a related course where those units can assist them in meeting the requirements for a qualification.

To apply for credit transfer, the applicant must complete and submit to the Course Coordinator:

* RTO Credit Transfer Application Form
* certified copy of the qualification or statement of attainment
* RTO Enrolment Form to apply for the training program applicable to the units of competency for which credit transfer is requested

Refer to the *Credit Transfer Policy* and *Credit Transfer Procedure*.

# Deferring Study

Students wishing to apply to defer must forward their request in writing to the Course Coordinator. An appropriate reason for wanting to defer must be given. After consideration of your case and planned future courses and resources, you will be notified in writing of the outcome. This will occur within ten working days of receiving your written request.

# Disciplinary Action

Misconduct of students will result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the *RTO Student Disciplinary Policy* and *RTO Student Disciplinary Procedure*. The Code of Conduct of Students identifies the expected behaviour of students. Disciplinary action will be taken where students act outside the Code of Conduct, any applicable Vision Australia or RTO specific policy, or State or Commonwealth laws.

**Misconduct** is any behaviour that is in breach of the RTO’s policies or procedures. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, disrupting students or staff, cheating and plagiarism, and inappropriate use of mobile phones. **Serious and wilful misconduct** is any deliberate or wilful behaviour which may cause serious risk to the health and safety of a person or to the reputation of the RTO, significantly impact costs or be illegal, such that it warrants the RTO cancelling the student’s enrolment. This includes, but is not limited to, stealing, fraud, intoxication while undertaking training and assessment activities, harassment, threatening behaviour or assault.

The degree of disciplinary action taken will depend upon the severity of the breach and the number of times the breach occurs. The penalties that may be imposed for misconduct are:

* a reprimand and caution (warning)
* payment for the cost of repairing or replacing damaged resources, equipment or facilities
* an appropriate period of suspension from classes, practical sessions or work placement
* cancellation of enrolment

Refer to the section titled *Code of Conduct of Students*, and the *RTO Student Disciplinary Policy* and *RTO Student Disciplinary Procedure*.

# Dress Code

Vision Australia RTO requires students to dress in a manner which is neat, does not offend others and meets OHS requirements.

When attending work placement, the dress code and culture of the host organisation should be observed.

# Emergencies

In case of fire or other emergency, please familiarise yourself with the relevant site’s designated meeting place and exits. All Vision Australia sites conduct regular fire drills. Your cooperation and participation is appreciated.

# Enrolment

Prior to enrolment, it is recommended that prospective students read the relevant Course Flyer and/or Course Handbook which provide specific course information including prerequisite requirements, course structure and assessment requirements. Further details and information can be provided by the Course Coordinator.

# Equal Opportunity

Vision Australia RTO is committed to treating people equitably and ensuring discriminatory behaviour does not occur. It is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of race, gender identity, nationality or ethnicity, marital status, sexual preference, lawful sexual activity, physical features, pregnancy, breastfeeding, age, impairment, disability, family responsibilities, industrial activity, religious or political belief or activity.

Discrimination may be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of one of the characteristics listed above.

Indirect discrimination is more difficult to identify and occurs when a policy or requirement which at first glance seems fair, actually operates to the detriment of a particular individual or group of people because of a characteristic of that individual or group, such as age, family circumstances or gender.

Students have the right to be treated equitably and with respect, and the responsibility to treat their fellow students and staff in the same manner.

Refer to the *Vision Australia Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy*.

# Equipment Requirements

Students are expected to provide certain equipment for their studies including:

* stationary such as notebooks, pens, highlighters, ruler and eraser
* computer with Microsoft Word and internet access

# Feedback and Quality Improvement

Vision Australia RTO collects data regularly to monitor, manage and achieve continuous improvement in the delivery and assessment of its training programs. We value and welcome constructive feedback from all stakeholders regarding any aspect of our services.

