



# CANDIDATE'S HANDBOOK 2024

Australian Forensic Services RTO 4282

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## Introduction

### Message from the Managing Director

As Managing Director of this organisation, I can assure students that I will fully support the implementation of all quality, management and operational functions articulated in this student handbook. I welcome your input and will ensure myself and the Australian Forensic Services team adhere to our underlying philosophy of continuous quality improvement in all aspects of our operations.

This Candidate's Handbook provides the direction that informs and guides Australian Forensic Services towards the provision of best practice in training development, management and service delivery. For Australian Forensic Services, it will facilitate compliance with the standards regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority. For clients of AFS, it will ensure that their investment in training provides the best possible training experience and outcomes.

### Context

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training sector. ASQA regulates courses and training providers according to the **Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 (SNRs)** to ensure nationally approved quality standards for training are met. The focus of these standards is the demonstration of preparedness of registered training organisations to deliver quality training and assessment services and focus on continuous improvement.

### Services

All programs offered by Australian Forensic Services are aligned to the BSB Business Services, ICT Information and Communications Technology, PSP Public Sector, CPP Property Services, TAE Training and Education, and DEF Defence training packages for quality assurance and best practice. AFS has the following current qualifications on our scope of delivery:

#### BSB Business Services

- BSB30120 Certificate III in Business
- BSB40120 Certificate IV in Business
- BSB40920 Certificate IV in Project Management Practice
- BSB50120 Diploma of Business
- BSB50920 Diploma of Quality Auditing
- BSB50420 Diploma of Leadership and Management

#### CPP Property Services

- CPP30619 Certificate III in Investigative Services
- CPP40719 Certificate IV in Security Management
- CPP41519 Certificate IV in Security Risk Analysis
- CPP50619 Diploma of Security Risk Management

#### DEF Defence

- DEF40217 Certificate IV in Intelligence Operations
- DEF50317 Diploma of Compliance

#### ICT Information Technology

- ICT30120 Certificate III in Information Technology

## PSP Public Sector

- PSP40316 Certificate IV in Government Security  
Specialisations available:
  - Fraud control
  - Personnel vetting
- PSP40416 Certificate IV in Government Investigations  
Specialisation available:
  - Regulatory compliance
- PSP50316 Diploma of Government Security
- PSP50416 Diploma of Government Investigations
- PSP50616 Diploma of Fraud Control
- PSP60122 Advanced Diploma of Government  
Specialisations available:
  - Workplace inspection
  - Investigations
  - Fraud control

## TAE Training and Education

- TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
- TAE50116 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training
- TAE50216 Diploma of Training Design and Development

## Units of competency

- CPCCWHS1001 Prepare to work safely in the construction industry
- FNSMCA314 Locate individuals

Forensic Services recognises the importance and benefits of combining industry experience with tertiary education when striving to deliver programs of highest quality and relevance to the client. All trainers and assessors employed or contracted by AFS have demonstrated significant industry experience in addition to obtaining tertiary qualifications, allowing them to provide a professional, well rounded learning environment for participants. Staff are equipped with the skills to ensure their teaching methods are suitable for all participants, utilising simple language where appropriate to communicate information most effectively. Australian Forensic Services strictly adheres to the SNR to continue delivering training services of the highest quality to their clients.

The Managing Director recognises that opportunities for improvement arise in every aspect of business and has developed an organisational culture within Australian Forensic Services to capitalise on these opportunities for improved practice. Australian Forensic Services supplies feedback forms to all students at the end of each program, as participant feedback has been identified as an important and valuable factor in monitoring and developing business practices and quality training, ensuring the ever-changing needs and expectations of clients are being met. The Managing Director also welcomes feedback from other improvement opportunities such as risk assessment, student suggestions, complaints and appeals, validation sessions and audit reports.

As a student with Australian Forensic Services, your feedback is critical to our continuous improvement policy. Along with the formal feedback mentioned earlier, students are encouraged to give feedback throughout their enrolment.

In order to encourage and achieve continuous improvement based on the collection of the above-mentioned data, Australian Forensic Services has developed a best practice register which will include a written record of all improvement strategies.

## Legislative Requirements

Registered training organisations are subject to legislation pertaining to training and assessment, as well as business practice. Australian Forensic Services will comply with relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation and regulatory requirements relevant to its intended scope of registration.

Australian Forensic Services will also inform all staff and clients of the legislative and regulatory requirements that affect their duties or participation in vocational education and training. AFS recognises that compliance with legislative requirements underpins the effective implementation of its operations and ensures accountability and transparency of activities of both management and staff.

## Complying with Legislation

Staff will be advised at induction and kept up to date with changes to legislation through monthly management meetings and written correspondence. Policies and procedures and associated tools and templates will be updated to reflect updates to legislation as soon practical following advice. Any training that is required will be organised in a professional and timely manner.

All staff are encouraged to view current legislation online at: <http://austlii.edu.au>

Examples of legislation relevant to the training business and its staff includes but is not limited to:

## Commonwealth Legislation

- Copyright Act 1968
- Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988/Privacy Amendment Act 2012/Privacy Regulation 2013
- Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Commonwealth Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011
  - Standards for VET Regulators 2015
  - Standards for registered Training Organisations 2015

## ACT Legislation:

- Children and Young People Act 2006
- Disability Services Act 1991
- Discrimination Act 1991
- Fair Trading (Australian Consumer Law) Act 1992
- Education Act 2004
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

## Training Authorities / Regulators:

- National VET Regulator (NVR)
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Employment
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
- Council of Australian Governments Industry and Skills Council (COAGISC)

## Work, Health and Safety Policy

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 outlines the requirements of an RTO in establishing and maintaining workplace health and safety standards. The requirements of an RTO as specified in the above-mentioned Act are to:

- Secure the health, safety and welfare of employees and other persons at work
- Eliminate, at the source, risks to health, safety or welfare of employees and other persons at work
- Ensure that the health and safety of members of the public is not placed at risk by the conduct of undertakings by employers and self-employed persons
- Provide for the involvement of employees, employers, and organisations representing those persons, in the formulation and implementation of health, safety and welfare standards

Australian Forensic Services has initiated procedures, policies, guidelines and work instructions, practicing an ongoing commitment to workplace health and safety including each site used for training delivery.

The following presents a strategic overview of Australian Forensic Services' safety system and provides guidance for meeting the requirements of Work Health and Safety Act on Australian Forensic Services' premises thereby ensuring a high standard of workplace health and safety at all times.

It is an obligation under legislation that all Australian Forensic Services employees and management contribute to and assist in maintaining workplace health and safety and risk management operations as part of their role within the RTO. Australian Forensic Services management is responsible for providing the following standards as part of its commitment to employees and clients:

- A safe workplace, with a safe system of work
- Adequate workplace health and safety professional development for Australian Forensic Services students, employees, management and stakeholders
- Properly maintained facilities and equipment
- A clean, tidy, suitably designed workplace with the safe storage of goods.

The following procedures and standards are observed by Australian Forensic Services to achieve a safe working and learning environment:

- Maintain a safe, clean and efficient working environment
- Evacuation plan (fire, bomb, major incident)
- Emergency control
- Accident / Incident reporting
- Rehabilitation
- Risk identification reporting
- PPE / chemicals (storage)
- Manual handling techniques and training
- Store and dispose of waste according to WHS regulations
- Equipment checks and maintenance
- Equipment safe storage
- Fire hazards identified and fire prevention
- Student safety
- Unsafe situations identified and reported
- First aid and safety procedures displayed, for all Australian Forensic Services staff and students to see

## Harassment and Discrimination Policy

Under Australian law it is a requirement of every workplace to ensure it provides an environment free from all forms of harassment and discrimination, including victimisation and bullying. In doing so, all staff and students are treated fairly and have the opportunity to feel safe, valued and respected.

By definition, harassment includes any form of behaviour that is unwanted, unwelcome or unreciprocated by relevant persons. This may manifest as verbal or physical harassment, but includes





any acts that may be perceived as humiliating, offensive, intimidating, threatening, discriminatory or otherwise contributing to an unpleasant workplace or experience for the persons.

