

**FORTRESS**  
LEARNING

**STUDENT HANDBOOK  
ACT USER CHOICE FUNDING  
TRAINEESHIPS**



Unlocking potential for brighter futures

RTO 31974

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**This Handbook outlines the key policies, processes, and information that students enrolling in a traineeship need to be aware of.**

**Please read through the following chapters carefully so you understand the expectations for your course and the roles and responsibilities you have as student and the roles and responsibilities that we have as your provider**

## 1. Pre-Enrolment Information

### What we provide

#### For All Students:

- Fortress Learning ensures that all prospective students seeking to enrol in a qualification/training product have access to clear and accurate information before enrolment, including making informed decisions about the training product and the RTO and being made aware of changes that affect them.
- The following information is easily accessible to VET students on the Fortress Learning website and within this Student Handbook and includes:
  - All training product codes and titles, course durations, course mode(s) of delivery, course locations, course commencement dates (where not enrolled in an online course with rolling enrolment dates), workshop schedule, assessment requirements, whether any licensing or occupational licence requirements apply, and details of any third-party arrangements.
  - The training support services, and well-being support services are available both from Fortress Learning and from external service

providers (where Fortress Learning cannot supply them). This information also outlines contact details and website links on how to access the services listed.

- o Any fees and costs payable by the VET student, including payment terms and conditions, refund policies and the availability of any relevant government training entitlements and subsidy arrangements.
- o The VET student's obligations or liabilities, including any obligations relating to work placements, external physical or human resources required within the course, equipment or IT, additional costs and processes associated with VET student withdrawal and obtaining a Unique Student Identifier.
- o The Transition Arrangements in place include information about how Training Package changes affect VET students, including the transition of superseded, deleted, or expired training products, and how Fortress Learning informs VET students of these as soon as practicable.

## **For Trainees only**

### **Notification and Review**

Fortress Learning is notified that you have been nominated for a traineeship. Our Training Manager reviews this notification and confirms if we can proceed with your enrolment.

### **Setting Up Your Pre-Enrolment Meeting**

If your traineeship is approved, we will schedule a Pre-Enrolment Discussion between you, your trainer, and a Student Support Officer.

This meeting must take place within 7 days of our internal approval.

You will receive a calendar invite to your email with the date, time, and meeting details.

## What's Covered in the Pre-Enrolment Meeting

In this meeting, we will:

1. Confirm your eligibility to enrol.
2. Assess your current skills.
3. Provide course information (including tuition fees and any exemptions or concessions available)
4. Discuss Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Credit Transfers (if applicable)
5. Review your Language, Literacy & Numeracy (LLN) needs (if applicable)
6. Identify any support you may need during your traineeship.

This meeting helps us tailor your training to suit your background, experience, and goals.

## After your meeting is booked

- You will receive a Welcome Email which will include this Student Guide.
- Your employer will also receive a notification.
- Within 24 hours, you will receive an LLN Assessment (Language, Literacy and Numeracy) to complete.
- You will have 3 business days to complete the LLN.

*Note: Please complete this on time to avoid delays.*

## Foundation Skills Assessment Procedure

All Traineeship students seeking to enrol with Fortress Learning may be required to complete a Foundation Skill Assessment Survey

This tool has been developed using.

- ACSF (Australian Core Skills Framework) – *A national framework that describes core skill levels in learning, reading, writing, oral communication, and numeracy. It is used to assess and develop adult learners' foundation skills in education, training, and workplaces.*
- CSWF (Core Skills for Work Framework) – *A framework that outlines workplace-related skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork, communication, and self-management. It helps individuals understand and develop the non-technical skills needed for successful employment and career progression.*
- DSF (Digital Skills Framework) – *A framework that maps out the essential digital skills required for work, study, and everyday life. It includes areas like using digital devices, online communication, data security, and problem-solving in digital environments.*

These frameworks have been used to create a tool that lets us evaluate your core skills in the following areas.

- Learning
- Digital literacy
- Oral communication
- Reading
- Writing
- Planning and organising
- Problem-solving
- Self-Management
- Initiative and Enterprise
- Numeracy
- Teamwork

The facilitator will analyse information received from this test. The facilitator will then contact students who are identified as requiring support in foundation skills and outline some strategies to apply.

Should the Foundation Skill Assessment identify large gaps in foundation skills, potential students will then be directed to discuss possible other course options with the course advisor and a full refund of any application fees paid will be provided.

## **After Your LLN is Reviewed**

The Operations Manager will analyse and complete a foundation skill result Report and share this with you and your trainer.

Your trainer will then hold your Pre-Enrolment Meeting (online or by phone). Together, you will develop your Personalised Learning Plan (PLP).

The PLP includes:

- How you will complete the course
- Any support strategies you will need.
- A clear plan for your learning

## **After your Pre-Enrolment Meeting**

The Training Manager / Allocated Trainer will send an email to the Trainee and their employer informing them that the trainee meets the eligibility requirements for the program and next steps.



## 2. Development of your Training Plan

### What happens

You, your employer, and your trainer will meet online to finalise your Training Plan

This document outlines how your training will run, including:

- Delivery method
- Employer responsibilities (e.g., 20% of work time set aside for training)
- Assessment details
- Support needs
- Credit Transfer or RPL (if applicable)

### After the meeting

- You will receive a copy of the Training Plan by email.
- You and your employer must sign and return it to us within 5 business days.
- Once received, we will upload it to the government portal to trigger your traineeship payment.
- The Traineeship admin support will notify Accounts to issue an invoice of \$350 to the Trainee unless fee exemptions or concessions apply.

## 3. Tuition Fees & Fee Support

### Fees (Traineeships - ACT Only)

#### Tuition Fee

- Traineeships are government-funded and applicable in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) only.
- The User Choice Funding program requires a mandatory minimum tuition fee of \$350.
- We will invoice you directly for this fee.
- Once payment has been made, your learner portal will be activated, and learning can begin.

