

Australian Institute of Community Services

Student Handbook



November 2009

The information and policies contained within this "Student Handbook" were current on the date of printing. The information and policies contained within this document are subject to change. It is therefore recommended that students periodically refer to the Institute's website at www.aics.net.au for a current version of the handbook.

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Welcome

Thank you for becoming a student of the Australian Institute of Community Services.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Institute on behalf of myself, Sandra Poletto, and our team of Managers, Administrators, and Education staff. The Institute and its staff are dedicated to developing high-quality applicable courses and programs, and providing an exceptional level of education and service to all students.

This Student Handbook has been prepared to inform you of the various aspects of studying with the Institute and undertaking your course.

With Australia's ageing population and a greater need for support services for individuals and families within our communities, the community services industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in Australia. There is an increasing need for skilled workers to enter and gain employment within the sector. The Institute is pleased to offer nationally recognised community services training programs that provide quality training with flexible study and support options.

All courses offered by the Institute are Nationally Recognised Training Programs. The Course Outlines shown in this Student Handbook provide details of the workbooks, practical assessments and work placements you are required to complete as part of your course. All the learning materials that you need to complete your course are supplied to you.

You are provided with a workbook for each unit of your course. The workbooks present progressive information about the unit and contain assessment questions. When responding to the questions, you will find that it is generally not necessary to include references in your assessment to information other than what is supplied.

The Course Outline for your course will clearly explain how to complete the practical requirements of your course. Your course may require you to demonstrate your proficiency in practical tasks in a simulated environment. These practical tasks can be demonstrated by attending seminars or being assessed privately. Seminars are offered in most major cities throughout Australia and include case studies and the application of skills in a simulated setting. Depending on the nature of the unit, you may also have the option of demonstrating your competency by recording your skills and submitting your recording (on video or DVD) for marking.

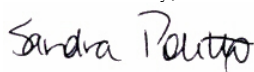
Some courses require the completion of a work placement and we provide information in this Student Handbook about how to arrange and access your work placement.

Please remember that all Institute learning materials, information and documentation are fully protected by copyright and other registrations, and as an Institute student we ask that you do all you can to protect our information and methodology. All Institute material is prepared by qualified and experienced professionals and for this reason we actively seek your help to protect against plagiarism.

If you have any questions regarding the Institute or your course please contact your local Student Support Centre.

On behalf all our staff here at the Institute, I wish you much success as you embark on this life changing course.

Yours faithfully,



Sandra Poletto
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Institute of Community Services

About the Institute

The **Australian Institute of Community Services** (AICS) is a leading national provider of Community Services qualifications. AICS delivers training nationally through its State-based network of training and support centres.

Working in Community Services is extremely rewarding. You are helping some of the most disadvantaged individuals and groups in society live a more comfortable and better quality life. It will give you a strong and empowering sense of personal worth.

All AICS courses are delivered through a blend of external and practical face-to-face training. As such, all AICS courses are extremely flexible allowing you to fit learning around your busy schedule. Simply complete theoretical components at home and practical elements when it suits you.

The Australian Institute of Community Services offers a selection of community services courses from Certificate III to Diploma level. Our courses are offered through a network of Student Support Centres, located both Australia-wide and internationally. Each Student Support Centre is overseen by a Manager who is responsible for general administration and the well being of students within a given area. The Institute is managed by an Executive Committee, which reports to and works with the Director.

The educational function of the Institute is provided by a team of Education Advisers, Lecturers and Tutors who have their principal qualifications in relevant community service and welfare fields and several years experience working in community services combined with recognised instructional skills.

All AICS courses lead to qualifications from the industry-endorsed Community Services Training Package. Institute courses have been developed on the basis of progressive assessment and self paced learning. Upon acceptance of your enrolment with the Institute you will have received a Study Package which contains a workbook for each unit included in the Study Pack. Each is designed to make your correspondence studies as comfortable as possible. A Practical Assessment timetable and other relevant information are also provided.

Should you require assistance with your studies, do not hesitate to contact an Education Adviser on 1300 139 239. If you are enrolled with a Student Support Centre outside of Australia, please contact your Student Support Centre if you require study assistance. For all administrative enquiries, please contact your local Student Support Centre. The personalised service offered by the Institute ensures that your queries will be attended to as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The Courses

AICS offers a range of Nationally Recognised Training courses from the Community Services Training Package in a range of fields including aged care, child care, home and community care, disability, financial counselling and community services work.

Details of current courses offered by AICS can be found at the Institute's website at www.aics.net.au.

Contacting Us

Head Office

Locked Bag 15, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006
47 Baxter Street, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006
Telephone: (07) 3216 1610
Facsimile: (07) 3257 7195

Internet

www.aics.net.au

Study Assistance Line - Australia

Telephone: 1300 139 239

Brisbane / Northern Territory / Tasmania

Manager: Robert Carrigan
PO Box 425, Carina QLD 4152
336 Stanley Road, Carina QLD 4152
Telephone: (07) 3843 4799
Facsimile: (07) 3843 3599

Regional Queensland

Manager: Peter Kesper
PO Box 300, Moffat Beach QLD 4551
7 Mariner Place, Bokarina QLD 4575
Telephone: (07) 5437 9549
Facsimile: (07) 5493 7466

Gold Coast

Manager: Amanda Black
PO Box 9069, Lighthouse Beach, Port Macquarie NSW 2444
11/13 Karp Court, Bundall QLD 4217
Telephone: (02) 6581 4217
Facsimile: (02) 6581 5117