At Australian Forensic Services it is made known that in the event that a person considers that he or she has been or is being harassed, this person should be encouraged to inform the other party that their behaviour is objectionable and should not be continued, provided they are comfortable with confronting the offender. In instances where the person is not comfortable discussing the matter with the offending party, a trainer or other AFS staff member should be informed of the situation. In this case it becomes the responsibility of the relevant staff member to follow Australian Forensic Services policy and procedures to rectify the situation.

All students and staff working with Australian Forensic Services have the right to discuss matters of harassment with the relevant members of staff without making a formal complaint; all discussions are dealt with in confidentiality. The right to lodge a formal complaint of misconduct against the offending party is available and will be actioned according to AFS policy and procedures.

Australian Forensic Services ensures that all staff are adequately trained in dealing with harassment and discrimination in order to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in creating and contributing to a harassment and discrimination free workplace. In addition to relevant training, AFS management provides opportunities for communication and mentoring amongst staff to ensure that all employees understand and correctly apply the processes and procedures involved in identifying and addressing of all forms of harassment and discrimination.

Australian Forensic Services staff and students should be aware of the following definitions:

#### Racial harassment

Involves a person or persons being threatened, abused, insulted or taunted in relation to their race, descent, nationality, colour, language, ethnic origin or any other racial characteristic. It may include but is not limited to; derogatory remarks, innuendo or slur, gestures, intolerance, mockery, displays of material prejudice towards a race, racial jokes, discrimination, exclusion, allocation of least favourable jobs or positions, or unfair treatment.

#### Sexual Harassment

Involves any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which is inappropriate, unwelcome or uninvited. It may include but is not limited to; sexually related physical contact such as kissing, embracing, pinching or other suggestive gestures, intimidation, coercion, requests for or promising of sexual favours, questions about a person's private or sexual life, sexist or explicit jokes, unwelcome phone calls, emails or other forms of non-work related communication, offensive noises, or displays of sexually graphic or suggestive material.

#### Bullying

Involves any behaviour that suggests a real or perceived power over another party, or otherwise undermines a person or group, generally comprised of repeated, persistent acts over a period of time. It may include, but is not limited to; verbal abuse, physical assault, intimidation, humiliation, unjustified criticism, sarcasm, insults, false or malicious rumours, exclusion or isolation, inflicting unnecessary work stresses, or sabotage of a person's work or their ability to work by withholding resources or information.

#### Confidentiality

Relates to privacy of information, ensuring that the information is only accessible to those who have the authority to access it. Within an RTO this may refer to private verbal discussions, student assessments, managerial decisions and legal proceedings.

## Discrimination

Involves the unfair or unequal treatment of another person based solely on class or category. Equal opportunity laws prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, pregnancy, family responsibility, family status, race, religious beliefs, political conviction, gender history, impairment, age or sexual orientation. All forms of victimisation are also treated as a type of discrimination.

## Harassment

Involves any behaviour intended to disturb, offend or upset. It may include any unwelcome or uninvited verbal or physical action that results in a person feeling intimidated, offended, humiliated or embarrassed. Equal opportunity laws prohibit harassment on the grounds of sex and race.

## Personnel

Refers to all employees and contractors of Australian Forensic Services.

## Victimisation

Involves any process that results in the unfavourable treatment of a person on unjust terms.

It may include, but is not limited to; unfair punishment, treating a person poorly for their involvement in a complaint, to swindle or defraud a person, adverse changes to another's work environment, or denial of access to work related resources.

## Specific Principles

- It is the right of all staff and students to work and study in an environment free of any form of harassment and discrimination
- All reports of harassment and discrimination will be treated seriously, in an unbiased, respectful and sensitive manner. Any form of harassment and discrimination is considered unacceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated by Australian Forensic Services
- When AFS management is informed of any event involving harassment or discrimination, it is their responsibility to take immediate and appropriate action to address it
- In dealing with all complaints, the rights of all individuals involved should be respected and confidentiality should be maintained
- It is the intention of AFS management that a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation will resolve all complaints. The aim is to achieve an acceptable outcome for the involved parties while minimising any potential damage to the organisation
- Both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint has been made will receive information, support and assistance in resolving the issue from AFS management
- Victimisation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. No person making a complaint or assisting in the investigation of a complaint should be victimised
- Harassment or discrimination should not be confused with legitimate comment and advice (including constructive feedback) given appropriately by management or trainers. Managers and trainers should be conscious of how they present their feedback to ensure the message is not misinterpreted
- Staff and students should not make any frivolous or malicious complaints. All staff and students are expected to participate in the complaint resolution process in confidence that the procedures are designed to ensure fair resolution

## Working with Persons Under 18 Years of Age

Students under 18 years of age may enrol with Australian Forensic Services. According to the law, a child is considered any individual less than 18 years of age.

Australian Forensic Services will ensure that all students are protected from all forms of harm, including bullying, harassment, discrimination and intimidation. All staff are required to report to AFS management any behaviour that can reasonably be considered harmful or potentially harmful to students, or where it is reasonable to believe that a student has been harmed or requires protection from harm.

In cases where allegations or information indicate it is reasonable to believe a student has suffered from or may require protection from harm, Australian Forensic Services will report to the situation to the appropriate agency.

The initial information that a child protection officer will require is:

- The name, age and address of the child or young person
- The reasons you suspect the child or young person may have experienced or is at risk of experiencing harm
- The immediate risk to the child or young person
- Contact details. You may remain anonymous; however it is preferable to provide these details so that the officer can call you if further information is needed

If allegations may constitute child abuse by a person external to Australian Forensic Services, the AFS Managing Director will report the matter to the Police.

Australian Forensic Services will comply with all relevant State and Federal legislation in the area of working with children.

AFS management recommend that all staff obtain the appropriate Police check for child related employment. Information is available at: <http://afp.gov.au>

## Consumer Rights

### Consumer protection

On 1 January 2011, the Australian Consumer Law commenced, and the Trade Practices Act 1974 was repealed and replaced by the Competition and Consumer Act 2010. The Australian Consumer Law provides for:

- National consumer protection and fair-trading laws
- Enhanced enforcement powers and redress mechanisms
- A national unfair contract terms law
- A new national product safety regime
- A new national consumer guarantees law

### Contractual agreement

Students who enrol in a training program with Australian Forensic Services should be aware that they are entering into a contractual agreement. With a view to ensuring all students are fully aware of their rights and obligations, Australian Forensic Services will design agreements, enrolment forms, service agreements or similar using a logical format and simple English.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Wording that allows the prospective student to know what he / she is agreeing to
- Clearly explained disclaimers
- No misleading or deceptive behaviour
- No actions, omissions or dialogue (written or verbal) that may force or coerce the student
- Fair dealings for disadvantaged students



## Privacy Principles

The Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (Privacy Amendment Act) made many significant changes to the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act). These changes commenced on 12 March 2014. The Privacy Regulation 2013, made under the Privacy Act, also commenced on 12 March 2014.

Privacy Principles that are strictly applied to all aspects of Australian Forensic Services' operations include:

### Collection

Australian Forensic Services will only collect necessary information pertaining to one or more specific operations. The student will be informed as to the purpose for which details are being collected.

### Use and disclosure

Australian Forensic Services will ensure student personal information is not used or disclosed for secondary purposes without obtaining explicit consent from the student, unless a prescribed exception applies.

### Data quality

Australian Forensic Services will take all reasonable measures to ensure that all students' personal information that is collected, used or disclosed is accurate, current and complete.

### Data security

Australian Forensic Services will take all reasonable measures to ensure all collected students' personal information is protected from misuse, loss or damage, and that all data and record storage is secure from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

### Openness

Australian Forensic Services will maintain documentation which detail how students' personal information is collected, managed and used. When a student makes an enquiry in relation to information collected, AFS will explain what information is held, for what purpose it is held and what procedures outline the collection and use of information.

### Access and correction

Australian Forensic Services will allow students access to personal information held in all circumstances unless prescribed exceptions apply. If the student identifies errors within the information, AFS will correct and update to file.