## **Fee Exemptions and Concessions**

Details about available fee exemptions and concessions for Trainees (also called Australian Apprentices – AAs) including eligibility criteria and the application process are provided below.

## **Fee Exemptions**

1. During your pre-enrolment discussion, your Trainer will discuss potential eligibility for fee exemptions.
2. Eligibility criteria includes:
  - a. If the employer is the Training Provider for its own Trainee.
  - b. The Trainee leaves one employer and recommences within 12 months with another employer, in the same qualification and with the same training provider.
  - c. The Trainee is required to go to a different training provider because of a change of RTO process.
  - d. the student is an ASBA, and the school is the training provider.
3. If you meet the eligibility criteria, please notify the RTO who will apply for the exemption within 10 business days of the enrolment; no separate application form is needed from you.

## Fee Concessions

1. During your pre-enrolment discussion, your Trainer will discuss potential eligibility for fee concessions.
2. You may be eligible if:
  - a. You hold a current health care card or pension card.
  - b. You can prove genuine hardship.
  - c. If you believe you are eligible, inform your RTO. They will provide you with an "Application for Fee Concession Reimbursement" form.
3. You must provide supporting documentation with your application.
4. Fortress learning may waive the remaining tuition fee.
5. If your concession is approved, the training provider will be reimbursed by the Directorate.

## General Information

- Exemption and concession applications are processed within 5 working days.
- All fee-related transactions, including exemption and concession applications and approvals, are kept by the Finance Department and in your Student Folder.
- If you disagree with a decision regarding your fee exemption or concession application, you can discuss your concerns with your Trainer. If unresolved, you can lodge a formal appeal in writing to the Training Manager within 10 working days, following Fortress Learning's Appeal Policy and Procedure.

For detailed processes on fee exemption and concession application see [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#)

## 4. Enrolment and Course Commencement

### Once the Training Plan is approved

- You will receive an email with a link to officially enrol on the course.
- After enrolling, we will activate your Learner Portal where you can access your learning materials.
- We will also set up a Welcome Meeting with your trainer too:
  - Walk you through how to use the portal.
  - Confirm your start and end dates.
  - Schedule regular monthly check-ins
  - Revisit any support you need.
  - Explain the Workplace Activity Log (this needs to be completed for every unit)
- This discussion will be recorded in your Traineeship Contact Log.

### Course Activation

1. Upon completion of your Online Enrolment Form, your Student Learner Portal is then activated, and the enrolment period and course commencement begins.
2. You will receive an email called **Fortress Learning Create your Global Account** which will allow you to create your aXcelerate account and access your learner portal.
3. Our Enrolments Team will also send an SMS to let you know the Portal is now active and you will be directed to log in to your Portal after you have created your Global account.
- 4.

### Course commencement

Your allocated Trainer will reach out to set up a welcome meeting to walk you through the learner portal and get you started with your learning and assessment.

The trainer at this time will:

- review the planned start and end dates.
- agree regular monthly check-ins.
- discuss any support needs required.
- apply any pre-defined support strategies as necessary throughout the enrolment period.
- Explain the Workplace Activity Log and the requirement to complete for all units and the assessment.

You will now begin your training and assessment journey.

## **5. Support, Monitoring, Assessment and Graduation**

### **Ongoing Support & Monitoring**

As you move through your course

- Your trainer will meet with you each month to talk about your progress, answer any questions, and offer support. These are essential to help you stay on track.
- Everything discussed in your check-ins—progress, support provided, and next steps—will be recorded in your Traineeship Contact Log.
- Every 3 months, your trainer will also meet with your employer to provide a progress update and gather workplace feedback.
- Our support team will send you regular SMS messages to check in—but if there's ever anything serious, your trainer will be in touch directly.

- If any changes need to be made to your training contract (such as extending the end date), your trainer will work with you and your employer and update the required documents in the government AVETARS system.
- 

## Assessments and Completing Units

Here's how assessment works during your traineeship:

1. Your assessments will include:
  - a. Knowledge Questions
  - b. Coursework Tasks and a Workplace Activity Log *-This is a key part of your learning. You'll record what you've done on the job for each unit. Your supervisor must review and sign this off before we can mark the unit as complete*  
or
  - c. RPL ([Recognition of Prior Learning](#)) and a Third-Party Report. If you're completing a unit through RPL, this report (signed by your supervisor) replaces the activity log.
2. Your trainer will mark your assessments within 4 business days of submission.
3. You'll receive feedback through your learner portal, and your trainer will check in with you monthly to discuss your progress.
4. Before your unit can be officially marked as competent:
  - a. Your trainer will let our Training Manager know it's ready for moderation.
  - b. The Training Manager will review and approve it.
  - c. Then the unit will be officially marked as Competent in the system.
5. Once that's done:

- a. The unit will be updated in your training records
  - b. Your employer will be notified via email that you've achieved the unit
  - c. A claim will be submitted to Skills Canberra for that unit
- 

## **If You Need More Time**

- If you're not on track to complete all your units by the original contract end date:
- Your trainer will work with you and your employer to extend your training contract.
- This must be done before your end date, so let us know early if you're falling behind.
- If there are any challenges—like not getting enough time at work for your training—your trainer will help resolve it and may need to report the situation to the Directorate.

## **Assessing Students Whose Enrolment Period Has Concluded.**

- Fortress Learning students can submit assessment items up until midnight of the last date of their Enrolment Period. However, submissions that are submitted within 4 business days of the expiry date are subject to the following process:
- Fortress Learning students can submit assessment items up until midnight of the last date of their Enrolment Period. However, submissions that are reviewed following expiry will be subject to a pre-review of the portfolio's completeness.
- During the pre-review, we will seek to identify any omissions or errors, which by themselves would deem it not possible for the Rule of

Evidence: Sufficiency to be satisfied, and thus preventing a successful outcome to be awarded for that/those unit/s of competency.