Regional NSW & ACT

Manager: Amanda Black
PO Box 9069, Lighthouse Beach, Port Macquarie NSW 2444
1/34 Jindalee Road, Port Macquarie NSW 2444
Telephone: (02) 6581 4217
Facsimile: (02) 6581 5117

Sydney

Manager: Neville Randle
PO Box 3635, Parramatta NSW 2124
Suite 21, Level 2, 152 Marsden Street, Parramatta NSW 2150
Telephone: (02) 9633 4404
Facsimile: (02) 9687 9698

Victoria

Manager: Katie Penman
GPO Box 417, Melbourne VIC 3001
Level 1, 337 Latrobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Telephone: (03) 9670 3676
Facsimile: (03) 9602 3832

South Australia

Manager: Carol Moore
PO Box 3027, Rundle Mall PO, SA 5000
Level 10, GHD Building, 68 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Telephone: (08) 8359 3254
Facsimile: (08) 8232 4242

Western Australia

Manager: Jason Hart
PO Box 631, Mt Lawley WA 6929
Suite 1, 110-116 East Parade, East Perth WA 6004
Telephone: (08) 9328 2066
Facsimile: (08) 9227 6648

Study Assistance Line: +61 7 3216 1610

(Students calling internationally, please add the international call prefix and country code 61 before the above numbers)

Studying with the Institute

Communication

All students can register on our website to receive our '**Community News**' newsletter. This e-newsletter is emailed to you each fortnight containing powerful strategies for personal development, the latest industry news and much more. Visit our web page at www.aics.net.au to register and receive this popular electronic magazine.

For all student study assistance queries, please call our **Study Assistance Line** on 1300 139 239 or email the Institute at tutor@aics.net.au; please refer to the next section for further information regarding Study Assistance. Alternatively, if you have a query relating to your enrolment, study progress or payments, please contact your local Student Support Centre.

Any student who changes their contact details or email address should notify the Institute within 14 days by sending your updated details to your local Student Support Centre.

Study Assistance

Should you need help or assistance with any of your units or learning material, Education Advisers are readily available to help you on the Institute's **Study Assistance Line**. Study assistance is available to students throughout Australia for the cost of a local call by telephoning 1300 139 239. The Study Assistance Line is open from 9am to 5pm (EST), Monday to Friday.

You can also get study assistance by emailing an Online Education Adviser for assistance. You can access an Online Education Adviser by selecting "Contacts" from the main menus in the Students section of the site or email tutor@aics.net.au.

Worrying about a problem that can easily be resolved is not productive. Please phone or email for assistance (not results) should it be required. Remember we are here to help and support you throughout your course.

Tutorials

Small group tutorials are held in many capital cities and some major regional centres around Australia. Tutorials are optional and provide students with personalised support with each unit. Opportunities are available at tutorials for students to share ideas and ask questions about each unit. Your local Student Support Centre will be able to advise you of tutorial costs and availability in your area.

Practical Components

Your course may include practical components that must be completed as part of your course curriculum. The most popular way to complete these practical components is by attending our Seminar Program. Seminars give you the opportunity to practice and demonstrate the practical skills that you learn throughout your course, under the supervision of a qualified and experienced Facilitator. Please refer to your "Seminar Timetable" for a schedule of seminar topics, dates, times and locations.

As each of the seminars is based upon the practical application of a part of the course theory, each seminar has unit pre-requisites that need to be completed before you attend.

Alternative Assessment for Practical Components

Students who find it difficult to attend seminars due to distance, disability or work or family commitments, are able to complete the practical course components by "Alternative Assessment".

There are two main options available for students who complete the course practical components by Alternative Assessment.

1. Recording your skills on video or DVD*
2. Having a private assessor assess your skills

If you would like to take one of these options there are specific guidelines that you will need to follow. Upon application for “Alternative Assessment” you will be provided with complete and easy to follow details and instructions. Please contact your local Student Support Centre for further information.

* Being able to demonstrate competency by recording skills on video or DVD will depend on the requirements for the unit and the suitability of this method with the skills that need to be demonstrated.

Work Placements

While you are able to choose where you would like to complete your work placement, the Institute will need to agree that the placement and what you will be doing in the workplace is suitable to the requirements of your course. Once you have decided on the agency, you notify the details of the workplace on the Workplace Nomination Form included with your first Study Pack. We can also provide assistance in locating a suitable workplace if you are having difficulty finding a suitable agency.

Our Education Advisors will also liaise with the agency where you are undertaking your placement to ensure you will be suitably supervised in the workplace, that you are given sufficient opportunity to participate in the workplace in accordance with your course requirements, and that your supervisor at the agency is clear on what you need to achieve during your placement.

While we recommend at what stage of your course to start your placement, it is between you and the agency as to how many hours you spend in the workplace and the days and times you work. This means you are able to fit your placement around your current work, family and lifestyle commitments.

**except the Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling)

Getting Started

Studying by correspondence offers many benefits. Some of the advantages of studying by correspondence include being able to study when you have the time, studying from home rather than attending classes, and being able to adjust your study to suit your lifestyle and other commitments.

Study Time

At times, studying by correspondence may result in difficulty in motivating yourself. It is important that you set regular study times for yourself and try to keep to your program. Try to work for periods of approximately two hours at a time with a short break after you have been working for about 70 minutes. Adjust this '2 hour' guideline to suit the study of a section of your Workbook, as it is important that you do not break for long periods of time (more than an hour) when studying a particular topic. If you do have a break for a longer time part way through a topic, it is a good idea to revise what you have read before you continue.

