



NORTHERN INLAND INC.

BARRABA • GUNNEDAH • INVERELL • MOREE • NARRABRI • WARIALDA

**2008
INFORMATION HANDBOOK FOR
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
STUDENTS**

VISION STATEMENT

Community College – Northern Inland Inc. will:

- raise the profile of adult learning
- make a greater impact on the community
- be the “glue” which unites the community
- inspire every adult to participate in at least one adult learning activity in the next three years.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to *identify* and *provide* learning opportunities for the communities we *service*.

CODE OF PRACTICE

Community College – Northern Inland Inc. believes that education is the foundation of an informed, cohesive and progressive community.

Our community comprises people from all backgrounds and circumstances sharing access to education training to assist them to participate fully and successfully in our community.

All people should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programs offered by our organisation.

Community College – Northern Inland Inc supports the NSW Charter for Equity in Education and Training principles which are;

- 1 Everyone is entitled to high quality education and training programs that provide recognised credentials and clear pathways to employment and life long learning. The outcomes of education and training should not depend on factors beyond the learner's control and influence.

2 In the allocation of public resources, priority is given to narrowing those gaps in education and training outcomes that reflect need and prevailing social inequities.

3 All young people are entitled, as a minimum, to be able to complete their school education to year 12 or a vocational education equivalent.

4 The diversity of the population is recognised and valued by inclusive approaches to the development, conduct and evaluation of programs.

5 A demonstrated commitment to these equity principles and practices is a core responsibility for all those working in education and training.

6 The mutual recognition of AQTF qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by other RTOs

Student enrolment conditions will be clearly stated in the course program and where there are pre-requisites for enrolment, then that will be stated in the course details or brochure.

Courses will be delivered primarily in a teacher directed classroom style however flexible delivery methods, including workplace experience and assessment, recognition of prior learning and distance education may also be used if appropriate and within the organisation's resources.

Assessments will be carried out in accordance with the National Principles against the stated learning outcomes or competencies in the accredited curriculum.

Community College – Northern Inland Inc. has a student appeals and grievance procedure. This is fully documented in the Student Handbook.

Course fees will be clearly stated in the course program and an estimate of any additional costs will be advised prior to enrolment.

Community College – Northern Inland Inc. will refund all student fees where a course does not proceed for lack of enrolments or other reasons. 5 days prior to a course commencing, the student fees are deemed to be off set against the course budget and cannot be refunded except in special circumstances when a deduction for administration and/or purchase of resources for the course will be made.

Students will be given every opportunity to achieve a satisfactory learning outcome including the development of educational pathways. Where we cannot assist, referral to other agencies will be made.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Equity Community College – Northern Inland Inc. will ensure that all persons have access to our education programs regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnic origin, political belief, religious belief, disability or disadvantage.

Empowerment Community College – Northern Inland Inc. will work to ensure the education programs and environment assist participants in their efforts towards self determination, self responsibility and to improve their ability to make informed choices.

Independence Community College – Northern Inland Inc. is an independent, autonomous, community based organisation working for the local community.

Consultation Community College – Northern Inland Inc. will consult fully with all its stakeholders in its planning, directions and service provision.

Co-operation Community College – Northern Inland Inc. will work closely and co-operatively with existing and future agencies within our community

Consolidation Community College – Northern Inland Inc. will not duplicate the work of other education providers by offering direct or similar education services in competition.

Flexibility Community College – Northern Inland Inc. will maintain flexibility in our operations and functions ensuring appropriate responses to the changing education needs of the community

Excellence Community College – Northern Inland Inc. will strive for excellent in all of our areas of education service, accountability to the community and administration using the Community College – Northern Inland Inc. Quality Strategy for guidance.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Community College – Northern Inland Inc. recognises that;

- 1 Students recognise other peoples' human worth and dignity
- 2 The student's right to learn in an appropriate environment and that all people using the Community College – Northern Inland Inc. service have a right to be free from any form of harassment and/or discrimination.
- 3 Students are required to dress appropriately, keeping in mind the nature of the course they are attending. Dress should reflect industry and community standards.
- 4 Students should come to class sober and drug free and smoke only in open areas away from other people.
- 5 Students with a disability have a right to access Community College – Northern Inland Inc. programs and activities without discrimination, however they also have a responsibility to disclose their disability to ensure their learning needs known and addressed by the organization.
- 6 Students pay all fees and charges associated with the course. Should this cause hardship the student can discuss the matter with the course co-ordinator when other payment arrangements may be possible
- 7 Students have the right to expect a competent tutor and achieve the expected course outcomes
- 8 Students have the right to be re-assessed if the competency is not achieved first time
- 9 Students are responsible for personal possessions while attending the course
- 10 Each students is expected to take responsibility for cleaning and tidying their work area at the end of each session and assisting with general class/venue tidying
- 11 Students have the rights to normal privacy afforded all citizens in personal matters
- 12 Students have a right to a prompt refund of course fees in accordance with the refund policy