- Where there are no such omissions, the submission is assessed and feedback provided as per usual. Where such omissions do exist, no further assessment will occur; feedback will be provided to the candidate that the portfolio was incomplete, thus deeming the outcome *Competency Not Achieved* or *RPL Not Granted*.
- Further assessment, and associated feedback of a more detailed nature, will be provided only following the student signing up for a time extension. However, AQF qualifications for trainees must be issued before the traineeship period expires (unless there is a [variation in the training contract](#))
- [ASQA](#) can be contacted regarding records here:  
<https://www.asqa.gov.au/students/student-record>
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## What Happens If the Course Changes (Transition)

Sometimes courses get updated or replaced. If this happens during your enrolment:

- We'll map your completed work to the new version.
- If needed, your training contract will be updated to reflect this.
- If Fortress Learning can't continue delivering your course, we'll help you transfer to a new provider and make sure your records are up to date.
- We'll also issue a Statement of Attainment for any units you've completed, within 30 days.

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## Graduation – Finishing Your Traineeship

Once you've completed all your units:



1. Your trainer will update and sign off your Training Plan and prepare a Traineeship Final Agreement.
2. You, your trainer, and your employer will meet one last time to officially confirm you've completed the qualification and your workplace requirements.
3. Everyone signs the agreement—this is your formal sign-off date, which will be recorded on your certificate.
4. Then:
5. Your final agreement is saved and sent to our Graduation Officer.
6. The Graduation Officer will check everything's complete and issue you:
  - o Certificate of Qualification
  - o or a Statement of Attainment (if applicable)
7. Your certificate will include a note confirming it was completed through the Australian Apprenticeship program.
8. You'll receive your certificate within 3 business days, and your employer will be notified.

## **6. Variations of Training Contracts**

### Types of Variations

The following information outlines the variations that may occur to a training contract.

#### **Extensions**

1. An extension to a training contract may be granted if the Trainee/Australian Apprentice (AA) will not achieve the required competencies by the due completion date.

2. In this case, the training provider must help the employer request an extension.
3. All relevant parties must validate the extension request.
4. If numerous extensions are requested for the same training contract, the Directorate may request an update from the training provider on the Trainees' competencies and reasons for the extension.
5. If the training contract is not extended, it will automatically expire at midnight on the "due to complete" date, and any training delivered after this expiry will not be funded.
6. All parties, including the training provider, will be notified by email of the approval or rejection of the extension request. If approved, the notification will include the new "due to complete" date.
7. Extensions must be initiated at least 10 business days prior to the original due to complete date on the training contract.

## **Suspensions**

1. Training contracts may be suspended for extended absences, such as parental leave, sick leave, workers compensation arrangements, or other significant periods where the Trainee cannot attend the workplace and/or structured training.
2. The training contract is suspended for an approved period and resumes when the Trainee returns to work and/or training.
3. A request to suspend the training contract must be initiated in AVETARS, including the dates and reasons for the suspension before it commences. It should not be requested retrospectively.
4. A suspended status is considered 'active' in the ACT.
5. The impact of a suspension must be discussed between the employer and the training provider. Training must not continue during a suspension unless prior approval has been obtained through formal discussion and agreement with the Directorate by the training provider.

6. The date the Trainee is expected to complete their training contract will be changed to reflect the length of the suspension once a return-to-work date has been confirmed. Training providers can assist by advising the Directorate by email if they are aware of return or non-return to work.
7. All parties, including the training provider, will be notified by email of the approval or rejection of the suspension request. If approved, a new due to complete date will be calculated when the AA returns to work and/or training.

## **Cancellations**

1. The training contract must be cancelled when the employer and/or Trainee no longer wish to continue the training contract, or the Trainee has ceased employment.
2. A training contract may also be cancelled by the Directorate for specific reasons, such as when the employer refuses to allow the Trainee to attend structured training or other requirements related to the ACT training contract are not being met.
3. A cancelled training contract cannot be transferred to a new employer, even if the Trainee continues to undertake structured training with the same training provider. Without an active training contract, there is no Australian Apprenticeship.
4. In these circumstances, the training provider must:
  - a. Assist the employer and Trainee to initiate a request to cancel the training contract through their AVETARS portal. The cancellation date is the last day the Trainee was in the workplace (if ceasing employment), or the last day of involvement with the training provider if still employed but ceased training.

- b. Mutual consent for cancellation of a training contract is required, except when the training contract is cancelled within the probationary period.
  - c. When an employer or Trainee is unable to validate the cancellation, the Directorate may cancel the training contract after 28 calendar days.
  - d. Contact the Apprenticeship Network Provider (ANP) to arrange a new training contract, where applicable.
  - e. If the Trainee does not return to work following a suspension, the cancellation date is the last day the Trainee was at work or training. The Directorate may request copies of pay slips or training provider attendance evidence if a dispute arises regarding the cancellation date.
5. Cancellations must be initiated within 10 business days of the training provider identifying that the Trainee has withdrawn from training or changed employers.

## **Change of Registered Training Organisation (RTO)**

- If a training provider is contacted by an employer or Trainee to take over Australian Apprenticeship training and assessment services from another training provider, the new training provider must be listed as an approved provider for the qualification on the ACT Qualifications Register.
- The change of RTO request must be initiated by the employer or the Trainee.
- The employer, Trainee, and previous training provider must all validate the request.
- Once validated, the previous training provider has 30 calendar days to claim any payments for the Trainee and issue the Statement of

Attainment. Claims submitted outside 30 calendar days will be ineligible for payment.

- The new training provider is responsible for seeking clarification regarding the transfer of business and value remaining in the training contract.
- Change of RTO - The original training provider will have 30 calendar days from the approval date to claim any outstanding payments and issue the Statement of Attainment.

## Other Variations

For any other variations to a training contract, speak to your trainer who will advise how variations can be processed through AVETARS for Australian Apprenticeship training contracts:

## 7. Complaints and Appeals

### Resolving Complaints

Fortress Learning is committed to dealing with complaints and appeals in a timely and constructive way. Complaints and Appeals include, but are not restricted to, matters of concern to a student or staff member relating to training delivery and assessment including the quality of the training, student support, learning materials, discrimination, and sexual harassment.