Study Techniques

There are some very simple things that you can do to make study a more pleasurable and rewarding experience. Following is a list of study suggestions, and practical advice on writing assessment.

- Choose a quiet, uncluttered place to study. Set up a study area and always do your study in this area. Do not use this area for other activities. This way you condition your mind that when in this area, you study.
- Set a regular study time and stick to it. e.g. 7-9pm on Mondays and Wednesdays and 10 hours over the weekend. Adjust this two hour guideline to suit the study of a particular section. If you have a long break, revise what you have read before you continue.
- Set specific study goals. The course outline you receive when you commence your studies with the Institute lists recommended due dates for assessment (compulsory for Austudy/Abstudy students). Mark these dates on a calendar and treat them as study goals. Place the calendar in a prominent place in your home study area and refer to it on a regular basis.
- If there are competing demands, keep sight of your end goal.
- Break up your study goals into smaller parts that can be realistically achieved within a study period. Perhaps study of a section, or part of a section.
- Use a pen or pencil to highlight main points in your readings and texts.
- Record main points on audio tape and play the tape back when doing other things, such as cleaning or driving, to reinforce your learning. Alternatively, summarise the main points on a page or a file card. This is also useful for later units or general revision.

Assessment Procedures

Unit questions are designed to allow you to express your understanding of the theory and its application to practical settings. Whilst assessment is not a test of your grammar or spelling ability, care in these areas will make your work easier for the marker to read and understand.

An individual Workbook is supplied for each of the course units and contains the information, activities and questions you will need to complete for each unit. This element of the course is completed by home study distance education. Please undertake each unit in the order they appear on your Course Outline and Assessment Cover Sheet/s. Once you submit a unit you must wait for its return before submitting a subsequent one.

Begin study of each unit by starting at Section One of the corresponding Workbook. Read the questions, information, and activities carefully and highlight the key points. Avoid copying blocks of the text and make notes on the main points before attempting to write your answer. Work your way through the workbook until you have completed all sections.

When spaces have been provided, you are required to neatly handwrite your answers straight into your workbook. For longer essay style answers, you may be asked to use your own paper. It is preferred that essay-style answers are typed, however neatly printed handwritten work will be accepted. Whether typing or handwriting essay answers it is important to leave a 3½ cm margin on each side of the page and to double space each line. This allows room for your marker to write their feedback on your work.

Your work will be graded as either 'Competent' or 'Not Yet Competent'. In instances where a grade of 'Not Yet Competent' is given, the unit will be returned to you with comments from the marker who will recommend how to improve the unit. You may then resubmit the amended unit for grading. If after several attempts Competency is not achieved, then it may be necessary to be interviewed by an Institute Education Adviser. Please note that you may find some sections of the workbooks challenging, so don't feel too despondent if you receive a 'Not Yet Competent'. It is common for many students to find parts of the course challenging: identifying these areas and having the opportunity to clarify these issues is important to assist you with later work in the course and also the overall development of your knowledge and skills.

Some units also contain a practical assessment designed to give you the opportunity to apply your skills and knowledge in a simulated environment. Practical components can be completed by either attending a seminar, recording your skills on DVD or videotape, or having a private assessor assess your skills.

Your course outline also lets you know at what stage of your studies to commence your work placement. Prior to reaching this stage, you will be provided a Work Placement Handbook which covers all the essential information on what you need to achieve during your work placement. It also explains the documentation to send in to us at the completion of your work placement.

Submitting a Unit

When all of the questions and activities for each section of a unit Workbook have been completed, your Workbook can be submitted to the Institute for assessment. Use the following as a checklist before submitting each unit:

- Have all questions and activities been completed and filled in?
- Is your name and student number written inside your Workbook?
- Is your name and student number written clearly on all attachments such as essays and forms etc?
- Have you made a copy of all of your work (in case of loss in the mail)?
- Is your Assessment Cover Sheet securely attached?

Submit completed Units to: AICS, Locked Bag 15, Fortitude Valley Q 4006. Whilst we do our best to have your units marked and returned to you as quickly as possible, you may need to allow up to three weeks for their return.

If you would like verification that we have received your workbook, please enclose a **stamped self addressed envelope** with your submitted workbook. The Institute will then return the envelope to you as confirmation that your workbook has been received.

Priority Marking of Assessment

If you require your assessment to be marked faster than the standard marking period and have a genuine reason why, **priority marking** of units is available. Priority marking means that your assessment item is given priority in the marking queue. Another form of priority marking is to submit two units at once for marking (pre-requisites continue to apply). To find out if you are eligible for priority marking, please contact the Manager of your Student Support Centre.

Study Queries

Following are some common questions asked by students, as well as some suggested answers. If you have any further questions please call for assistance.

Q. Do I have to stick to the number of words indicated at the end of a unit or part of a unit section?

A. The approximate number of words it may take you to complete a unit or part of a unit are presented to give you some idea of how much work may be required to successfully answer the question.

The approximate number of words can also be used as an indicator of the depth of information required. For example, if you are well under the approximate number of words you may need to ask yourself whether you have been too superficial in your coverage of the unit or part of a unit. If you are well over the word limit, then you may need to ask yourself whether you have included irrelevant information or repeated yourself unnecessarily.

Q. Can I send in more than one unit at a time?

A. Yes. You can submit two workbooks at a time. Your Course Outline shows the order in which you are to submit your workbooks for marking. In some circumstances, students can apply for marking of three units at once, please refer to the Priority Marking of Assessment section for further information.