### Unique identifiers

Australian Forensic Services will not assign students unique identifiers except when it is necessary for efficiency of operations. Commonwealth Government identifiers, such as Medicare numbers or Tax File Numbers, will only be used for the purposes for which they were issued.

### Anonymity

Australian Forensic Services will provide students the opportunity to interact with the business without requiring the student to make their identity known in any circumstances it is practical and possible to do so.

### Trans-border data flows

Australian Forensic Services privacy protection principles apply to the transfer of data throughout Australia.



### Sensitive information

Australian Forensic Services will request specific consent from a student in circumstances where it is necessary to collect sensitive information. Sensitive information may include but is not limited to; information relating to a student's health, criminal record, racial or ethnic background.

### Student progress

Students have the right to request information about or have access to their own individual records. AFS trainers and assessors or administration staff will provide the requested information or access. Students also have the right to request a hardcopy of their own individual file that can be supplied as a printout from records retained within the data management system.

Please feel free to ask your Australian Forensic Services trainer and assessor or administration staff at any time for a printout of your progress.

## Student Overview

### What courses can I study with Australian Forensic Services?

A list of the qualifications and stand-alone units offered by AFS [here](#).

### How is training delivered?

Training courses with Australian Forensic Services are delivered by:

- Face-to-face training
- Online seminars and discussion boards
- Blended learning

### What are the prerequisites?

Prerequisites are specific to individual courses. Please consult the course outline for your chosen course for prerequisite information.

### How do I enrol?

Enrolment is initiated by you contacting Australian Forensic Services.

Once we have received your inquiry you will be contacted by a member of our staff who will provide further details in relation to the qualification to ensure it meets your needs.

You will then be supplied with an AFS enrolment form and requested to complete that document, including obtaining a unique student identifier. You are required to sign and scan then and return to AFS:

- by email [reception@afsi.com.au](mailto:reception@afsi.com.au); or the qualification trainer (as appropriate)
- by mail to AFS:  
PO Box 311  
Deakin West ACT 2611
- in person to our office at:  
Suite 5-7  
Level 1  
36 Thesiger Court  
Deakin ACT 2600

Once enrolment is confirmed, invoicing action will commence for course fees.

## Fees

Australian Forensic Services operates predominately as a 'fee for service' training business. This means all training programs attract fees.

Where less than \$1,500 is collected prior to the commencement of training or where the total course fee is less than \$1,500, a fee protection process is not required. These fees are paid by/charged to the student, a government agency or the student's employer.

Where the total course fee is more than \$1,500, AFS will deposit the full amount of the Course, into a holding bank account, which protects fees prepaid by individual students or prospective students for services.

Fee information is available via:

- AFS program brochures
- AFS promotional material
- Direct email from AFS
- The AFS website
- This handbook

Each of these information streams clearly identifies all fees and charges. The RTO's fee policy will be updated regularly so that both Australian Forensic Services and our clients will be protected.

Australian Forensic Services will provide the following fee information, to each student:

- The total amount of all fees including course fees, administration fees, materials fees and any other charges;
- Payment terms, including the timing and amount of fees to be paid and any non-refundable deposit/administration fee;
- The nature of the guarantee given by the RTO to complete the training and / or assessment once the student has commenced study in their chosen qualification or course;
- The fees and charges for additional services, including such items as issuance of a replacement qualification testamur and the options available to students who are deemed not yet competent on completion of training and assessment; and
- The applicant's refund policy.

## Recognition of Prior Learning Fee

Section 1: Initial application of Recognition of Prior Learning including consultation either in person or via phone with a suitably qualified assessor incurs no fee.

Section 2: Upon successful application the candidate will be charged an agreed fee which includes the successful RPL Assessment and certification.

Section 3: Where the student is not able to achieve the full qualification through RPL and gap training is required, a training plan and costing structure will be mutually agreed upon. The basis of the cost structure will be pro-rata on a unit by unit basis based on the scheduled course fee.

Special circumstances surrounding RPL costs will be discussed with the candidate by the trainer on a case by case basis.

To learn more about the Recognition of Prior Learning process please refer to page 25.

## Protecting Students where Course Fees are more than \$1500

The corporate structure, governance and financial management systems and processes guarantee the training for students enrolled with Australian Forensic Services. Specifically, the integrity, business experience and training expertise of the MANAGING DIRECTOR ensure continuity of training and completion of training is guaranteed for all students.

Student's training is further protected by Australian Forensic Services' financial management policy and procedure. Fees paid in advance are not transferred to the operating account until training commences.

## Fee Structure

### *Total course fee*

Each qualification, unit of competency or accredited course offered by Australian Forensic Services has a specific course fee. The course fee is the maximum fee that may be charged to the student for his/her selected training program.

It is Australian Forensic Services' policy that the course fee will be *all-inclusive*. Students will not be 'surprised' by unexpected requirements, fees or expenses.

Where additional resources normally associated with a program of study are required (for example; reference material, research documents, own computer) the student will be clearly advised of exactly what is required in the student study guide for that program.

Our course fees can be found on our website <http://afsi.com.au>

Payment plans are offered as a convenience by AFS and do not negate a student's liability for the full fees. No qualifications will be issued until all course fees have been paid in full.

### *Payment Required in Advance*

AFS does not take any payment in advance. Fees are payable on enrolment and access being granted to the AFS Learning Management System.

### *Enrolment Fee*

No enrolment fee is applicable.

### *Withdrawal Fee*

Withdrawal fees consist of a \$200 administrative fee.

### *Re-Submit Fee*

No re-submit fee applies.

### *Support Fee*

Students who require extra tutoring will receive 16 hours of free one on one tutoring for the course they are enrolled in. Bookings are essential. Students exceeding the 16 hours of free mentoring will be charged \$120 + GST per hour charged in advance. Please see Student Support Policy for further information.

### *Re-assessment Fee*

No re-assessment fee applies.

## Produce Partial Completion Statement of Attainment

Statement of Attainment when the student has partially completed the training program and must withdraw will be covered by the \$200 withdrawal fee.

## Re-print Certification

Where the student requests a new copy of their certification, the following fees apply:

- Statement of attainment \$25.00 + GST
- Qualification (with academic transcript) \$40.00 + GST

Contact AFS directly to request a re-print of certification:

- via email (reception@afsi.com.au)
- via phone (02 6106 9332)
- via mail to AFS PO Box 311, Deakin West ACT 2611

## Refunds

An application for a refund is addressed on a case-by-case basis. In normal circumstances, where attendance is not possible for the candidate, AFS promotes deferment to an alternative scheduled delivery date, with the fees paid fully transferrable to that course.

In the event of a course for which the candidate has sought enrolment being unavailable or no acceptable alternative course is available, all fees paid are fully refundable.

In no instance will refunds be payable because the industry provider of the vocational outcome has changed their education entry requirements.

Should a candidate cancel their enrolment with AFS the following conditions will apply regarding a refund of fees paid:

- an administration fee of \$200.00 is non-refundable in any instance.
- cancellation prior to the commencement date of their enrolled course will result in a full refund of fees paid to date minus the administration fee.

No refunds will be given for cancellations or discontinuations after the course commencement date or after exclusion for unsatisfactory attendance or behaviour, as candidates are considered to have accessed the training material and are therefore liable for the full cost of the course.

Notification for cancellation of enrolment in a course must be given in writing. Contact via email or internal message in the Learning Management System is acceptable and must be provided within a reasonable period of the course commencement date. All requests for cancellation will be processed within four weeks and any resulting refund will be paid within one week of the claim being agreed.

Information provided prior to enrolment or the commencement of training and assessment, whichever comes first, specifies the student's rights as a consumer, including but not limited to any statutory cooling-off period (where applicable) and the student's right to obtain a refund for services not provided by the Australian Forensic Services in the event the:

- Arrangement is terminated early, or
- Australian Forensic Services fails to provide the agreed services.

## Payment of invoices

Once the Enrolment Form has been signed and returned to AFS, applicants will be charged for the full cost of the course. 50% of the course fee is due 7 days from the invoice date, and the remainder is due after commencement onto the AFS Learning Management System. Alternative payment arrangements such as payment plans can be discussed with AFS Management.