**Natural Justice** is concerned with ensuring procedural fairness:

- Decisions and processes should be free from bias.
- All parties have the right to be heard.
- The respondent has a right to know what s/he is accused of.
- All parties are told the decision and the reasons for the decision.

As per the general directions from the regulator ([ASQA: Complaints about training providers](#)) Complaints refer to the quality of training delivered as well as the services and business practices of training providers.

## How to go about making a complaint

**Step 1:** If you have a complaint about your training provider, the first step is to submit feedback through their complaint process. Information about your [Fortress Learning's Complaint Process](#) is outlined below.

### Complaints Process

If you wish to make a complaint or an appeal concerning any aspect of a Fortress Learning course, or a course provided by a Third-Party Partner of Fortress Learning, the student should refer to the following process:

**Step 1:** Attempt to informally resolve the issue with appropriate Fortress Learning staff.

**Step 2:** If unsuccessful they should lodge a formal complaint in writing and using the **Complaints & Appeals Form** that is available on request. It should be submitted to:

The Manager  
Fortress Learning  
PO Box 1096  
Maroochydore QLD 4558

Or via email to: [complaints@fortresslearning.edu.au](mailto:complaints@fortresslearning.edu.au)

Fortress Learning will seek to resolve all appeals and complaints within 60 days of its receipt, and where a longer period is likely to be required, Fortress Learning will conduct a thorough investigation into all communications relevant to the complaint and advise in writing the reasons for this.

No changes to enrolment status are permitted to occur while a Complaint is being addressed. This includes graduation, extensions, and deferments.

Fortress Learning will advise the Directorate in writing within 10 business days of identifying any issues related to training that may reduce the likelihood of a successful outcome, for example, an employer refusing an Trainee's attendance at formal training, identification that the Trainee is not receiving adequate opportunities to undertake informal training and learning or lack of appropriate supervisory staff.

**Step 3:** If, after following your RTO's internal procedures, you still believe the RTO is breaching or has breached its legal requirements, you can submit a complaint to ASQA by completing the online complaints process available from here: <https://www.asqa.gov.au/>

**Please note.**

ASQA cannot **resolve** disputes between students and training providers. ASQA's regulatory functions allow them to collect, analyse, interpret, and disseminate information about vocational education and training. They do not have the legislative power to function as students advocate.

If the complaint is specifically about fees/payments/refund, you should contact the consumer protection agency in your state or territory as they:

- can provide information about seeking a refund or cancellation of your course fees.
- can provide information about your rights and obligations.
- may be able to help you negotiate with your training provider.
- A list of state and territory consumer protection agencies can be found on the [Commonwealth Ombudsman website](#).

## **Assessment Appeals**

Students have the right to make an appeal against the academic decisions made by Fortress Learning.

Appeals should be made within ten (10) working days of the original decision having been made.

An appeal against an assessment decision can be made on the following grounds:

- The student was not provided with a clear explanation of the assessment process.
- The student needs were not taken into consideration where appropriate.
- The assessment process did not meet the requirements of the training package.
- The student genuinely believes there has been an administrative error in the calculation of their assessment marks; or
- alleged bias or incompetence of the trainer.

## **Seeking advice from the Directorate**



Fortress Learning will always seek the Directorate's assistance in writing where the Training Provider and the employer and/or AA cannot resolve differences of opinion about assessment.

## **Assessment Appeals Process**

This process applies to all students enrolled in courses delivered by Fortress Learning who wish to appeal an assessment outcome.

### **1. Informal Resolution (Optional but Recommended)**

1. Before lodging a formal appeal, students are encouraged to:
  - Discuss their concerns with the assessor who made the decision.
  - Seek clarification on the assessment criteria and outcome.
  - Request feedback and reassessment if appropriate.
  - If the issue remains unresolved, proceed to a formal appeal.

### **2. Lodging a Formal Appeal**

If a student is not satisfied with the informal resolution, they may submit a formal appeal by following these steps:

#### **2.1 Complete the Assessment Appeal Form**

- Obtain the Assessment Appeal Form from your Fortress Learning student portal.
- Provide the following details:
  - Student Name and ID
  - Course and Unit Name
  - Assessor's Name
  - Assessment Task and Decision Being Appealed
  - Reasons for Appeal (with supporting evidence, if applicable)

## 2.2 Submit the Appeal

- The completed Assessment Appeal Form must be submitted within 10 working days of receiving the assessment outcome.
- Submissions can be made via email, student portal, or in person to the Compliance Team.
- A confirmation email will be sent acknowledging receipt of the appeal.

## 3. Appeal Review Process

Once the appeal is submitted:

- Our Training Manager will review the appeal for completeness.
- An independent assessor (not involved in the original assessment) will be assigned to reassess the student's work. The independent assessor will:
  - Review all evidence submitted.
  - Conduct an objective reassessment of the task.
  - Consult with the original assessor if required.

## 4. Appeal Outcome Notification

The student will be notified of the appeal outcome within 10 working days of submission. The possible outcomes include:

- **Original decision upheld** – no change to the assessment result.
- **Assessment outcome modified** – result adjusted based on review findings.
- **Reassessment opportunity granted** – student given another chance to complete the task.

## 5. Further Escalation (If Unresolved) and record keeping

If the student remains dissatisfied with the appeal outcome, they may:

- Request a review by Fortress Learning's RTO Manager.
- Lodge a complaint with ASQA (Australian Skills Quality Authority) if they believe the process was not managed fairly.

All appeals, reviews, and outcomes will be documented and stored securely.

Records will be maintained in accordance with RTO compliance and confidentiality policies.