Q. What does it mean if I am assessed as “Not Yet Competent” or “NYC” for a particular unit?

A. “Not Yet Competent” or “NYC” means that your work is incomplete or that you have not included some important information or adequately demonstrated your understanding of the information. In this case you should follow the assessor’s recommendations for improvement. There are no penalties for a grade of Not Yet Competent. If you are not sure why you have been requested to resubmit a unit, please contact an Education Adviser. Please send your original unit attempt in with the re-submitted unit.

Q. Does my work have to be typed?

A. In most cases there is sufficient space in your Workbook for your answers to be hand written. It is preferred that questions requiring longer or essay answers are typed. However, you will not be penalised if you present a neat and legible hand written piece of assessment.

Course Outlines and Assessment Cover Sheets

A current version of the Course Outline and Assessment Cover Sheet for your course has been included with your first Study Pack. These two documents contain the details about the workbooks and practicals to be completed during your course and when to consider commencing your work placement.

If you have any questions about the structure of the Course Outline for your course, please contact your Student Support Centre for assistance.

Important Information for Students Receiving Austudy, Abstudy, Youth Allowance or PES

All Institute courses are approved for students eligible to receive Austudy, Abstudy, Youth Allowance or Pensioner Education Supplement (PES). For information regarding any of these government benefits or your eligibility, please contact Centrelink on 13 24 90 (for Austudy, Youth Allowance or PES) or 13 23 17 (for Abstudy). When submitting an application form for these benefits you may be asked to provide proof of your enrolment. Upon request, your local Student Support Centre will be happy to supply you with a letter confirming your course commencement date and student number.

If you are receiving Austudy, Youth Allowance or PES funding while you are completing your course, you should be aware that Centrelink has very firm guidelines regarding a student's obligations. It is extremely important to remember that if you do not meet your obligations you will probably be asked to pay back some of the funding that you have received, so it is important to take a note of these guidelines. The Institute recommends that students who cannot meet their obligations for whatever reason (illness, special circumstances) contact Centrelink as soon as possible.

If you are receiving Austudy, Abstudy, Youth Allowance or PES you must submit your units according to the Assessment Due Dates on the Course Outline. To be eligible for Austudy or Youth Allowance, you must be studying your course as a Full Time student. Funding is not available for students studying on a Part Time basis. As home study is different to traditional classroom education in that you do not have to spend a set number of hours attending lectures each week, we have set the assessment due dates on your Course Planner very carefully based on the time an average student studying Full Time would require to complete each unit. If you are putting in the work to submit each unit on time, you will be studying enough hours each week to meet with the Full Time workload requirement. On average this will be approximately 25 hours each week.

If your study commitment changes and you will no longer be studying as a full time student, you must advise Centrelink as soon as possible. Centrelink will ask to be reimbursed for any payments received during the lapse of ceasing as a full time student and notifying them that this has occurred.

If you are receiving the PES benefit, both Full Time and Part Time study options are available at 100%, 50% or above, or 25% workloads. Students who selected a workload requirement on their Application Form will have received a Course Planner with their first Study Pack that indicates the due dates for their assessments. If you did not receive a Course Planner in accordance with your required workload it is essential that you notify your Student Support Centre so that we can inform you of the due dates you are required to adhere to and issue you with a revised planner. Once again, if your study commitment changes and you are no longer studying at a rate consistent with your nominated workload, you must advise Centrelink as soon as possible.

From time to time during your studies, Centrelink will ask AICS to advise them of your progress through your course and **AICS is obliged to provide this information to them**. AICS will not accept any responsibility for the outcome of the reporting of this information to Centrelink.

If you are receiving Austudy, Abstudy, Youth Allowance or PES, then some of our longer courses will show that you can take some time off for a holiday allocation during your course. Your Course Planner will show the week/s where this can occur. You are free to choose your own holiday times as long as you stick within these guidelines. When you have planned the dates you will be taking holidays you must advise your local Student Support Centre before you go, so we can note it on your student record.

When you reach the end of your course and have completed all units, practicals and your work placement, you must advise Centrelink immediately that you have completed your full time studies. This applies even if you have completed your course earlier than the allocated timeframe shown on your Course Planner.

You must advise Centrelink that you are no longer studying as a full time student as soon as you have completed your course units.

Important Information for Students Whose Courses are Funded by the Productivity Places Program (PPP)

If your course has been funded by the Productivity Places Program (PPP), you must submit your units according to the Assessment Due Dates on the Course Planner included with your first Study Pack.

On your Application Form, you were asked whether you intended to study full time or part time. The Assessment Due Dates on your Course Planner have been set based on your response to this question.

As home study is different to traditional classroom education in that you do not have to spend a set number of hours attending lectures each week, we have set the Assessment Due Dates on your Course Planner very carefully based on the time an average student studying Full Time or Part Time would require to complete each unit.

If you are putting in the work to submit each unit on time, you will be studying enough hours each week to submit your assessment by the Assessment Due Dates.

Practices, Policies and Procedures

The following information has been prepared to guide you whilst you are a student with the Institute. To allow for effective communication between the Institute and yourself, we have included the following practices, procedures and policies that you should be aware of during your studies.

Should you have any queries about the following, please contact your local Student Support Centre.