13 Students should report all injuries or incidents of harassment by another student or tutor promptly to the co-ordinator and ensure a written report is kept in the incident record book.

Occupational Health and Safety

The organisation's policy is to ensure, as far as practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all personnel. All employees, however, have a responsibility for their own health and safety and the health and safety of other staff for whom they have responsibility.

Duty of Care

All employees must take care to ensure that their own and others health and safety is not affected by anything occurring or not occurring in the workplace. Due care must be exercised at all times.

The organisation will ensure all employees and volunteers have access to first aid equipment within the workplace in accordance with the Workcover Act.

An incident book is to be kept at the administration office and all incidents/accidents must be recorded as soon as practicable with time, date, location and description of the incident/accident.

Disability Support - Rights and Responsibilities

Staff

All staff take responsibility to ensure equity for students with disabilities and discharge their duties in a non-discriminatory manner.

Staff rights

Staff have a right to expect that students seeking reasonable adjustments to the learning program will be willing to discuss their specific requirements (with assistance if required) and share responsibility in negotiating solutions.

Staff responsibilities

Staff are encouraged to undertake development activities which ensure they become familiar with the general requirements of students who have a disability.

Staff are affirming of and value students and create a climate that encourages students to approach them to discuss issues impacting upon their studies that arise from their disabilities.

While many students with disabilities may work through the Coordinator at Community College – Northern Inland Inc., others may approach teaching staff directly. All staff can demonstrate their willingness to make adjustments for students by inviting them to discuss their particular requirements in private at a subsequent time.

Community College – Northern Inland Inc. requires that any arrangements made for reasonable adjustments are formally notified to the Coordinator and manager

Teaching staff and trainers need to respond to the particular requirements of students who have a disability by making reasonable adjustments within a flexible curriculum.

Staff need to understand and constructively manage behaviour arising from disability which impacts upon others in the class.

Students

Students with disabilities have the right to:

- Equitable access to courses, programs, services, activities and facilities at Community College – Northern Inland Inc.
- Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or additional support services
- Confidentiality of information pertaining to their disability
- Information to be made reasonably available in accessible formats
- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- The institution will establish an inclusive educational environment
- They can undertake their studies free from discrimination and harassment
- Staff will anticipate their need for reasonable adjustment, invite them to discuss their requirements, and treat the request promptly and seriously
- Their views will be sought in the development and review of institutional policies, procedures and practices affecting their lives at the tertiary institution
- Where required, they may be assisted by independent advocates
- Staff will be given appropriate training to become familiar with good practices for meeting the requirements of the students
- They will be given the opportunity to develop skills which will enable them to obtain maximum benefit from available services.

Students, and where applicable, prospective students with disabilities, have a responsibility to provide information which assists Community College – Northern Inland Inc. in the timely planning and implementation of appropriate services by:

- Identify themselves at enrolment as an individual with a disability when seeking an adjustment or service on the basis of their disability
- Provide documentation from an acceptable professional source that verifies the nature of the disability and impact on access to the learning environment and/or experiences
- Follow the procedures for obtaining reasonable services as outlined in student handbook
- Treat staff at Community College – Northern Inland Inc. with dignity and respect.
- Notifying and verifying their requirements to the extent necessary to ensure an appropriate response
- Being proactive in advising Community College – Northern Inland Inc. of the difficulties they encounter in accessing aspects of the life at Community College – Northern Inland Inc and how to overcome those difficulties.
- Ensuring that specialised services provided are utilised in a fair and effective manner
- Respect the efforts of others, observing conditions placed on adjustments made
- Advising absences to obviate unnecessary attendance of service personnel such as interpreters.