Evaluation forms are distributed to students at various stages throughout their course including a government driven “Learner Questionnaire” which is distributed to students via a link in an email toward the end of your course. Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is appreciated.

Students wishing to provide management with feedback on any issues, concerns or areas for improvement are encouraged to email rto@visionaustralia.org or complete an RTO Continuous Improvement Report.

# Fees

Vision Australia RTO acknowledges it has a responsibility to protect the fees paid by students in advance of their training and assessment services being delivered. To meet our responsibilities, Vision Australia RTO may accept payment of no more than $1,000 from each individual student prior to the commencement of the course. Following course commencement, Vision Australia RTO may require payment of additional fees in scheduled payments in advance from the student, attributable to tuition or other services yet to be delivered to the student, that do not exceed $1500.00 at any given time in advance.

Students must pay their fees on or before the due date. Please contact your Course Coordinator immediately, if you are uncertain of your payment requirements or face difficulties in meeting your payment schedule.

Students who do not pay their fees by the due date may be suspended from their course until outstanding fees are paid. In extreme cases, a student’s enrolment will be cancelled and Centrelink will be notified.

Where fees are not paid, a debt collection agency will be engaged to deal with the matter. Any fees incurred in this process will be the responsibility of the student.

Refer to the section titled *Refunds*, and the *RTO Fees, Charges and Refund Policy*.

# Harassment

Vision Australia RTO will not tolerate any harassment, victimisation, bullying or any such conduct that has the purpose or effect of threatening an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment. This unacceptable conduct may relate to sex, race, national origin, religion, disability, sexuality or age.

Harassment is unlawful under State and Commonwealth legislation and all harassment, bullying and victimisation are contrary to the duty of care to provide a safe environment for work and learning.

Harassment, bullying and victimisation can take many forms. It can be covert or subtle, direct or indirect.

Examples of harassment may include:

* unwelcome physical contact
* repeated unwelcome invitations
* insulting or threatening language or gestures
* continual unjustified comments about a student’s work or work capacity
* jokes and comments about someone’s ethnicity, colour or race
* pictures, posters, graffiti and electronic images which are offensive, obscene or objectionable

Examples of victimisation may include:

* unfavourable treatment such as aggression
* refusing to provide information to someone
* ignoring a person
* mocking customs or cultures

Examples of bullying may include:

* a person who uses strength or power to coerce others by fear
* behaviour that intimidates, degrades or humiliates a person
* aggression, verbal abuse and behaviour which is intended to punish
* personality clashes and constant “put-downs”
* persistent, unreasonable criticism of student work performance
* violence, both physical and threatened, against any student or staff member

Students and staff should be aware that differing social and cultural standards may mean behaviour that is acceptable to some may be perceived as offensive by others. Such conduct, when experienced or observed, should be reported to the Course Coordinator. All complaints will be promptly investigated. The privacy of a student filing a report and the individual under investigation shall be respected at all times consistent with the obligation to conduct a fair and thorough investigation.

All staff and students are expected to work in an atmosphere based on mutual respect for the rights and differences of each individual.

Disciplinary action may be taken against students or staff who are found to have harassed other students or staff.

Vision Australia RTO expects all students to uphold the spirit of this policy. Breaches of the policy are considered to be “misconduct” or “serious misconduct” which may result in expulsion for students or dismissal for staff.

Refer to the *Vision Australia Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy*.

# Induction and Orientation Program

An Induction and Orientation Program is conducted for students who enrol in more than one unit of competency. This session helps familiarise students with the policies and procedures of the RTO, and includes course information. It is also designed to orientate students to the building where they will be undertaking studies and provides an opportunity to ask individual questions.

Where students enrol in only one unit of competency or undertake training via flexible delivery mode, students are referred to this RTO Student Handbook. All students are required to complete an Induction and Orientation Information: Receipt and Feedback Form.