Code of Practice

The Institute advises that it:

- has adopted policies and management practices which will maintain high professional standards in the marketing and delivery of its courses and which will safeguard the interests and welfare of course participants.
- markets courses with integrity, accurately and in a professional manner and supplies to participants information that includes:
 - procedures and criteria regarding courses and seminars,
 - award to be issued on completion or part completion,
 - competencies to be achieved to obtain the award,
 - a copy of the Course Cancellation policy,
 - assessment procedures,
 - recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs,
 - how to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning,
 - grievance and complaints procedures,
 - appeal procedures,
 - behaviour and conduct expectations,
 - counselling, education and support services and assistance available
- guarantees that the recruitment of students will be conducted in an ethical and responsible manner and consistent with the requirements of the curriculum
- recognises qualifications issued by other RTOs
- complies with relevant laws and Commonwealth and State legislation; and regulatory requirements including but not limited to: the Qld Workplace Health and Safety Act (1995), Qld Anti-Discrimination Act (1991), Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act (2000), Commission for Children and Young People Act (2000), Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998, Child Protection

(Offenders Registration) Act 2000, Privacy Act (1988), Copyright Act (1968); Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act (1986), Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Racial Discrimination Act 1975, Disability Discrimination Act (1992), Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (1999)

- is aware that registered training providers who do not meet the obligations of this Code or supporting regulatory requirements, where applicable, may have their registrations as training providers withdrawn.
- will honour all guarantees outlined in the Code of Practice

Access and Equity Policy

Policy Statement:

The Institute acknowledges the diverse nature of its student population and aims to meet the educational needs of all students, irrespective of their background. The Institute will endeavour to meet the individual needs of students through the integration of access and equity principles. The Institute will endeavour to ensure that equity principles for all students are implemented through the fair allocation of resources and the right to equality of opportunity without discrimination. The Institute will make reasonable adjustments to training delivery and assessment to increase opportunities for students to participate in their training programs delivered within the vocational education and training system. The Institute will endeavour to provide training programs that consider the needs of all people within the community. The Institute's Education Advisers, under the direction of the Education Manager, are responsible for implementing the assurances provided in this Policy.

Students who would like to discuss their individual study and assessment needs should contact an Institute Education Adviser on the Study Assistance Line 1300 139 239 or write to: Head Office, Education Dept, Locked Bag 15, Fortitude Valley Qld 4006. The Institute may request that a student supply evidence of the nature and extent of their disability or special needs.

Special needs, options and preferences of each individual student will be discussed during an interview and a plan for delivery of training and assessment prepared based on the student's individual needs. Alternatively, students may wish to contact a relevant organisation themselves. Students can obtain details of relevant organisations by calling our Study Assistance Line on 1300 139 239.

The Institute expresses its commitment to student access and equity by:

1. Ensuring access and equity issues are considered during resource and curriculum development.
2. The establishment of non-discriminatory student selection procedures that encourage fair access for members of under-represented groups.
3. Encouraging reasonable adjustments to training delivery and assessment that will support and assist students with a disability or other special requirements to participate fully in the course without disadvantage.
4. Ensuring that all students have physical access to education facilities in the region in which they are enrolled.
5. Presenting learning materials in a manner that embraces cultural diversity.
6. Providing students with a variety of options for demonstrating how they meet the required competencies.
7. Ensuring that there is a self paced learning option to cater for students with varying time requirements.
8. Providing opportunities for re-assessment of Not Yet Competent assessment.

The Institute demonstrates its commitment by:

9. Interviewing students who express a special need in training delivery and assessment, discussing individual needs, options and preferences and preparing a customised plan for delivery of training and assessment.
10. Making reasonable adjustments to the way in which learning materials are supplied to students including learning materials supplied in alternative formats such as on computer disk, etc.
11. Making reasonable adjustments to the way in which the course is assessed by having provision for oral rather than written questioning and alternative assessment modalities such as audio and recorded answers. The Institute also makes provision for alternative means of assessing the practical components of the course. Students in rural or isolated areas or students with a disability or other special needs have a

choice in the way the practical element of their course is assessed. These options include, but are not necessarily limited to: being assessed in their local area under the supervision of an Institute approved private assessor, conducted in a major city through the Institute's practical workshops, or via a recorded presentation. The Institute will negotiate other reasonable assessment options available for trainees with a disability or other special needs if necessary.

12. Making Learning Materials available for external study in a written or on-line format that enables students' access to the information, regardless of their location.
13. Providing all students ongoing access to support services, including access to the 1300 Institute Study Assistance Line & online support.
14. Providing additional support and opportunities for re-assessment for students assessed as Not Yet Competent.
15. Utilising a broad student selection criteria.
16. Ensuring that staff is appropriately informed and aware of access and equity issues.

Language, Literacy and Numeracy Assistance

Policy:

The Australian Institute of Community Services has a process in place to identify students with language, literacy or numeracy difficulties. Language, literacy and numeracy assessment is available for students. Should a student be assessed as requiring assistance with a language, literacy or numeracy difficulty that prevents the successful completion of their course, they will be:

- a) Referred to an outside agency that is able to provide training in language, literacy and/or numeracy. In this instance, any fees for language, literacy and / or numeracy training will be required to be paid by the student directly to the agency providing the training. An Education Adviser will provide individual case advice, depending on the student's circumstances, regarding their ability to defer study of their course with the Institute, re-entry into the course and resulting implications to Centrelink, if applicable.
- b) Encouraged to access Institute study support services.
- c) Provided with reasonable adjustments to training/assessment to allow the successful completion of the students training; as deemed applicable by the Institute.

Should a student require assistance with a language, literacy or numeracy difficulty that prevents their successful completion of their course, they should contact the Institute Head Office on 1300 139 239 and speak with an Education Adviser.