A reminder that no qualifications will be issued by AFS until all course fees have been paid in full.

## Records

Australian Forensic Services has a clearly documented quality administrative and records management system in place to secure the accuracy, integrity and currency of records, to keep documentation up-to-date and to secure any confidential information obtained by Australian Forensic Services and committees, individuals or organisations acting on its behalf.

Data is collected and stored in accordance with the processes outlined in this document and Australian Forensic Services' record management procedures ensure timely and accurate records inform the continuous improvement processes of Australian Forensic Services. In addition, these records management procedures will ensure that all documentation providing evidence of compliance to the essential standards of registration is accurately maintained.

## Record Keeping Procedures

Australian Forensic Services has a clearly documented quality administrative and records management system in place to secure the accuracy, integrity and currency of records, to keep documentation up-to-date and to secure any confidential information obtained by Australian Forensic Services and committees, individuals or organisations acting on its behalf.

Upon enrolment, student's details will be entered into the Australian Forensic Services database system. This process initiates the establishment of the student's individual file which is then used to record all future details pertaining to the client. The file is retained by Australian Forensic Services and management of the file will be in accordance with the AFS training records policy.

Australian Forensic Services is committed to maintaining the accuracy, integrity and currency of all student files, as well as ensuring appropriate security of all records to uphold confidentiality and protect student privacy. AFS management will undertake a validation of the training records of approximately 5% of registered students and report the findings at the monthly management meeting.

## Completed Assessments

Each and every assessment submitted by every student will be retained for a minimum period of six (6) months. At the expiration of six (6) months period, the student's assessments will be scanned and stored electronically for thirty (30) years.

When in paper format, student's work will be filed according to the competency/unit number, competency/unit cluster or alphabetically according to the students' names. Individual student records will be stored in a lockable steel filing cabinet in a locked secure office area. If the files are stored in a location where student or public access is possible, the cabinets will remain locked.

For ease of application and consistency, a similar filing process will be used for electronic files. The electronic records are stored utilising AVETMISS compliant software and access is restricted by a password system.

## Results of Assessment Records

Student assessment results will be recorded electronically within the Australian Forensic Services database system. This information may be used to provide annual competency completion reports and/or AVETMISS reports, as required.

- Sufficient information to re-issue the testamur, if required, will be retained
- Results of assessment will be retained for thirty (30) years

## Security

Australian Forensic Services ensures further security of records by complying with the storage requirements detailed in ASQA's General directive: *Retention requirements for completed student assessment items*, 22 June 2012. This directive includes requirements for storage including: safeguards against unauthorised access, fire, flood, termites or any other pests, and to ensure that copies of records can be produced if the originals are destroyed or inaccessible. Australian Forensic Services enhances its compliance with this directive by protecting electronic files with up-to-date virus protection, firewall and spy ware protection software.

The data management system is Cloud based and offers the security and integrity expected of a reputable Cloud storage system. In addition, electronic records are copied to a portable hard drive, every four (4) week period. The portable hard drive is stored off site in a fire proof secure location.

Australian Forensic Services software and hardcopy systems will retain student's results for a period of no less than thirty (30) years. If requested, enrolment information, training and assessment information or results of assessment will be provided in electronic format wherever possible.

Paper based records will be scanned and saved in Adobe PDF format. Paper records will be securely shredded every twelve (12) months in accordance with the Managing Director's directions.

A copy of each testamur issued is scanned and retained in Adobe PDF format. If requested, the testamur may be re-printed at any time within the thirty (30) year period after issue. This method ensures the original format, design, signature, date and units of competency are re-printed accurately and with a minimum of effort and expense.

The database system is used and data/files/records are converted and saved in Adobe PDF format. Australian Forensic Services has chosen Adobe PDF because research indicates this software will be able to be opened and read for up to thirty (30) years.

## Ceasing Operation

In the event that Australian Forensic Services ceases to operate, its records will be transferred to ASQA in the appropriate format and detail as specified by the Department at the time of ceasing RTO operations.

All other records including training records, taxation records, business and commercial records will be retained for a period of at least seven (7) years.

Australian Forensic Services will ensure that any confidential information acquired by the business, individuals, committees or organisations acting on its behalf is securely stored.

## Access to Records

Australian Forensic Services has implemented a record management system that ensures that all students have access to accurate information regarding their learning in a timely fashion. To ensure this, employees are informed of their responsibilities for record keeping and the process is monitored through the continuous improvement process and improved where necessary. This section outlines the data management procedures that support our records management system.

### Access to student records

Access to individual student training records will be limited to those required by the SNR, such as:

- Trainers and assessors to access and update the records of the students whom they are working with
- Management staff as required to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of the business

- Officers of ASQA or their representatives for activities required under the standards for registered training organisations

Australian Forensic Services trainers and assessors will maintain accurate and current records of each student's progress and achievement of competencies in the area of their study. These records will be entered on the Australian Forensic Services database system during training and assessment or immediately at the completion of training and assessment.

As students complete each competency, the trainer or assessor will check the achievements against the relevant qualification packaging rules and sign off successfully completed competencies.

All details of full or partially completed competencies will be recorded and stored on the student's file.

Upon completion of all relevant competencies within a qualification, the student will be entitled to receiving the full qualification. The certificate and academic record and / or statement of attainment will be produced and signed by AFS management, trainer and / or assessor, and presented to the student.

A scanned electronic copy of all signed qualifications issued will be converted to PDF format and secured in the student's file.

#### *Student access to records*

Students have the right to request information about or have access to their own individual records. AFS trainers and assessors or administration staff will provide the requested information or access. Students also have the right to request a hard copy of their own individual file that can be supplied as a printout from records retained within the data management system.

You should feel free to ask your Australian Forensic Services trainer and assessor or administration staff at any time for a printout of your progress.

#### *Privacy*

Australian Forensic Services considers student privacy to be of utmost importance and will practice a high standard of care and concern in regard to maintaining student privacy in all aspects of business operations. Any persons external to the organisation acting on behalf of Australian Forensic Services are made aware of the confidentiality procedures and privacy policies prior to commencing work with AFS.

Australian Forensic Services will comply with all legislative requirements including the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and Australian Privacy Principles (2014). The Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (Privacy Amendment Act) made many significant changes to the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act). These changes commenced on 12 March 2014. The Privacy Regulation 2013, made under the Privacy Act, also commenced on 12 March 2014.

Australian Forensic Services ensures no student information is disclosed without the student's consent, except as required by law or in adherence to the SNR. Student consent must be obtained in writing from the student, unless the student is under the age of 18 years, in which case written consent from their parent or guardian must be obtained. Consent to disclosure of information forms and / or letters will be recorded.



## National Recognition

Australian Forensic Services will recognise all AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any other RTO. If any ambiguity is detected when validating a student's certification, AFS will seek verification from the relevant RTO before recognising the qualification or statement of attainment.

### Procedure for Recognition of Qualifications

Students enrolling with Australian Forensic Services will be made aware of the recognition of qualifications policy by AFS staff at the time of enrolment to offer the opportunity of recognition of relevant qualifications or statements of attainment prior to the commencement of training. AFS trainers will remind students of the policy progressively throughout the duration of their course.

When a student presents an AQF qualification or statement of attainment to a trainer or staff member, a copy of the certificates will be taken and submitted to Australian Forensic Services for verification. Australian Forensic Services will verify the authenticity of the qualification or statement of attainment.

The verified copy of the qualification or statement of attainment is placed in the student's file. Once verification of the qualification or statement of attainment has been established, AFS staff will inform the student and offer exemption from the relevant unit(s) of competency. Staff will ensure the student is aware of and understands what component(s) of their training and assessment are affected.

AFS staff will update the student's records accordingly.

### Credit Transfer

Credit transfer refers to the transferal of academic credit obtained by students through participation in courses or national training package qualifications with other RTOs, towards a qualification offered by Australian Forensic Services. Credit transfer is granted on the basis that the credit validates the student's competency within the relevant qualification / unit of competence. Credit transfer of a qualification / unit of competence is available to all students enrolling in any training program offered by Australian Forensic Services.