## 8. Transition Arrangements

### **What happens if training package has been updated whilst you are enrolled**

During the transition of training products (where a training package has been updated, and students are still enrolled in the superseded qualification/ skill set or unit) Fortress Learning ensures that:

1. Where a training product on its scope of registration is superseded, all learners' training and assessment is completed, and the relevant AQF certification documentation is issued.
2. Should a learner not be able to complete their training within the allocated transition time learners may be transferred into its replacement, within a period of one year from the date the replacement training product was released on the national register. This transfer may require additional fees to be paid and may require additional training and assessment to be completed depending on the changes to the Qualification.
3. Where an AQF qualification is no longer current and has not been superseded, all learners' training and assessment is completed (or if unable to complete the learner is withdrawn from study) and the relevant AQF certification documentation issued within a period of two years from the date the AQF qualification was removed or deleted from the national register.
4. Where a skill set, unit of competency, accredited short course or module is no longer current and has not been superseded, all learners'

training and assessment is completed (or if unable to complete the learner is withdrawn from study) and the relevant AQF certification documentation issued within a period of one year from the date the skill set, unit of competency, accredited short course or module was removed or deleted from the national register

5. A new learner does not commence training and assessment in a training product that has been **removed or deleted** from the national register.

## **Additional Transition Information for Trainees**

In addition to the above transition policy the following process must be followed for all students completing a qualification as part of an ACT Traineeship (User Choice Funding)

1. Where a replacement qualification has been released, the RTO Manager must:
  - Map existing Trainee is to the new/replacement qualification if they will not complete training within the transition time.
  - [Vary the training contract. Refer to part B: Administrative Arrangements \(Managing Training Contract Variations\)](#)
2. Where Fortress Learning is unable to deliver the training for one or more qualifications, the RTO Manager must:
  - Advise the Directorate of the proposed transition arrangements and provide a status report for all affected Trainee's within 10 business days of the decision not to continue to deliver training.
  - [Assist the employer and the Trainee to apply for a change of RTO. Refer to part B: Administrative Arrangements \(Managing Training Contract Variations – Change of RTO\)](#)
  - Issue the Statement of Attainment within 30 calendar days from when the Training Provider ceases training delivery.
3. Where Fortress Learning ceases to deliver training for a Trainee because there is a change in RTO variation, the RTO Manager must:

- [Validate the change of RTO Variation. Refer to part B: Administrative Arrangements \(Managing Training Contract Variations – Change of RTO\)](#)
- Issue the statement of attainment within 30 calendar days from the date of change.

## 9. Direct Credit/Credit Transfer

### Credit Transfer

If you have completed study equivalent to any units from the qualification in which you are enrolled with Fortress Learning, then it might be possible to award a Credit Transfer. Your trainer will provide further advice about this.

### Credit Transfer Process

This process outlines the steps for Fortress Learning (RTO 31974) to authenticate previous TAE qualifications and other qualification transcripts submitted by applicants, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards and RTO policies.

This process applies to all applicants seeking recognition of prior qualifications as part of their enrolment, credit transfer, or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) applications.

### Authentication Process

#### 1. Submission of Qualification Evidence

Applicants must submit one or more of the following documents:

- A certified copy of their qualification or transcript.

- An electronic copy of their qualification (PDF or scan).
- A USI transcript showing the completed qualification.

## 2. Verification Methods

The following steps will be used to verify the authenticity of qualifications:

### 2.1 Direct Contact with the Issuing RTO

- Verify the issuing RTO's registration status on [training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au) to confirm it was active at the time of issuance.
- Contact the issuing RTO via email or phone to verify the qualification details.
- If the RTO is no longer registered, check their historical registration records.

### 2.2 USI Transcript Verification

- Request that the applicant provide access to their USI transcript.
- Review the transcript to confirm that the qualification was issued by a registered RTO.

### 2.3 Online Verification Systems

- If the issuing RTO provides an online verification portal or QR code validation, use this method to confirm authenticity.

If doubts arise about the qualification's authenticity, we may request additional supporting documents, such as:

- Training/assessment records (e.g., competency reports, learner assessments).
- Employer references confirming the qualification were used in practice.

Fortress Learning will then review documents for potential signs of fraud, including:

- Incorrect or non-existent RTO details.
- Formatting or logo inconsistencies.
- Certificates issued after the RTO's registration expired.

## **Final Decision and Record-Keeping**

- If authentication is successful, we will record the verification outcome in the student's file.
- If authentication fails, inform the applicant in writing, outlining the reasons.
- Upon successful verification we will then award credit transfer in the LMS and rebate the amount for the unit from the remaining balance of fees on your invoice.

## **10. Student Responsibilities**

### **Computer and IT Resource Requirements**

#### **Computer Requirements**

Fortress Learning is aware that there are many versions of computer software and operating systems in use. Our assessment materials are developed using

MS Word on a Windows platform. Effectively engaging with our online programs will require access to:

- A broadband internet connection
- Laptop or PC
- a video camera, either built into your device or a separate webcam.
- a microphone, either built into your device or in the webcam.

and the ability to:

- open web pages
- view embedded video and slideshows (e.g., Youtube, SlideShare)
- download and extract .zip folders.
- open and download .pdf and .swf documents
- open, edit, save, and upload documents created in .doc and .docx format.

Fortress Learning wishes all prospective students to make an informed decision prior to enrolling.

## **Mac Users**

We are unable to attest to the reliability of our platform for Mac Users.

While most people using Mac computers and applications can engage with the program without issues, it is the case that some Mac users experience difficulties with some aspects of downloading, saving, converting, and uploading files.

Mac Users who decide to enrol are encouraged to evaluate all aspects of our online portals within the first week of their enrolment so that they can avail themselves of the 30-day Cooling Off Period if so required.



## **Other Resource Requirements**

Each program will require resources that are provided by the student. This will be discussed with you prior to enrolling.

## **Student Responsibilities for Assessment**

Fortress Learning will not be held responsible for items of assessment that are submitted in any form until we receive them. For this reason, all students are responsible for retaining a copy of all materials and items that are submitted.

Submitted items will be retained by Fortress Learning for a period of 6 months following graduation, after which time they will be destroyed. Original items submitted in Hard Copy are not returned; as above, students are advised to retain copies of all materials submitted.

Students approaching the end of their enrolment period, and who wish to receive feedback on completed assessment items, are advised to submit assessment not less than 4 business days prior to the final enrolment date (see below).