Procedures:

1. The Institute has a process in place to identify students with language, literacy or numeracy difficulties. Students with difficulties may be self identified or identified by Institute assessors.

Self Identification

- a) Enrolment Application Forms require all students to identify whether they will require assistance with language, literacy or numeracy.
- b) Under the Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LL&N) section of the Student Handbook, students who require assistance with LL&N are requested to contact an Institute Education Adviser.

Institute Identified

- a) By an Assignment Marker. If after conducting an assessment of a student's work, an Assignment Marker is concerned about a student's language, literacy or numeracy ability they will bring their concerns to the attention of a Senior Education Adviser. Indicators may be things such as a student's inability to construct a sentence coherently and/or an inability to convey information.
 - b) If a concern is raised regarding a student's language, literacy or numeracy ability the student is contacted by a Senior Education Adviser to discuss these concerns and to advise them of the LL&N assessment process.
2. If a language, literacy or numeracy concern is identified, the student will undergo a Language, Literacy and Numeracy assessment.
 - a) Should the assessment indicate that the students' current language, literacy or numeracy level is not

sufficient to carry out the tasks required as a community services worker the Institute will either: provide a referral from their database of available literacy training or if there is no listing in the student's area the Institute will source a local referral for the student.

During this time, the Institute will allow for the student's Diploma studies to be deferred until Language, Literacy and/or Numeracy training is complete.

Upon a satisfactory level of language, literacy and numeracy being reached the student is integrated back into their course, under the guidance of an Education Adviser.

- b) If the level is assessed to be sufficient for work as a community services worker, the student will continue on with their course work. In this instance the student will be encouraged to access Institute study support services such as the Study Assistance Line, Tutorials, etc. As deemed applicable by the Institute, reasonable adjustments to training/assessment which will allow the students successful completion of their training will be made. Adjustments will be made in consultation with the student and the Institute's LL&N adviser.

Privacy Policy

The Australian Institute of Community Services is committed to protecting your privacy in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988. This Act requires us to communicate to our students how we will protect their privacy.

Personal Information

The Australian Institute of Community Services will keep on file personal information such as your name, residential and postal address, date of birth, contact telephone numbers, email address, occupation, education, qualifications, credit card or bank account details and academic records and results. For some students, we will also keep on file their information about special learning requirements and needs.

This information will be disclosed to us through your completion of the Enrolment Application Form, by discussion with any of our client service or educational staff, or via written communication to the Institute from you.

So that we are able to provide you with a quality educational service, we recommend that you advise us of any changes to your personal information or if there are any errors in the personal information we have on file. We may also update your personal information from information we receive from the organisations listed below under the section **Disclosure of Personal Information**.

How We Use Your Personal Information

Your personal information will be used to:

- Provide you with the educational service you require to successfully complete your course.
- Obtain feedback from you about the course, service and facilities we have provided.
- Advise you of upcoming seminars, tutorials and relevant events.
- Administer and manage these services including billing and collecting debts.
- Further develop and improve our business and educational systems.
- Inform you about new products and services that we may introduce from time to time.

Your personal information will be held by the Institute for a period up to 30 years.

Disclosure of Personal Information

For the purposes set out above, we may disclose your personal information to the following organisations:

- Service providers who assist with managing the services we provide to you including information technology, educational services, marketing and debt recovery.
- Franchisees who provide educational services and qualifications under the Australian Institute of Community Services banner.
- Government and regulatory authorities during audit of the service we provide to you or due to information reporting requirements.

- Centrelink for those students whom are studying either full or part time under the Austudy, Abstudy, Youth Allowance or Pensioner Education Supplement (PES) scheme.
- Organisations involved in the transfer/sale of all or part of our assets or business.

Your personal information will not be disclosed to any other party (except those listed above) unless written permission is received from you.

Extreme care is taken by our staff to ensure that personal information is not released to any party other than those listed above.

Access To Your Personal Information

You have a right to access your personal information. If you would like to do so, please submit your request in writing.

How To Contact Us

If you have any questions in relation to privacy, please write to:

Chief Executive Officer
Australian Institute of Community Services
Locked Bag 15
Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

Admission Procedures

Students applying to enrol into any of the Institute's courses must complete the Application Form or enrol into the course via one of the enrolment methods shown on the Application Form.

Once the completed Application Form for enrolment and nominated fee payment has been received, the applicant is enrolled and issued with a Student Number. Course material is forwarded to the student once enrolment is completed.

Total Costs and Fees

Prior to the commencement of a course, all students are advised of total costs and fees as outlined in the website and Application Form of the day.

Course Cancellation Policy

In instances where a student wishes to be prematurely released from their contractual obligation to the Institute, they must in the first instance place a request to withdraw from their course in writing addressed to the Manager of their enrolling Student Support Centre. Verbal requests for course withdrawal will not be accepted. The severance balance of a student account will be determined in accordance with the Institute policy agreed to upon enrolment.

The Institute policy states that:

"I agree to follow the Institute's Course Cancellation Policy. If I am enrolled in a Certificate III or Certificate IV course offered by the Institute and I wish to discontinue my course, then I understand that I am liable for one sixth of the full cost of my course for each month of my enrolment. If I discontinue my Certificate III or Certificate IV course before one month into my enrolment, I am liable for one sixth of the full course cost. I further agree that if I discontinue my Certificate III or Certificate IV course six months or more after my initial enrolment, I will be liable for the full amount of the course cost. If I am enrolled in a Diploma course offered by the Institute and I wish to discontinue my course, I understand that I am liable for one twelfth of the full cost of my course for each month of my enrolment. If I discontinue my Diploma course before one month into my enrolment, I am liable for one twelfth of the full course cost. I further agree that if I discontinue my Diploma course twelve months or more after my initial enrolment, I will be liable for the full amount of the course cost. I further understand that should I wish to discontinue with my chosen course, I must submit my request in writing and return all course materials including the workbooks and any other items bearing the name of the Institute before my cancellation is processed. I further agree and understand that should my student fees become three or more months in arrears I am immediately liable for the full cost of my course enrolment."