# Internet Usage

**Your internet usage at Vision Australia can be monitored and traced using your user ID.** The viewing, sending and printing of obscene, offensive or defamatory material is prohibited. Sending or forwarding of nuisance messages is prohibited. Perpetrators are subject to disciplinary action and possibly legal action.

# Legislation

Below are the key legislation which affects Vision Australia RTO operations:

**Commonwealth legislation**

* *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*
* *Legislative Instruments Act 2003*
* *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
* *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986*
* *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
* *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
* *Disability Standards for Education 2005*
* *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
* *Racial Hatred Act 1995*
* *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
* *Privacy Act 1988 and National Privacy Principles 2001*
* *Workplace Relations Act 1996*
* *Skilling Australia’s Workforce Act 2005*
* *Child Protection Act 1999*
* *Copyright Act 1968*
* *Trade Practices Act 1974*

**New South Wales legislation**

* *Vocational Education and Training Act 2005*
* *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*
* *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*
* *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998*
* *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
* *Copyright Act 1879 (as amended 2003)*
* *Disability Services Act 1993 and Disability Services Regulation 2003*
* *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
* *Fair Trading Act 1987*
* *Industrial Relations (Child Employment) Act 2006*

**Victoria legislation**

* *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
* *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
* *Accident Compensation (Workcover Insurance) Act 1993*
* *Disability Act 2006*
* *Fair Trading Act 1999*
* *Working With Children Act 2005*

**Queensland legislation**

* *Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000*
* *Vocational Education, Training and Employment Regulation 2000*
* *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
* *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*
* *Child Employment Act 2006*
* *Child Protection Act 1999*
* *Fair Trading Act 1989*

**Australian Capital Territory legislation**

* *Training and Tertiary Education Act 2003*
* *Work Safety Act 2008*
* *Workers Compensation Act 1951*
* *Discrimination Act 1991*
* *Fair Trading Act 1992*

# Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are to be switched off during training and assessment unless they are specifically required in order to undertake these activities.

# National Police History Check and Working with Children Check

Where students undertake a work placement and have contact with clients, they are required to undergo a National Police History Check as part of the selection process. In addition, where the work placement involves contact with children, a Working with Children Check (Volunteer Check) is required.

Vision Australia RTO will arrange and cover the cost of your National Police History Check. You will be requested to complete a Fit2Work Consent Form and provide proof of identity (100 point check). We are unable to accept a previous National Police History Check.

It is the student’s responsibility to arrange and cover any costs associated with obtaining a Working with Children Check. This process differs between states.

Vision Australia RTO must receive the results of checks **prior to confirming your enrolment**. If the result of a check is deemed unsatisfactory to Vision Australia, the individual will be denied a place in the course or their enrolment will be terminated immediately. Vision Australia does not refund any monies to students in relation to costs incurred for checks that are deemed unsatisfactory.

Refer to the *Vision Australia Police and Working with Children Checks Policy* and *Vision Australia Police and Working with Children Checks Procedure*.

# Occupational Health and Safety

Vision Australia RTO is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for the benefit of all students, staff and visitors.

Management is responsible for ensuring that the level of Occupational Health and Safety is not compromised and recognises its obligation under State and Commonwealth rules and regulations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (1985) and associated regulations.

It is essential students report all safety incidents, hazards and near misses immediately to their Trainer who is responsible for assisting in the completion of a Safety Incident/Hazard/Near Miss Report Form. If students have any concerns or notice a condition or practice that seems unsafe, it is important to report this to your Trainer.

# Policies, Procedures and Additional Information

Vision Australia RTO policies, procedures and forms are available on request. Please speak with your Course Coordinator if you would like a copy of these documents or require any further information.

# Privacy and Confidentiality

Vision Australia RTO is bound by the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act). Any personal information we collect from students will be used, disclosed and stored in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles outlined in the Privacy Act and any applicable state or territory legislation. We will only collect personal information relevant to students’ training program and the business activities that support this. In addition to students’ contact information, other types of personal information we may collect may include enrolment forms, training schedules, attendance lists and assessment records. It is mandatory for Vision Australia RTO to submit certain information to State and Commonwealth government bodies for statistical and reporting purposes, particularly where funding supports the training. A copy of the Vision Australia Privacy Policy is available on our website: [www.visionaustralia.org](http://www.visionaustralia.org).