## **Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures**

In striving to have a skilled, competent, and caring workforce, unsatisfactory student performance and/or conduct will be addressed in a professional manner to ensure a fair and consistent process in line with natural justice.

Within the framework, Fortress Learning is committed to ensuring that inappropriate behaviour that may impair the integrity of the learning processes or the wellbeing of individuals is appropriately managed.

## **Fortress Learning students have the right to:**

- Be treated fairly and with respect.
- Pursue their learning activities in a supportive and stimulating environment.
- Learn in an environment free of discrimination and harassment.
- Be assured of privacy of their personal information and records.
- Lodge a complaint without fear of victimisation.

**Fortress Learning Students have responsibilities to:**

- Treat other students and staff with respect and fairness
- Follow any reasonable directions from staff.
- Not engage in plagiarism, collusion or cheating in assessment activities
- Submit assessment activities by the due date or seek approval to extend the due date, and retain a copy of all assessment materials that are submitted if submitted items are not received by Fortress Learning
- Return company equipment and materials on time.
- Observe normal safety practices.

**Where Fortress Learning identifies that plagiarism, collusion, or cheating (all defined further down) in assessment activities may have occurred among a group of 2 or more students, either concurrently or over a period:**

- The students involved will be invited to resubmit all the materials that they wish to be assessed anew. Students who choose not to submit their portfolio of assessment anew will have their most recent previous submissions used for the remainder of this process.
- Once all students involved have submitted all materials that they wish to be included in the assessment, these will be assessed by a single Assessor.
- Where one or more students have previously been awarded an outcome, that outcome will be subject to revision based on the findings of the re-assessment outlined above.

- If one or more students are dissatisfied with the outcome of the assessment, they may pursue the [Complaints & Appeals Process](#).
- If through this re-assessment, plagiarism, collusion or cheating in assessment activities is found to have occurred, then any outcomes that have previously been awarded will be revoked and/or credentials recalled, and the steps below will be followed.

**Where a student breaches these guidelines or where a single incident is a serious breach of discipline, the following steps will be taken by Fortress Learning staff:**

- The student will be invited to participate in a Counselling interview or provided a written request to adopt a more courteous tone.
- If the student acknowledges the breach and indicates a willingness to address it, then the student will be issued a first written warning. If the student does not acknowledge the breach and/or is unwilling to address it, then the student's enrolment will be terminated.
- If the breach persists after the first warning, then the student will be issued a final written warning.
- If these repeated attempts to manage unsatisfactory student behaviour fail, then the student's enrolment will be terminated.

Where student behaviour constitutes an attempt to threaten or otherwise coerce staff such as in relation to the integrity of assessment decisions, Fortress Learning reserves the right to immediately cancel that student's enrolment, with any refund to be calculated in line with the Withdrawal Policy or at the Manager's discretion.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own, without giving proper credit or attribution. It involves the unauthorised use or reproduction of someone else's intellectual property, such as text, ideas, images, or creative works, without acknowledging the

original source. Plagiarism is considered a breach of Fortress Learning's academic and ethical standards, as it undermines the principles of honesty, integrity, and the proper attribution of intellectual contributions.

## **Cheating**

Cheating in assessment refers to the act of dishonestly gaining an unfair advantage in academic evaluations or examinations. It involves actions such as using unauthorised materials, getting assistance from others without permission, plagiarising someone else's work, or engaging in any form of deception to achieve a higher score or better results than one's actual knowledge or abilities would merit. Cheating undermines the integrity of the assessment process, diminishes the value of academic achievements, and violates the principles of fairness and authenticity.

## **Collusion**

Assessment collusion occurs when two or more individuals collaborate inappropriately on an assessment or assignment. This collaboration goes beyond acceptable levels of cooperation and involves a coordinated effort to produce work together in a manner that is not allowed by the assessment guidelines. Collusion may include sharing answers, jointly producing work meant to be done independently, or engaging in any form of unauthorised collaboration that compromises the individual assessment process. Like cheating, assessment collusion undermines the authenticity, fairness, and integrity of the evaluation system.

## **Use of AI Tools**

Fortress Learning acknowledges and encourages the prevalent use of AI tools, including ChatGPT and Google Gemini (formerly Google Bard), in knowledge assessment activities and some assignments. We support the utilisation of AI as a research tool for all students. However, copying and pasting directly from AI tools is prohibited and will be considered plagiarism.

When incorporating AI tools, students are required to cite their use of AI and, if requested, provide AI transcripts that demonstrate the content was not simply copied and pasted. This is to ensure academic integrity and originality in the assessment process.

## **II. Student Support Services**

### **Student Health, Wellbeing and Support Services**

Fortress Learning is aware of its responsibilities under the Standards for RTO's 2015 (and its successor) to provide adequate protection for the health, safety and welfare of students enrolling into its courses. This includes adequate and appropriate support services in terms of academic mentoring and coaching services and strategies to assist students in overcoming potential barriers to their learning. Fortress Learning is committed to:

- Ensuring VET students have reasonable access to training support services, trainers and assessors and other staff to support their progress through the training product. This includes:
  - How it determines the training support services to be provided to each VET student and makes these available
  - Ensuring that VET students have reasonable access to trainers and assessors and other staff.
  - Ensuring that VET students are informed about how and when they can access trainers and assessors and other staff.
  - Ensuring that VET students receive timely responses to queries.
- Ensuring Reasonable adjustments are made to support VET students with disability to access and participate in training and assessment on an equal basis. This includes:

- Providing reasonable adjustments to learning and assessment where appropriate
- Where reasonable adjustments are not possible, the reasons why have been communicated to the VET student.
- Ensuring our online learning environment promotes and supports the diversity of VET students. This includes.
  - Fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment for VET students
  - Fostering a culturally safe learning environment for First Nations people.
- Ensuring the wellbeing needs of the VET student cohort are identified and strategies are put in place to support these needs with the student (either prior to enrolment or during enrolment if identified after the training and assessment commences) This includes:
  - Identifying the well-being needs of the VET student cohort, as relevant to the training content, and appropriate well-being support services
  - Advising VET students of the actions they can take, the staff they may contact and the well-being support services that are available.