## Unique Student Identifier

The [Unique Student Identifier \(USI\)](#) scheme, enabled by the Student Identifiers Act 2014, allows students to access a single online record of their VET achievements. The scheme also allows for reliable confirmation of these achievements by employers and other RTOs. The online system provides each student with a USI.

The USI scheme will provide a national online authenticated record of student's training attainment and will serve as a building block for a range of vocational education and training reforms. Over time, the ability of students to access and share their training records will make enrolment processes more efficient for training providers and students. Training providers will have access to an online information source to manage student transfers between training providers, and the assessment of credit transfer and pre-requisites.

Australian Forensic Services will only issue a qualification or statement of attainment to a student after the student has provided a verified USI or AFS applies for a USI on behalf of the student. To avoid any delays in issuing certification documentation AFS will ensure that student's USIs are applied for or verified USI at the time of enrolment.

Australian Forensic Services will protect the security of all information related to USIs. Security measures are in place to protect both digital and hard-copy records from loss, damage or unauthorised access. AFS stores paper based records in locked cabinets. Digital records are backed up on a Cloud

system. All AQF certification documentation issued by AFS is kept for 30 years. Where a qualification or statement of attainment is recorded in the USI scheme, AFS does not retain additional records to demonstrate this because the required records will exist within the USI scheme.

When reporting data about the training, each record of nationally recognised training that is provided to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) national VET provider collection will have a USI attached. This USI will be used to draw down on this data collection in real time. This means that, in the future, students will be able to draw down a record of their VET achievements from one place. They can view this online or they can use the data to develop a transcript that they can attach to a job application, for example.

The USI will be increasingly useful for Australian Forensic Services when the data builds, Australian Forensic Services (with the student's permission) will be able to draw down information about that student's previous VET attainments throughout Australia. This will assist with assessing student's admission to courses, for credit transfer and in some circumstances, their eligibility for funding. More information is available from the [Department of Industry's website](#) where a comprehensive [video](#) outlines the USI scheme.

Certain individuals are exempt from the requirement to supply a USI. In this situation, assessment results for these students will not be available via the USI system.

## Training and Assessment

Australian Forensic Services is committed to delivering high quality training and assessment services that exceed the expectations of their students. To ensure this, AFS has implemented processes for data collection and analysis within its operations that ensure the continuous improvement of training and assessment. Continuous improvement measures in this area respond to the results of data analysis and involve all internal and external stakeholder groups.

After the successful completion of the course (Student being deemed competent for all the course) the RTO will issue the relevant AQF certification documentation.

The quality and continuous improvement policy and procedure defines the methods of data collection and analysis. In order to provide high quality outcomes to their clients and students, Australian Forensic Services ensures that strategies for training and assessment are developed with effective consultation with industry and stakeholders.

## Principles of Training and Assessment

Training and assessment strategies developed by Australian Forensic Services will adhere to the following principles:

- Training and assessment strategies are developed for each qualification / unit of competency that will be delivered and assessed
- All training programs will require the development of a training and assessment strategy for full and partial completion of a qualification
- Each training and assessment strategy will be developed in consultation with industry representatives, trainers, assessors and key stakeholders
- Training and assessment strategies will reflect the requirements of the relevant training package and will identify target groups
- Training and assessment strategies will be validated annually through the internal review procedures

## Quality Training and Assessment Principles

Australian Forensic Services will apply the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence:

### Principles of assessment

To ensure quality outcomes, assessment should be:

#### *Fair*

Fairness in assessment requires consideration of the individual student's needs and characteristics, and any reasonable adjustments that need to be applied to take account of them. It requires clear communication between the assessor and the student to ensure that the student is fully informed about, understands and is able to participate in the assessment process, and agrees that the process is appropriate. It also includes an opportunity for the person being assessed to challenge the result of the assessment and to be re-assessed if necessary.

#### *Flexible*

To be flexible, assessment should reflect the student's needs; provide for recognition of competencies no matter how, where or when they have been acquired; draw on a range of methods appropriate to the context, competency and the student; and support continuous competency development.

#### *Valid*

Assessment is valid when the process is sound and assesses what it claims to assess. Validity requires that:

- Assessment against the units of competency must cover the broad range of skills
- Knowledge that are essential to competent performance
- Assessment of knowledge and skills must be integrated with their practical application
- Judgement of competence must be based on sufficient evidence (that is, evidence gathered on a number of occasions and in a range of contexts using different assessment methods). The specific evidence requirements of each unit of competency provide advice on sufficiency

#### *Reliable*

Reliability refers to the degree to which evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and results are consistent with assessment outcomes. Reliability requires the assessor to have the essential competencies in assessment and relevant vocational competencies (or to assess in conjunction with someone who has the vocational competencies). It can only be achieved when assessors share a common interpretation of the assessment requirements of the unit(s) being assessed.

### Rules of Evidence

These are closely related to the principles of assessment and provide guidance on the collection of evidence to ensure that it is:

#### *Valid*

Assessment is valid when the process is sound and assesses what it claims to assess. Validity requires that:

- Assessment against the units of competency must cover the broad range of skills
- Knowledge that are essential to competent performance
- Assessment of knowledge and skills must be integrated with their practical application

- Judgement of competence must be based on sufficient evidence (that is, evidence gathered on a number of occasions and in a range of contexts using different assessment methods). The specific evidence requirements of each unit of competency provide advice on sufficiency

### *Sufficient*

Sufficiency relates to the quality and quantity of evidence assessed. It requires collection of enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly. Supplementary sources of evidence may be necessary. The specific evidence requirements of each unit of competency provide advice on sufficiency.

### *Authentic*

To accept evidence as authentic, an assessor must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the student's own work.

### *Current*

In assessment, currency relates to the age of the evidence presented by a student to demonstrate that they are still competent. Competency requires demonstration of current performance, so the evidence collected must be from either the present or the very recent past.

## Connecting Training and Assessment with the Workplace

To maximise the outcomes for students, Australian Forensic Services ensures that every opportunity to connect training and assessment with the workplace is utilised. Opportunities will be developed in consultation with the relevant workplace personnel and responsibilities clearly communicated to all involved.

To identify a range of delivery and assessment methods that meet a variety of needs, an ongoing schedule of industry liaison and consultation will be adhered to. These consultations will be documented with meetings and memorandums acknowledged by those industry and enterprise representatives involved in consultation relative to the development of assessment strategies.

Students enrolled in a traineeship program will normally be working for an employer within the industry. In some circumstances employers may offer a contribution towards the cost of training and assessment, which is encouraged by Australian Forensic Services.

Australian Forensic Services will:

- Involve workplace personnel in planning workplace programs, where they are relevant to the training and assessment program
- Ensure that the training and assessment program makes full use of opportunities at the workplace
- Monitor each student's progress and the support provided to them by workplace personnel
- Consult with workplace personnel in the development of workplace training and assessment processes
- Inform workplace personnel of their training and assessment roles and responsibilities, and accept these responsibilities, where relevant to the training and assessment program
- Monitor support provided to each student by workplace personnel
- Monitor the student's progress

Information from workplace personnel is used to continuously improve training and assessment. A number of programs that engage employers or other parties who contribute to each learner's training, assessment and support services to meet their individual needs are available. Refer to [Apprenticeships](#)

[and Traineeships](#) below for examples of programs, government initiatives and opportunities for employers to be engaged with training and assessment.

## Assessment Policy

Australian Forensic Services acknowledges the critical role that assessment plays in determining the competency of students. In developing the assessment (including RPL) for each qualification and unit of competence, the Managing Director will ensure:

- Compliance with the assessment guidelines from the relevant training package, qualification and unit of competence of accredited course
- Assessment leads to a qualification or statement of attainment under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Assessment complies with the principles of competency based assessment and informs the student of the purpose and context of the assessment
- The rules of evidence guide the collection of evidence to support the principles of validity and reliability
- The application of knowledge and skills is relevant to the standard expected in the workplace, including skills for managing work tasks, contingencies and the job environment
- Timely and appropriate feedback is given to students
- Assessment complies with AFS's access and equity policy
- All students have access to re-assessment on appeal

Australian Forensic Services implements an assessment system that ensures that assessment (including Recognition of Prior Learning) complies with the assessment requirements of the relevant training package or VET accredited course. Australian Forensic Services recognises that each unit of competency contains assessment requirements relating to; performance evidence, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions.