Student Change of Address and Transfers

Any student who changes their residential, mailing or email address should notify the Institute in writing of their new address within 14 days of address change.

Institute courses are delivered externally allowing students to complete studies from any location. Any student whose residential address changes from one Student Support Centre trading area to another will continue to be enrolled by their original Student Support Centre.

Regardless of their enrolling Student Support Centre, students will be eligible to attend seminars and tutorials and utilise local facilities at the Student Support Centre closest to where they reside.

Competencies to be Achieved

As outlined in the Unit Workbooks for the course undertaken.

Qualification to be Granted

To obtain the qualification in which they are enrolled, a student must be assessed as being competent in all areas of the course. Should a student not complete their course, a Statement of Attainment will be granted for all units in which a student has obtained a competency.

Recognition of Prior Learning

The Australian Institute of Community Services allows students to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The RPL process enables students to apply for exemption from completing one or more units from their course. RPL recognises that you may be competent in particular community services areas prior to beginning their course due to relevant life and work experiences, education and training. Students who have completed or partially completed a similar course, who have been working within a relevant community services environment for a number of years, or who have relevant experience or qualifications gained overseas, are able to apply for recognition of their prior learning or experience. Exemption can be applied for one or more course units. There is no Recognition of Prior Learning application fee.

Students who have completed similar units to those listed in the Course Outline of their course are welcome to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning for the units.

Further details of the Recognition of Prior Learning process and a Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Application Kit can be obtained from the “Students” section of the Institute’s Web Page at www.aics.net.au or from the Institute’s Head Office by phoning TOLL FREE 1800 637 231. Students living overseas can call +61 7 3216 1610

To apply for Recognition of Prior Learning, complete the Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Application Kit and forward to the Institute along with certified documentation of your evidence of prior learning.

Mutual Recognition (Credit Transfer) of Qualifications

The Australian Institute of Community Services recognises the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by any other training organisations. If you have previously completed any of the Units of Competency listed in the respective Course Outline for the course in which you are enrolled, you are able to apply to transfer competency of the unit/s towards your course with the Australian Institute of Community Services.

If similar units to those listed in the relevant Course Outline have previously been completed, you are able to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning for the respective units.

Further details of the Recognition of Prior Learning process and a Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Application Kit can be obtained from the “Students” section of the Institute’s Web Page at www.aics.net.au or from the Institute’s Head Office by phoning TOLL FREE 1800 637 231. Students living overseas can call +61 7 3216 1610.

To apply for mutual recognition, complete the Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Application Kit and forward to the Institute along with certified copies of your results for these units.

Complaints Policy

The Australian Institute of Community Services strives to deal with complaints as soon as they emerge in order to avoid further disruption or the need for a formal complaint. To ensure quick resolution, students should lodge their complaint within 28 days of the occurrence.

If a student has a complaint about any aspect of service provided, they are encouraged to speak immediately and in the first instance with a Student Support Centre Branch Manager or staff member to resolve the issue.

If the student is not satisfied that the issue has been resolved, he/she may wish to write a letter to the Institute's Executive Committee, setting out the issues of concern. The address to send this correspondence is:

Chief Executive Officer
AICS Head Office
Locked Bag 15
Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

Upon receipt, the complaint will be investigated internally by the Executive Committee or their representative. All complaints will be responded to in writing from the Executive Committee or Head Office Management within 28 days of receipt.

If, however, the matter is still not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student is able to take their complaint through legal avenues, the Anti-Discrimination Commission, Office of Fair Trading or other bodies as appropriate.

Appeal Policy

The Australian Institute of Community Services provides an avenue for students to appeal decisions made by the Institute, including the awarding of course and unit results.

Students are able to appeal against their results within 28 days from issue of the result. The appeal querying the result should be forwarded in writing with a copy of the completed Unit Workbook/s including the marker's comments to:

Education Manager
AICS Head Office
Locked Bag 15
Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

Upon receipt, the Education Manager and an Education Advisor will review the result and notify the student in writing of the outcome, including reasons for the decision, within 14 days of receipt of the appeal.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the reviewed assessment, or any other decision made by the Institute or its representatives, they are able to write to the Institute's Executive Committee at the following address:

AICS Executive Committee
Locked Bag 15
Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

The Executive Committee will investigate and review the situation and will respond in writing to the student within 28 days of receipt.

If the student is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they will be referred to the appropriate body.

Student Conduct Policy

The Australian Institute of Community Services is a professional educational institute. Institute staff are required to provide a high level of educational and administrative service to all enquirers and students. To maintain the integrity of this service, students also have obligations, including:

- Treating all Institute staff with respect and courtesy at all times including during telephone conversations, at seminars and tutorials, in the Institute branches and training rooms, and via web or email communication.
- Abiding by all Institute Policies as detailed on the Institute website (www.aics.nct.au) and in the Student Handbook.
- Acting in a polite and professional manner at all times in the areas of language, conduct and behaviour.
- Being punctual in attendance at training and assessment functions (tutorials, seminars or appointments).
- Conducting themselves in a safe manner at all times.
- Not being discriminatory or harassing in any way with Institute staff and students.