Refer to the *Vision Australia Privacy Policy, Management of Student Records Policy* and *Management of Student Records Procedure*.

**Property**

During the term of enrolment, a student may be issued with resources or equipment, such as textbooks or orientation and mobility aids, to assist in learning. These resources remain the property of Vision Australia RTO and are only on loan. Students are required to return the Organisation’s property within the time frame nominated by the issuing staff member.

# Public Transport Concession

Full-time enrolment in some courses in some states entitles the student to apply for a concession card for use when travelling on public transport. This eligibility is determined by the relevant state public transport authority.Where applicable, please provide your completed form from the relevant state public transport authority to the Course Coordinator to authorise as required.

# Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

***What is RPL?***

RPL is the acknowledgement of skills and knowledge obtained through:

* formal training (industry and education)
* work experience
* life experience

Each student's case is considered individually. The RPL process involves the student providing evidence of their prior learning and experience. This is then assessed against performance standards which have been determined by industry, from a unit of competency in a nationally recognised training package or an accredited course.

Whilst students may apply for RPL at any time, they are encouraged to apply before commencing a training program. This will reduce unnecessary training and guide the student down a more efficient path to competence. In order to receive RPL, students must follow the formal processes set out in this section. This process is **not** automatic. **Do not assume** RPL will be granted. Submit your application early so you know exactly where you stand.

Fees are calculated on the basis of course cost. Details regarding fees are available on the RTO Fee and Charges Schedule.

***Application for RPL Procedure***

Students who wish to apply for RPL must follow the procedure below.

1. Read the information contained in this section pertaining to RPL carefully.
2. Obtain and read the RPL Kit for Candidates for the relevant course from the Course Coordinator. This document includes a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application Form and unit specific information. The Course Coordinator can also offer guidance.
3. If you decide to apply for RPL, complete the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application Form and compile your Portfolio of Evidence comprising relevant evidence of prior learning. Evidence may include:
* Certified copies of any statements, references or articles about your employment or community involvement.
* Relevant work samples such as reports or completed work products.
* Certified copies of reports, certificates or statements about your education and training. Where education or training details are provided in Section D of your RPL Application Form, a certified transcript of results in English should be attached.
* Outlines from the relevant institutions of any courses you have undertaken.
* Any other information that you feel might aid the assessment of your request.

All evidence provided must be in **English** and copies of documents must be **certified**. Certified means a copy of an original document which has been sighted and signed by a Justice of the Peace (JP). To find a JP in your area, go to <http://australia.gov.au/topics/law-and-justice/justices-of-the-peace> or telephone 1300 365 567. A JP can also be located at your local police station or chemist.

1. Submit your completed form and Portfolio of Evidence with the Course Coordinator.
2. An appropriately qualified Assessor will review your application for RPL. You may be required to participate in a RPL interview, competence conversation and practical assessment to collect evidence to support your application. (Refer to RPL Interview and Competence Conversation in this section.) Furthermore, you will be asked to provide the name and contact details of preferably two employers or referees as third party verification.
3. After assessing all evidence supplied and collected through this process, the Assessor will make one of the following decisions:
* **Grant RPL.** You will be notified in writing of the units of competency for which you have been granted RPL and consequently, your study load will be reduced.
* **Deny RPL.** This means that the information supplied was insufficient to demonstrate competency against the performance criteria, and you will need to undertake and successfully complete the full requirements of the course at Vision Australia RTO. You will be notified in writing of the outcome.

***RPL Interview and Competence Conversation***

**Preparation**

Although the RPL interview and competence conversation are not an exam or as nerve wracking as other interviews, a certain degree of preparation is necessary.