## Training Guarantee

It is the intention of the Managing Director of Australian Forensic Services that all students will receive the full training services paid for at all times, including but not limited to training and assessment, assessment only, recognition of prior learning or short courses. The corporate structure, governance and financial management systems and processes guarantee the training for students enrolled with Australian Forensic Services. Specifically, the integrity, business experience and training expertise of the Managing Director ensure continuity of training and completion of training is guaranteed for all students. The continuous improvement and quality management practices employed by Australian Forensic Services Managing Director and staff are designed to proactively identify any anomaly that might cause a business interruption or training failure, and address this situation before any students are affected.

## Protecting Fees Prepaid by Individual Students

In the extremely unlikely event of a business interruption or training failure, the TAS guarantees student's training. Students may be transferred to a similar course with another RTO at no additional cost to the student, for example.

Student's training is further protected by Australian Forensic Services' financial management policy and procedure.

Furthermore, should an interruption occur while a student is enrolled in a training program, the student will be advised of any changes in writing and given time to respond. The student will be given the opportunity to respond, agree or offer input.



## Third Party Training

Where applicable, Australian Forensic Services' Training Guarantee extends to training partners and training conducted by a third party on behalf of the RTO. In the extremely unlikely event of a business interruption or training failure by a third party delivering training and assessment on the RTO's behalf, students may be transferred to another similar course with another RTO or approved third party at no additional cost to the student, for example.

## Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of prior learning means recognition of competencies currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. These competencies may be attained through any combination of formal or informal training and education, work experience or general life experience. In order to grant RPL, the assessor must be confident that the student is currently competent against the endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards or outcomes specified in Australian Qualifications Framework accredited courses. The evidence may take a variety of forms and could include certification, references from past employers, testimonials from clients and work samples. The assessor must ensure that the evidence is authentic, valid, reliable, current and sufficient.

Australian Forensic Services appreciates the value of workplace and industry experience, and recognises that students will acquire vocational skills and knowledge from a variety of sources other than formal training. These skills are legitimate irrespective of how they were acquired and the RPL process is designed to provide validation of such relevant skills.

### Australian Forensic Services' Recognition of Prior Learning Process

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process that assesses an individual's formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and / or partial or total completion of a VET qualification.

The recognition of prior learning (RPL) process will be offered to and explained to all relevant students. All students will have access to Australian Forensic Services' RPL policy which is contained in the AFS Candidate's Handbook and is available on request.

Students who believe they have already obtained current skills and knowledge that would otherwise be covered in the qualification / unit of competence for which they intend to attain, should apply for RPL at the time of enrolment. The student's skills and knowledge will be assessed and validated, and where appropriate, units of competency acknowledged, and face-to-face training reduced.

As part of the Australian Forensic Services enrolment policy, trainers will advise students of the availability of RPL policy, explain what the process involves and how it relates to the attainment of the qualification. Trainers will remind students of this option progressively throughout their time in training, in order to provide multiple opportunities for students to engage in the RPL process.

When approached by a student seeking RPL, trainers will:

- Provide the student with copies of an RPL Introduction Letter
- Provide the student with information about the types of evidence that can be used to support an RPL application

## Client Services

Australian Forensic Services is committed to delivering high quality services that support students throughout their training and assessment. This commitment is based on a client focused operation

that produces the best possible outcome for students. Australian Forensic Services will ensure students are informed of the services they are to receive, their rights and obligations, and the responsibilities of the RTO. Students who undertake training with Australian Forensic Services receive every opportunity to successfully complete their chosen training program. Australian Forensic Services will provide students with information prior to commencement of services including any subcontracting arrangements affecting the delivery of training and/or assessment.

## Student Advice

AFS takes a systematic approach to establish and recognise the needs of each client. It is a requirement that all staff members do their utmost to meet the needs of students. Where a student's need is outside the scope or skill of the organisation they will be referred to an appropriate service or an alternate training organisation.

Australian Forensic Services delivers specialised training and assessment services including:

- (a) Pre-enrolment materials
- (b) Study support and study skills programs
- (c) Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) programs or referrals to these programs
- (d) Equipment, resources and/or programs to increase access for students with disabilities
- (e) Learning resource centres
- (f) Flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment
- (g) Advice to counselling services or to similar services
- (h) Information technology (IT) support
- (i) Learning materials in alternative formats, for example, in large print
- (j) Learning and assessment programs customised to the workplace

As such, it is vital that all students are informed of and understand the extent of the training course that they are enrolling in. Australian Forensic Services has in place a process and mechanism to provide all clients information about the training, assessment and support services to be provided, and about their rights and obligations, prior to enrolment or entering into an agreement.

In summary, Australian Forensic Services will provide:

- Training programs and services that promote inclusion and are free from discrimination
- Support services, training, assessment and training materials to meet the needs of a variety of individual students
- Consideration of each individual's needs to provide the best opportunity for skill development and attainment of qualifications that can lead to further training or employment
- Opportunity for consultation between staff and students so that all aspects of individual circumstances can be taken into consideration when planning training programs
- Consideration of the views of students' community, government agencies and organisations, and industry when planning training programs
- Access to information and course materials in a readily available, easily understood format
- Information to assist students in planning their pathway from school or the community to vocational education and training

While Australian Forensic Services guarantees that all students will receive the full training services paid for, it does not guarantee a student will successfully complete the course in which they are enrolled or that the student will obtain a particular employment outcome outside the control of Australian Forensic Services.

## Student Information Policy

Australian Forensic Services will provide all relevant information and directions to each student prior to enrolment as part of the student induction to enable the student to make informed decisions about undertaking training with Australian Forensic Services. This information will be clear and readily available in print or referral to an electronic copy. This will include details required to source the Australian Forensic Services Candidate's Handbook, available as PDF document on AFS website: <http://afsi.com.au>

Australian Forensic Services will provide the following information specific to each student:

- the code, title and currency of the AQF qualification, skill set or VET course to which the student is to be enrolled, as published on the National Register the services the RTO will provide to the student including the:
  - estimated duration of the services
  - expected locations at which the services will be provided
  - expected modes of delivery
  - name and contact details of any subcontractor which will provide training and assessment to the student
- the student's obligations including any requirements that Australian Forensic Services requires the student to meet to enter and successfully complete their chosen AQF qualification, skill set or VET course
- any materials and equipment that the student must provide; the educational and support services available to the student

Where there are any changes to agreed services, Australian Forensic Services will advise the student in writing and with a follow-up telephone call as soon as practicable, including in relation to any new third party arrangements or a change in ownership or changes to existing third party arrangements.

## Client Selection and Enrolment Procedure

### Client Selection

Enrolment and admission into some Australian Forensic Services training programs is subject to meeting certain prerequisite conditions and/or entry requirements. Specific details of the prerequisites pertaining to these training programs are contained in individual course documentation and are made available prior to enrolment. In the case that a potential student does not meet the prerequisite conditions and/or entry requirements, AFS staff will endeavour to assist them in understanding their options in regards to meeting the standards. Any questions regarding these arrangements can be addressed by trainers or AFS management.

### Enrolment Policy

The enrolment procedure commences when a student contacts Australian Forensic Services (AFS) expressing interest in a training program(s). AFS staff will respond by dispatching by suitable means an enrolment form, student handbook, literature on the program(s) being considered and any other documentation which may be relevant.

Enrolment applications will then be assessed to ensure that the student meets any prerequisites and/or entry requirements that have been set for the selected course. Students will be informed of successful enrolment and sent information on the course and their course induction. Students who do not meet the prerequisites for the selected course will be notified of their unsuccessful enrolment

and invited to contact Australian Forensic Services to discuss their training needs and alternative opportunities.

Students who are undergoing funded training are obligated to complete 3 units every quarter in order to maintain consistency of learning and to complete their qualification within the stipulated time frame (Certificate IV being 2 years and Diploma being 4 years).