## **Specialist Support Services**

Our Pre-Enrolment does outline some questions about physical or mental health conditions and support needs. It is important that students answer these truthfully if they can so that our team can contact you to assist.

As a private RTO, we are committed to supporting students with physical or mental health conditions or learning support needs to help them succeed in their studies. While we can provide reasonable adjustments and general

support, we are not trained specialists in mental health, disability support, or medical care. If you require specialised assistance beyond our scope, we encourage you to seek support from qualified professionals or relevant services. If needed, we can help guide you to appropriate external resources.

A list of state specific and national specialist support services is available upon request.

## **12. Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)**

### **Ensuring a Safe Learning Environment**

Fortress Learning is committed to establishing, maintaining and enforcing a safe system that focuses on:

- A safe work environment
- A risk management approach to safety
- Preventing injury/illness
- Complying with legislative requirements
- If, at any time during the Fortress Learning training program, you identify hazards in the workplace please notify your trainer immediately. Incident Report Forms are available from the RTO on request or can be downloaded from the Learner Portal as required. Trainers regularly review venues and assets to identify and mitigate risks. All hazards are reported and are addressed through the RTO's Risk Register and Action Plan.

## **13. Workplace Bullying and Harassment**

### **Creating a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment**

Fortress Learning aims to create a working environment that is free from harassment and where all members of staff are treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect. Workplace bullying and harassment can be seen as the repeated, less favourable treatment of a person by another that may be considered unreasonable and inappropriate workplace practice. This relates to actions by both staff and students. For example:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Non-verbal.

Students with complaints concerning bullying and/or harassment should refer to the steps outlined in the Complaints/Appeals Policy.

If these attempts to settle the grievance are unsuccessful then the student can refer the matter to the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland on their statewide number 1300 130 670 or via TTY on 1300 130 670.

Where student behaviour is deemed to be offensive, either to another student or to staff, then Fortress Learning reserves the right to immediately cancel that student's enrolment, with any refund to be calculated in line with the Withdrawal Policy or at the Manager's discretion. Offensive behaviour includes such things as shouting, use of aggressive language or body language, making threats and use of threatening gestures and language, and swearing. Where such behaviour persists or is considered sufficiently serious, the involvement of the Police will be considered.

## **14. Anti-Discrimination**

### **Fortress Learning's Commitment to Anti-Discrimination**



Fortress Learning is committed to providing a safe caring environment where all employees have a right to work free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Discrimination may be defined as unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups of individuals based on personal attributes, characteristics, idiosyncrasies, or associations. Sexual harassment can be regarded as any form of unwelcome sexual attention that is offensive, intimidating or humiliating.

Racial harassment is defined by harassment based on race, which can vary from minor abuse to actual physical violence.

Students with complaints concerning Discrimination should refer to the steps outlined in the Grievance Policy.

If these attempts to settle the grievance are unsuccessful then the student can refer the matter to the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland on their statewide number 1300 130 670 or via TTY: [1300 130 670](tel:1300130670).

## **15. Data Information and Privacy**

### **Your privacy is important to us.**

As a registered training organisation, Fortress Learning is obliged to maintain effective administrative and records management systems. This involves the retention of student records. All staff must be scrupulous in using student information only for the purposes for which it was gathered. The following is based on the Company Privacy Policy, which is available on request.

Students must always have access to their own training records. Should it be deemed necessary, information about student records can only be divulged to a third party with the written consent of the student.

Students can access their records via Fortress Learning's Learning Portal. Once a student graduates, they can access their records by emailing [enrolments@fortresslearning.com.au](mailto:enrolments@fortresslearning.com.au). Student submissions are destroyed 6 months following graduation and/or expiry.

If you have concerns about personal information held by Fortress Learning, you should contact the RTO Manager on 1300 141 994 or in writing to Manager, Fortress Learning, PO Box 1096, Maroochydore, QLD, 4558 – marked Private & Confidential.

If you still feel that your concerns have not been resolved, your complaint can be sent directly to the Commonwealth Privacy Commissioner, GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001

Phone: 1300 363 992 or TTY: 1800 620 241

Email: [privacy@privacy.gov.au](mailto:privacy@privacy.gov.au)

## **Phone calls & Contact Information**

Fortress Learning records all phone calls. This is for the purpose of monitoring service standards, and to enable training of staff. Recordings are not shared with any third party.

At any time, you may contact Fortress Learning to:

- request access to your personal information.
- correct your personal information.

- make a complaint about how your personal information has been managed.
- ask a question about this Privacy Notice

Phone: 1300 141 994

Email: [admin@fortresslearning.com.au](mailto:admin@fortresslearning.com.au)

Address: PO Box 1096, Maroochydore, QLD, 4558

## **Authenticating evidence**

Where a student submits for assessment by recognition records of study completed previously, Fortress Learning may contact the issuing organisation to authenticate these records. Similarly, where a student submits for assessment by recognition of any third-party statements, Fortress Learning may contact the author to authenticate those statements.

Any information provided by a student as part of their assessment within their program of study will only ever be used by Fortress Learning for the purposes of that student's program of study.

## **Disclosure of Information to National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd (NCVER) and other parties**

### **Why do we collect your personal information?**

As a registered training organisation (RTO), we collect your personal information so we can process and manage your enrolment on a vocational education and training (VET) course with us.

Enrolment will not proceed if personal information is not collected through the enrolment process.

## **How we use your personal information**

We use your personal information to enable us to deliver VET courses to you, and otherwise, as needed, to comply with our obligations as an RTO.

## **How we disclose your personal information**

We are required by law (under the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cth) (NVETR Act)) to disclose the personal information we collect about you to the National VET Data Collection kept by the National Centre for Vocational Education Ltd (NCVER). The NCVER is responsible for collecting, managing, analysing, and communicating research and statistics about the Australian VET sector.