* If you forgot to include or attach information regarding prior learning or experience with your form, write them down to raise in the interview.
* Have an idea of what you want to discuss in relation to past learning or experiences.

**What the student can expect**

When you arrive at the interview or competence conversation you will be welcomed and made to feel comfortable by the Course Coordinator or delegated Assessor. This will likely be one-to-one with an emphasis on encouraging discussion.

The Course Coordinator or delegated Assessor has the training and skills to ensure they properly assess your prior learning, and make a fair and just recommendation on those grounds for the granting of RPL.

* The Course Coordinator will encourage you to discuss your past learning experiences. During these discussions, students may discover additional information for RPL not previously considered.
* You will be encouraged to discuss previous work experience, education, training and interests. These questions will relate to the application form you submitted.
* You are encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification about what you do not understand. It is important for you to understand the process and requirements, should your claim be denied.

**Duration**

The length of the interview and competence conversation will be determined by the amount of information required for a decision to be made.

# Referencing

When completing written assignments, it is acceptable and often essential to include information other people have written from various sources including websites, journals, books and electronic recordings (DVD, television, radio). However, this information must be referenced so it does not appear you are the author which is plagiarism and is **not acceptable**.

Vision Australia RTO uses American Psychological Association (APA) Referencing. Ask your Trainer for a copy of the APA Referencing Study Skills Brochure for details about using this system which includes:

* in-text reference to the source of information
* Reference List included at the end of the assignment

References must be provided wherever you **quote** (use exact words), **paraphrase** (use other people’s ideas using your own words), **summarise** (use main points of someone else’s opinions, theories or data) or use other people’s data or figures.

You are expected to cite all your references in order to:

* **acknowledge** your sources
* allow the reader to **verify** the date/information
* allow the reader to **consult** your sources independently
* show the reader the depth and breadth of your reading
* show the reader how your thinking and reasoning has been formed based on the material you have read

Flinders University of South Australia (2007) Study skills brochure SLC 01/2007. APA Referencing (American Psychological Association).  Retrieved 08/02/2011 from [http://www.flinders.edu.au/slc\_files/Documents/Brochures/ apa\_referencing.pdf](http://www.flinders.edu.au/slc_files/Documents/Brochures/%20apa_referencing.pdf), pp. 1-2.

# Refunds

Students who cancel their enrolment more than 30 days prior to course commencement will be entitled to a full refund of fees paid.

Students who cancel their enrolment less than 30 days prior to course commencement or after course commencement will be entitled to a refund of fees paid as follows:

* Where the student withdraws from a course due to illness (verified by a medical certificate), Vision Australia will refund any course fees paid in advance less an administration fee of 5% of the total course fee.
* Where the student withdraws from a course for any other reason aside illness, Vision Australia will refund only 50% of course fees paid in advance less an additional administration fee of 5% of the total course fee. The amount retained by Vision Australia is required to cover costs of staff and resources which have already been committed based on the student’s initial intention to undertake the course.

Refunds are not transferable to another party.

Discretion may be exercised by the RTO CEO if the student can demonstrate extenuating or significant personal circumstance led to their withdrawal. The student may be offered a full credit toward the tuition fee in another scheduled program in lieu of a refund. The RTO CEO may also authorise a refund of tuition fees if the circumstances require it.

A student requesting a refund is required to complete the RTO Refund Request Form. Where the refund is approved, the refund payment will be paid to the student within thirty days from the date the student submits the form. Refunds are paid via electronic funds transfer using the authorised bank account nominated by the student on the RTO Refund Request Form.

Refer to the *RTO Fees, Charges and Refund Policy*.

# Results

Upon completion of a unit of competency, students are assessed as Competent (C) or Not Yet Competent (NYC).

Results are provided to students in writing within three weeks of the final assessment task submission date as they progress through their course. This process varies between courses so check with your Trainer.