Notification for cancellation of enrolment in a course must be given in writing. Contact via email or internal message in the Learning Management System is acceptable and must be provided within a reasonable period of the course commencement date.

Student access to the AFS Learning Management System (LMS) will be suspended after withdrawal/cancellation of enrolment is confirmed.

### Pre-Course Letter

As an additional support to enrolling students, Australian Forensic Services will send a pre-course letter to the student prior to the commencement of training. Information includes the time, date and location of training, the resources the student should bring to the course and overview of the units of competency to be studied and the format/style of training to be provided.

### Pre-Course Evaluation Checklist

A pre-course evaluation of each student is conducted. Questions are designed to identify the student's needs, so AFS staff members can evaluate any requirements the student may have to improve his/her learning experience and outcome. These questions are integrated within the enrolment form.

The designated AFS staff member will receive and assess each student's pre-course evaluation checklist. Based on the information in the checklist, the enrolment form, interview, induction and any other relevant correspondence and conversation, AFS staff and management may offer additional support. Examples of the support services may include:

- Study support and study skills programs
- Language, literacy and numeracy (LL&N) programs or referrals to appropriate programs
- Equipment, resources and / or programs to increase access for students with disabilities
- Learning resource centres
- Flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment
- Advice to counselling services or to similar services
- Information technology support
- Learning materials in alternative formats i.e. large print
- Learning and assessment programs customised to the workplace

### Induction

On successful completion of the enrolment process, all students will undergo an induction program including:

- Introduction to AFS training staff
- Confirmation of the course being delivered
- The training and assessment procedures including method, format and purpose of assessment
- Qualifications to be issued
- Student handbook provided

## Access and Equity

Australian Forensic Services is committed to practicing fairness and providing an equal opportunity for all current and potential students to access and participate in learning, and to achieve their learning outcomes regardless of age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location that may present a barrier to access, or any other perceived difference in class or category. Australian Forensic Services ensures that its practices are as inclusive as possible and do not unreasonably prevent any clients from accessing its services. AFS will address access and equity matters as a nominated part of operational duties.

If a student identifies with one or more of the following priority groups, he/she may be able to receive additional assistance:

- Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander people
- Carers of people who are ill, aged or who have a disability
- People with a disability
- Women and girls who are returning to education and training
- Women and girls who are seeking training opportunities in non-traditional roles
- Young people aged 15 to 25
- Australian South Sea Islanders
- Parental job seekers
- People with English language, literacy and numeracy needs
- Mature aged workers who require up skilling
- Long term unemployed and disadvantaged jobseekers
- People from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- People who speak a language other than English

Australian Forensic Services has developed this quality management and operational framework to guide and inform all staff and students in their obligations regarding access and equity. Upon induction into Australian Forensic Services, all staff is provided with copies of the policies which they must adhere to throughout all their operations as an AFS staff member. Students are made aware of the access and equity policy via the Australian Forensic Services student handbook, and informed of their rights to receive access and equity support and to request further information.

Australian Forensic Services' access and equity policies are in place to ensure that training opportunities are offered to all people on an equal and fair basis in all circumstances, irrespective of their gender, culture, linguistic background, race, socio-economic background, disability, age, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation or carer's responsibilities.

Practicing these policies will guarantee that any student who meets Australian Forensic Services entry requirements will be accepted into any training programs. If any student or staff member have issues or questions regarding access and equity, or believes they have been treated unfairly, they will be directed to AFS's management for consultation.

## Language, Literacy and Numeracy Assistance

Australian Forensic Services course information and learning materials contain written documentation and in some cases, numerical calculations.

AFS recognises that not all students will have the same level of ability in relation to reading, writing and performing calculations. When an issue is identified by AFS staff or requested by a student, a language, literacy and numeracy test will be provided to assess the student's ability. This process is to



ensure that all students who commence a training program possess the skills required to understand the presented material and complete assessments.

Australian Forensic Services will endeavour to provide assistance to students having difficulty with language, literacy or numeracy to accommodate their needs. In the event that a student's needs exceed the ability of AFS staff to assist, the student will be referred to an external support agency so they have the opportunity to obtain the skills required to complete the training program.

## Certificate Issuance

### Certificate Issuance Policy

Upon completion of all relevant competencies within a qualification/skill-set/statement of attainment, in the stipulated time-frame, with all course fees being paid in total, the student will be entitled to receiving the full qualification/skill-set/statement of attainment, that they are enrolled in.

The certificate, academic record and/ or statement of attainment/skill-set will be produced and signed by Australian Forensic Services Management, trainer and/ or assessor and presented to the student, after all above criteria has been met. A scanned electronic copy will be sent to the student via email and the hard copy sent to the postal address stipulated on the student's enrolment form. Should a student come through a contracted department with Australian Forensic Services (AFS), the hard copy will be sent to the address stipulated within the department contract.

After certificate issuance has occurred and a digital copy has been sent to the student via email, the student's access to the Australian Forensic Services (AFS) Learning Management System (LMS) will be suspended and they will no longer have access to the system.

## Student Support

### Student Support Policy

Australian Forensic Services will make all reasonable effort and utilise a variety of available methods to assist all students in their efforts to complete training programs. Australian Forensic Services will determine the support needs of individual students and provides access to the educational and support services necessary for the individual student to meet the requirements of the AQF qualification, skill set or VET course as specified in training packages or VET accredited courses. Australian Forensic Services will continue to develop strategies to make support available where gaps are identified.

Trainers are responsible for ensuring that all students are aware they can contact their trainer or other AFS staff members in the event that they are experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their studies. Staff will ensure students have access to the full resources of Australian Forensic Services to assist them in achieving the required level of competency in all nationally recognised qualifications.

In the event that a student is experiencing personal difficulties, training staff will encourage the student to contact Australian Forensic Services who will provide discreet, personalised and confidential assistance as according to the nature of the difficulties.

In the event that a student's needs exceed the capacity of the support services Australian Forensic Services can offer, they will be referred to an appropriate external agency. Extensive information regarding support agencies, resources and services may be sourced online. AFS staff members will assist students to source appropriate support.

## Flexible Delivery and Assessment Procedures

Australian Forensic Services recognises that some people are better suited to learning via teaching methods not usually obtained in the traditional classroom setting. With some minor adjustments to teaching and assessment methods, a student who is experiencing difficulty learning and achieving the desired results in the traditional setting may show considerable improvements.

The staff and management of AFS respect these differences among students and will endeavour to make any necessary adjustments to their methods in order to meet the needs of a variety of students. For example, the inability to complete a written assessment will not be interpreted as a sign of incompetence, provided the student can verbally demonstrate competency.

Acceptable adjustments to teaching and assessment methods may include, but are not limited to; having a trainer read assessment materials to students, having a student's spoken responses to assessment questions recorded or allowing a student to sit for an assessment alone in a different room.

AFS staff will pursue any reasonable means within their ability to assist students in achieving the required competency standards. In the event that a student's needs exceed the capacity of the support services Australian Forensic Services can offer, they will be referred to an appropriate external agency.

### Reasonable Adjustment

Reasonable adjustment means adjustments that can be made to the way in which evidence of student performance can be collected. Whilst reasonable adjustments can be made in terms of the way in which evidence of performance is gathered, the evidence criteria for making competent / not yet competent decisions (and / or awarding grades) should not be altered in any way. That is, the standards expected should be the same irrespective of the group and / or individual being assessed; otherwise comparability of standards will be compromised.

## Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Australian Forensic Services recognises that apprenticeships and traineeships are the perfect vehicle for training and developing new and existing staff. Because much of the training is in the workplace, the skills an apprentice or trainee acquires are customised to the specific needs of an organisation. Furthermore, employers may be eligible for various government financial incentives to assist with employing an apprentice or trainee.

State and Territory governments are responsible for all aspects of their training systems, including Australian Apprenticeships policy, priorities, regulatory and administrative arrangements. It also includes determining what qualifications are suitable for Australian Apprenticeships in each state or territory, approving registered training organisations to deliver them and distributing public funds to registered training organisation for training delivery.