We are also authorised by law (under the NVETR Act) to disclose your personal information to the relevant state or territory training authority.

## **How the NCVER and other bodies manage your personal information.**

The NCVER will collect, hold, use, and disclose your personal information in accordance with the law, including the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (Privacy Act) and the NVETR Act. Your personal information may be used and disclosed by NCVER for purposes that include populating authenticated VET transcripts; administration of VET; facilitation of statistics and research relating to education, including surveys and data linkage; and understanding the VET market.

The NCVER is authorised to disclose information to the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE), Commonwealth authorities, State and Territory authorities (other than registered training organisations) that deal with matters relating to VET and VET regulators for the purposes of those bodies, including to enable:

- administration of VET, including program administration, regulation, monitoring, and evaluation
- facilitation of statistics and research relating to education, including surveys and data linkage
- understanding how the VET market operates, for policy, workforce planning and consumer information.

The NCVER may also disclose personal information to people engaged by NCVER to conduct research on NCVER's behalf.

The NCVER does not intend to disclose your personal information to any overseas recipients.

For more information about how the NCVER will manage your personal information please refer to the NCVER's Privacy Policy at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/privacy>

If you would like to seek access to or correct your information, in the first instance, please contact Fortress Learning using the contact details listed below.

DESE is authorised by law, including the Privacy Act and the NVETR Act, to collect, use and disclose your personal information to fulfil specified functions and activities. For more information about how the DESE will handle your personal information, please refer to the DESE VET Privacy Notice at <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-vet-data/vet-privacy-notice>

## Surveys

You may receive a student survey which may be run by a government department or an NCVER employee, agent, third-party contractor, or another

authorised agency. Please note you may opt out of the survey at the time of being contacted.

## **17. Continuous Improvement**

### **Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement**

Fortress Learning is committed to the principle of continuous improvement. This is articulated in the Continuous Improvement Plan that is available on request. This Plan aims to support and strengthen compliance with Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations in a way that reflects the growth of Fortress Learning, encourages innovation and measures and monitors outcomes.

### **Ensuring Accurate and Up-to-Date Documentation**

Fortress Learning will ensure that all forms and documents used in the delivery of qualifications under their scope will be accurate and up to date. As significant changes or amendments are made to documents then old versions will be recalled and new ones circulated.

At least once a year a complete review of all documents will occur.

### **Fair and Valid Assessments**

Fortress Learning has a systematic way of ensuring that assessments undertaken are fair and reasonable and consistent with industry's best practices. This is articulated in the Validation Strategy that is available upon request. Forms detailing validation processes are also available on request.

## 18. Issuing Qualifications

### Qualification and Statement of Attainment Policy

Fortress Learning is committed to issuing qualifications and statements of attainment that are within its scope of registration.

A Statutory Declaration attesting to authenticity will be required from a student prior to awarding official certification for one or more units/qualifications.

Certificates will be issued in a timely manner and in accordance with the 30 calendar day period stipulated by [Clause 3.3 of The Standards for Registered Training Organisations](#).

We issue soft copies of certificates that contain unique QR codes for authenticity and verification purposes. Hard copy certificates can be requested for a fee of \$60.

Under no circumstances will a certificate of graduation be issued prior to full payment of any fees due.

## 29. Office Opening Hours and Non-Contact Time

### Office Hours

Fortress Learning is open 9 am – 5 pm, Australian Eastern Standard Time, each business day. We are closed on Queensland Public Holidays.

### Non-Contact Periods

Our staff will not be available for certain periods during the year. These are usually for public holidays and for 2 weeks over the Christmas holiday period.

Our Trainers may also be unavailable at times due to annual and personal leave and professional development and administrative training duties that take them away from facilitation (such as validation and moderation activities).

Trainer non-contact periods will be published on the Learner Portal and all public holidays dates can be accessed from our website [here](#).

## **APPENDIX 1: Fee Exemption Application Process**

1. During the pre-enrolment discussion, the Training Manager/ allocated trainer will discuss potential eligibility for fee exemptions with the prospective Trainee.
  - Eligibility criteria includes:
    - If the employer is the Training Provider for its own Trainee
    - the Trainee leaves one employer and recommences within 12 months with another employer, in the same qualification and with the same training provider, or
    - the Trainee is required to go to a different training provider because of a change of RTO process, or



- o the student is an ASBA, and the school is the training provider.
2. If the Trainee meets the eligibility criteria for a fee exemption, the Training Manager will apply for the exemption and document the reason. No separate application form from the Trainee is required. This should be clearly communicated to the Trainee.
  3. The Training Manager must notify the Directorate of the exemption within 10 business days of enrolment using the [RTO Tuition Fee form](#), specifying the exemption reason. [Refer to ACT Standards for Compliance Guide for Australian Apprentices V6.0 – Fees and Charges section](#)

## **APPENDIX 2: Fee Concession Application Process**

1. During the pre-enrolment discussion, the Training Manager/ allocated trainer will discuss potential eligibility for a fee concession with the prospective Trainee, if:
  - They hold a current health care card or pension card, or
  - can prove genuine hardship.
2. If the Trainee believes they are eligible, they must complete the "[Application for Fee Concession Reimbursement](#)" form provided by the Training Manager.
3. The Trainee must provide supporting documentation with the application, such as a copy of their Health Care Card/Pension Card or documentation supporting their claim of genuine hardship.

4. The Trainee submits the completed application and supporting documents to the Training Manager.
5. The Training Manager assesses the application and supporting documentation to ensure completeness and eligibility. The training provider may choose to waive the remaining tuition fee for Trainee's that are eligible for a fee concession.
6. Where a Fee Concession is granted, the Training Manager submits the completed "[Application for Fee Concession Reimbursement](#)" form and supporting documents to the Directorate for approval.
7. Upon approval, the Directorate reimburses the training provider with the full tuition fee up to \$500.
8. The CEO may choose to waive the remaining tuition fee for the Trainee. This decision should be clearly communicated to the Trainee.