# Student Responsibilities

As a student you are required to take responsibility for:

* advising your Trainer/Course Coordinator if you have previous skills and knowledge and seek recognition of prior learning
* reading all relevant course materials and progressively working on assessment tasks
* monitoring your progress and meeting with your Trainer/Course Coordinator if you are experiencing difficulties or have concerns
* attending all scheduled training sessions and assessments, practical sessions and work placement days
* submitting assessment tasks as per requirements unless otherwise discussed with your Trainer/Course Coordinator
* ensuring all work is your own
* advising your Trainer/Course Coordinator if you require assistance including support services
* participating in course evaluation and providing feedback

# Support Services

Vision Australia RTO is committed to providing support services or referral for students within its scope of operations. The nature of the support depends on an assessment of the individual’s needs.

If you require support or assistance at any point throughout your course, you are invited to contact the Course Coordinator to discuss and design a support strategy. If you are aware of something that might impact your progression through training and assessment prior to course commencement, please notify the Course Coordinator as early as possible to allow us to best cater for your needs. If you do not tell us prior to course commencement about an existing condition that may affect completion of training and assessment, Vision Australia RTO may not be able to provide the support or assistance required.

Support services may include the following areas.

* **Mentoring:** This encompasses study skills support and assistance when applying for RPL.
* **Counselling:** Referral to other services can be provided.
* **Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN):** Vision Australia trainers are equipped with a range of strategies to assist students who struggle with LLN. Where required students can be referred to external agencies for support.
* **IT Support:** Students should contact their Trainer if IT support is required. Where students are staff members, contact can be made directly with IS Support by telephoning 1300 847 466 or emailing issupport@visionaustralia.org.
* **Assistive Technology:** This may include adjustments to lighting, magnifiers, computer screen reading/enlargement software or any other equipment which assists the student to access information. Clients who become students undertake an Assistive Technology Assessment prior to course commencement. All staff have access to a Worksite Assessment which includes the provision of required assistive technology to suit the individual’s needs. All prospective and enrolled students can access free advice and support via the Assistive Technology Help Desk by telephoning 1300 847 466 and asking for the AT Help Desk.
* **isability Support:** Vision Australia provides services or can refer students to an appropriate external agency depending on their individual requirements.
* **Post Program and Exit Services:** These include assistance for clients with job seeking, resume and interview skills, vocational advice and mentoring.

# Unique Student Identifier

The Unique Student Identifier (USI) is a ten-digit, government issued student number, required for all students in nationally recognised training from 2015. This number links to an online account to provide each student with a single record of all of their nationally recognised training. Create your USI at [usi.gov.au](http://usi.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx) – it’s free and takes only a few minutes. All students enrolled in Vision Australia RTO must apply for a USI.

Information on the requirement for students to obtain a USI and how to do so is available on the dedicated USI website ([www.usi.gov.au](http://www.usi.gov.au/)). An RTO can link to the USI website to provide information on the USI to their students and prospective students.

**Victorian Student Number**

The Victorian Student Number (VSN) is a student identification number that is assigned by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to all students in government and non-government schools, and with Vocational Education and Training providers in Victoria. The number, which is unique to each student, is used as a key identifier on a student’s school records and remains with the student throughout their education, until reaching the age of 25. The VSN is 9 digits long, randomly assigned and tied to identifying information about the student (name, gender and date of birth).

If you are aged below 25 years and have not previously attended an educational provider in Victoria, DEECD will automatically provide you with a VSN after you enroll at. If you are aged below 25 years and have attended a Victorian education provider since mid-2009, you are required to obtain your VSN from DEECD by emailing victorian.student.register@edumail.vic.gov.au and then provide this to Vision Australia RTO to complete the enrolment process.

Further information about the VSN is available at:

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/schooladmin/vsn/index.aspx>

Please contact the Vision Australia RTO Manager if there is anything in this course handbook that requires further clarification.

Contact details –

Email rto@visionaustralia.org