## Discipline

Australian Forensic Services makes every effort to practice cooperation and mutual respect in all internal and external dealings to uphold high quality, professional training and assessment services. The same disciplined behaviour is expected of students as a contribution to a functional learning environment, and as a sign of respect to staff and fellow students.

## Professional Behaviour

AFS Management advises any trainer or staff member who is dissatisfied with the behaviour or performance of a student that they have the authority to:

- Warn the student that their behaviour is unsuitable, or
- Ask a student to leave the class, without refund or acceptance into another course, or
- Immediately cancel the class.

If a student wishes to object or lodge an appeal against the disciplinary action taken, they have the right and opportunity to follow the Australian Forensic Services complaint procedure.

AFS staff are expected to maintain a professional and ethical working relationship with all other staff members, management and students. Breaches of the disciplinary standards will result in discussion between the relevant trainer and Australian Forensic Services, and appropriate action will be taken.

## Plagiarism, Cheating and Collusion

Plagiarism is the "wrongful appropriation" and "purloining and publication" of another author's "language, thoughts, ideas or expressions," and the representation of them as one's own original work.

Cheating is any behaviour by students in relation to any item of assessment which falsely represents the student's effort or performance on the assessment. The act of cheating, whether it is intentional or unintentional, is an act of academic dishonesty. Students are expected at all times to act honestly and with integrity when fulfilling their assessment requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorised collaboration on assessable work with another person/s and/or any artificial intelligence (AI). E.g., Chat GPT, OpenAI playground, Bing AI etc.

### Plagiarism, cheating and Collusion Policy

Plagiarism, cheating and collusion are considered academic dishonesty and a breach of journalistic ethics. It is subject to serious sanctions such as expulsion.

Whilst it is reasonable to seek assistance, or to research material in the course of undertaking assessment, all work submitted for assessment must be clearly referenced (where required) and constitute that student's own work.

Australian Forensic Services' Managing Director takes a very strict approach to plagiarism, cheating and collusion, and proven incidents will not be tolerated.

## Complaints and Appeals

Australian Forensic Services has a defined complaints and appeals process that will enable student's complaints and appeals are addressed effectively and efficiently.

AFS strives to ensure that each student is satisfied with their learning experience and outcome. In the unlikely event that this is not the case, all students have access to rigorous, fair and timely complaint and appeal processes which are outlined in this section of the policy and procedures document. Any complaints or appeals will be reviewed as part of the continuous improvement process and where corrective action has been highlighted, it will be implemented as a priority.

A student may lodge a complaint regarding the RTO; Third Party; Subcontractor or Trainer. There is also provision for any and all interested stakeholders to make a complaint if they feel aggrieved. For example, a Trainer may lodge a complaint against a student.



## Complaints Procedure

A complaints procedure is available to all persons wishing to make a complaint, appeal or any other manner of objection in relation to the conduct of Australian Forensic Services. The complaints procedure will address both formal and informal complaints. All formal complaints must be submitted in writing to AFS management and will be heard and addressed, including a response to the aggrieved person, within five (5) working days of receipt.

AFS management will maintain a complaints register to document the course of action and resolution of all formal complaints. All complaints substantiated by the complaints procedure will be reviewed as part of the Australian Forensic Services continuous improvement procedure.

It is the responsibility of AFS management to ensure adherence to the complaint procedure and that resolution is sought in all reasonable circumstances. This includes informing and assisting students with the complaints procedure and supply of complaint forms.

If the student is still not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint after following and exhausting the complaints procedure, the student may contact ASQA and lodge a written complaint.

The form may be submitted by mail to:

Complaints Team  
Australian Skills Quality Authority  
PO BOX 9928  
Sydney NSW 2001

Or via email to: [complaints.team@asqa.gov.au](mailto:complaints.team@asqa.gov.au)

## Appeals

The Australian Forensic Services appeals process is concerned with a student's right to request change to decisions or processes of an official nature, usually in relation to academic or procedural matters.

In the case of a student's appeal against specific assessment decisions, the student should first discuss the decision(s) with the relevant trainer or assessor and request re-evaluation. The trainer or assessor will hear the student's appeal, make fair judgement to the best of their ability as to whether change(s) are required and then discuss their final decision with the student.

If the student is still dissatisfied with the trainer or assessor's decision, they have the right to take the appeal to the management team. The formal notice of appeal is required to comply with the following principles upon submission to management:

- The notice of appeal should be in writing, addressed to Australian Forensic Services for referral to the management team and submitted within five (5) days of notification of the outcome of the trainer or assessors re-evaluation process.
- The notice of appeal must be submitted within the specified timeframe otherwise the original result will stand. If a student's appeal needs to be deferred due to emergency circumstances, such as in the case of serious illness or injury, a medical certificate supporting the case must be forward to management. The notice of deferral must be submitted within three (3) working days of the conclusion date displayed on the medical certificate.

It is the responsibility of AFS management to ensure adherence to the appeal procedure and that resolution is sought in all reasonable circumstances. This includes informing and assisting students with the appeal procedure and supply of appeal forms.

All appeals will be reviewed at the monthly management meeting and, if appropriate, result in a continuous improvement process.

If the student is still not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint after following and exhausting the appeals procedure, the student may contact ASQA and lodge a written complaint.

The form may be submitted by mail to:

Complaints Team  
Australian Skills Quality Authority  
PO BOX 9928  
Sydney NSW 2001

Or via email to: [complaints.team@asqa.gov.au](mailto:complaints.team@asqa.gov.au)

## Complaints / Appeals Procedure

All persons wishing to make a complaint, appeal or any other manner of objection in relation to the conduct of Australian Forensic Services or any third party (such as other students, outsourced trainers, subcontractors, staff, trainers, assessors) have access to the following procedure:

### Informal Complaint/Appeal:

- An initial complaint or appeal will involve the student communicating directly with Australian Forensic Services verbally or by other appropriate means.
- All persons identified or subject to a complaint will be notified in writing of the content of the complaint and/or allegation and afforded all natural justice and procedural fairness response mechanisms
- AFS management will make a decision, discuss their judgement with the student and record the outcome of the complaint or appeal
- Students dissatisfied with the outcome of Australian Forensic Services' decision may initiate the formal complaint procedure

### Formal Complaint/Appeal:

- It is normal procedure that all formal complaints proceed only after the initial informal complaint or appeal procedure has been finalized
- The formal complaint or appeal is to be submitted in writing, and the procedure and outcome recorded by AFS management
- On receipt of a formal complaint, the Managing Director or a nominated senior management person independent of the complaint will notify the complainant in writing that they have received the submission.
- The Managing Director will convene the complaint committee to hear the complaint
- The complaint committee will consist of a panel of members with no previous involvement or vested interest in the outcome of the particular complaint or appeal. Members of the committee should include:
  - A representative of AFS management
  - An AFS staff member
  - A person independent of Australian Forensic Services
- The complainant/appellant shall be given an opportunity to present the case to the committee and may be accompanied by one (1) other person as support or as representation
- Staff member(s) involved shall be given an opportunity to present their case to the committee and may be accompanied by one (1) other person as support or as representation



- The complaint committee will reach a decision on the complaint or appeal after consideration of each case presented
- The complaint committee will inform all parties involved of the outcome in writing within five (5) working days of making the decision

All complaints and appeals will be reviewed at Australian Forensic Services monthly management meeting. Continuous improvement procedures may be actioned when the complaint / appeal procedure results in identification of factors appropriate for improvement to internal operations. When the initial causative factor of the complaint identifies a problem with current Australian Forensic Services policies and / or procedures, the continuous improvement procedure will ensure changes are made to prevent reoccurrence of the problem.

#### *Delayed Processes*

In the unusual circumstances where a delay in the complaint or appeal process occurs, where longer than sixty (60) calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, Australian Forensic Services will inform the complainant or appellant in writing. In line with the importance that Australian Forensic Services places on open and transparent processes and communication, the first written communication will be made at five (5) days. From that point, the complainants or appellant will be regularly updated on the progress of the matter, including reasons why more time is required.