Students, who are found to be in breach of any of the above obligations, or any other action as deemed inappropriate by Institute management, will be advised in writing of their breach and of the expected level of behaviour and conduct in all future communications and dealings with the Institute. If, at the time of the breach, the student is in attendance at a tutorial, seminar or Institute branch, the student may, after a verbal warning, be asked to leave the premises with this being at the discretion of the presenter or Branch Manager.

After three written warnings, the student's enrolment and membership may be discontinued. If at any time, the student is not satisfied with the Institute's approach or decision regarding the student's conduct, a written complaint can be lodged with the Institute's Executive Committee as per the Institute's Complaints Policy.

The Institute's Student Conduct Policy is in place to protect the interests and safety of all students, and to enable Institute staff to provide a high level of service to all students.

Learning Materials

The Institute will supply all course study materials with the only exceptions being for those units that contain elements requiring the student to undertake their own research in order to facilitate learning.

Learning materials are supplied in "Study Packs". Each pack contains the necessary learning resources including workbooks for a set of units.

The Course Outline for each course (included with your first study pack) lists the Study Packs applicable for each course.

The first Study Pack for the course is issued to the student upon finalisation of their enrolment into the course. Students are eligible to receive the learning materials for latter Study Packs when:

1. The pre-requisite Workbooks (as outlined in the Course Outline for the respective course) have been successfully completed and marked Competent, and
2. Course fee payments are up to date and no more than 30 days past due.

Undertaking Work Placements

All AICS courses (with the exception of the Diploma of Community Services – Financial Counselling) require the completion of a work placement. The work placement is a compulsory component of the course and involves the student undertaking work experience in a relevant community agency or organisation. Work placements assist students with the transition from theory to practical application of their skills knowledge and are an essential part of the learning process.

Accessing Agencies and Organisations

Students are able to source their own suitable agency, however, AICS is able to assist with this process and will provide contact details of the organisation to the student. AICS needs to provide approval of the organisation as suitable for the student's placement prior to the placement being undertaken and provides information to the agency on what is required to be demonstrated during the student's placement.

Responsibilities of the Student during the Work Placement

When undertaking the work placement, students are expected to:

- abide by all workplace policies and procedures
- be present for the working hours agreed to prior to commencing the placement or as approved by the organisation subsequent to the placement beginning
- conduct themselves in a safe, ethical and professional manner at all times
- maintain confidentiality at all times
- only perform duties in accordance with the directions provided by the organisation's placement supervisor or other appropriate staff member
- advise the placement supervisor or Academic staff member if difficulty occurs during the placement
- where appropriate, comply with undergoing a Criminal History Check, the 'Working with Children Check', and/or any other specific requirements of the workplace.

Responsibilities of the Community Agency during the Work Placement

The community agency is to provide a suitable and safe working environment which will allow the student to actively participate in the workplace to the level required in order to successfully complete assessment requirements for the work placement. The community agency is to provide a suitably qualified staff member who is responsible for supervising the student in the workplace and liaising with AICS. The Institute will supply a copy of the Certificate of Currency for Voluntary Workers Accident Cover to the community agency. Students undertaking work placements are covered under these Policies. All of these requirements will be advised and disclosed to the community agency by the AICS prior to the work placement occurring.

Dispute Resolution

If a problem arises for a student or the community agency during the work placement, the following process should be followed:

1. A meeting (face to face, or over the phone for placements occurring outside of the Brisbane area) occurs between the student, the organisation's Agency Supervisor and AICS's representative. The objective of the meeting is to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome for all parties.
2. In the event of the dispute continuing or a satisfactory outcome not occurring, the matter is to be referred to the Education Manager for the appropriate action to take in order to resolve the situation with all parties.
3. If the grievance continues, the following options are available to students:
 - The student can submit a complaint to the Institute Executive Committee (Locked Bag 15, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006) or outside agencies such as the Australian Council of Private Education and Training (ACPET), the Anti-Discrimination Commission or Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, or
 - An alternative agency workplace may need to be arranged for the student.

Facilities and Equipment

Students will require:

- writing equipment including pens and paper, stationery including stapler and paper clips
- envelopes and postage stamps for submitting assessment
- appropriate study facilities ie, table, chair, and adequate lighting
- access to a computer and printer or a typewriter is advisable (however not compulsory)
- access to a video camera, tripod and blank video cassettes is necessary for those students choosing to complete the practical components by the recording of skills option.

Counselling and Support Services

Students requiring personal counselling or guidance may seek a referral to a qualified, practicing Counsellor, wherever possible. In this instance the Counsellor will negotiate a professional service fee with the student.

Student Cards

Student Cards are available from the Institute at \$11 each. Please refer to your first Study Pack or contact your local Student Support Centre for an Application Form.

Plagiarism

The course assessment is designed to allow students to express their own understanding of the relevant theory and its application to community services issues. In order to be marked as “Competent” on a piece of assessment a student must be able to demonstrate their own understanding of the topic by presenting the assessment in their own words and incorporating their own ideas.

Copying sentences and blocks of text directly from readings, textbooks, or other documents including copying the work of another student does not demonstrate a student’s own understanding of the topic. Such practices will be regarded as plagiarism unless the source is appropriately acknowledged.

Students who are unable to appropriately demonstrate their own understanding of a topic will be marked “Not Yet Competent” and will be required to re-submit the assessment.

Copyright

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