Community College – Northern Inland Inc. has the responsibility to:

- Ensure that our courses, facilities and activities are designed to be accessible to students with disabilities
- Provide to students with disabilities information regarding policies, procedures and services and ensure their availability in alternative formats where required
- Assess students on their abilities, not their disabilities
- Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations and services for students with disabilities
- Offer a range of services in keeping with the provisions and responsibilities outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act(1993) and relevant Community College – Northern Inland Inc. policies and procedures
- Assist students to inform staff within Community College – Northern Inland Inc. regarding the impact of the student's disability and arrange appropriate services and accommodation
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of personal, health and disability information provided to the service by students
- Inform students of Community College – Northern Inland Inc. policies and procedures relating to students with disabilities where required
- Seek feedback from students regarding the services being provided, work toward continuous improvement of services and respond appropriately to difficulties where they arise
- Provide students with disabilities information about complaints processes where required

CONSUMER GRIEVANCE POLICY

Disputes may arise with students, and/or potential students, regarding the quality of service provided by Community College - Northern Inland Inc. This may include course content, teaching practices, presentation, venue, course fees and marketing information.

Community College - Northern Inland Inc. and its staff will attempt to establish an atmosphere of trust and open communication with students and the community so that any grievance is dealt with in a constructive manner.

Any consumer grievance will be taken seriously and dealt with as soon as possible in order to resolve the issue.

All consumers have the right to have an independent advocate act on their behalf or to support them while the grievance is being resolved.

All grievances will be recorded in consultation with the consumer and confidentiality will be maintained by all parties.

Procedure

1 In the first instance attempts will be made to resolve the issue to mutual satisfaction locally and informally.

2 If the dispute is not resolved at an informal level the following process should be followed;

a) The consumer will be informed the Association has a grievance policy and procedure. This is available on the Associations website, in the VET Student Handbook and will be made available to consumers on request.

b) The consumer is to write a letter outlining the complaint and send it to the Association's President.

- c) The President shall acknowledge the letter by phone and attempt to resolve the grievance and reach a verbal agreement. The consumer may use the services of an independent advocate at this time. If unsuccessful;
- d) The President will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing and advise the issue will be brought to the next committee meeting of the Association for decision.
- e) The consumer's written complaint will be considered at the first committee meeting after receipt of the complaint
- f) The Consumer will be notified in writing, by the President, of the decision of the committee in regard to the complaint.
- g) The consumer has the right, if still not satisfied, to refer the complaint to a Community Justice centre and the Association will accept the decision of the independent party

3 Consumer complaints will be reviewed annually by the committee of the Association as part of its review of service and customer satisfaction

HOW WE PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY

Community College – Northern Inland Inc. is committed to protecting the privacy of students and staff.

Staff The personal details we collect include your name, address and phone number and information required by the Australian Taxation Office, HESTA Superannuation Fund and the Working with Children Check in accordance with the Child Protection Legislation. We also keep your CV and work history on file. This information is the minimum required by law as your employer.

We keep the information in a locked filing cabinet and it is only accessed by the Executive Officer and the Association's Treasurer

The information may require annual or regular updates as information changes, are added too or in accordance with legislation

Students The personal details we collect include your name, address and phone number at home and work and your email address. These details are necessary to ensure we can contact you in relation to the course you have enrolled in.

Other information collected includes your date of birth, country of birth, language spoken at home, whether or not you have a disability, whether or not you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and the level of education you have completed. We are required by the State and Federal Governments to collect data on all our activities and participants in accordance with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistics System (AVETMISS). We submit this information annually through the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education. In submitting the data your name is encrypted to ensure your privacy and the only part of your address submitted is your post code. It is collected for Government statistical and planning purposes and nothing is identifiable to any third parties.

We also conduct student satisfaction surveys on our courses and performance so we can maintain a quality check on our service in the interests of continuous improvement. These

surveys are optional and you have the opportunity to remain anonymous when completing them. Return is to the Executive Officer in a replied paid envelope. We collate the information for internal use only.

On a random basis the Government asks us to release the name and address of students who have completed accredited courses so they can follow up for student satisfaction and outcome surveys. Again your participation in these surveys is entirely your decision.

All your information is stored on a single, secure database, access is controlled and limited to the Executive Officer and Program Co-ordinators who manage the courses and have student contact. No personal information is taken off-site or disclosed to third parties, except as described above. It is your right to know exactly what personal information of yours we hold. Student information is available at all times, either over the phone or in writing. To protect the privacy of students, our staff will confirm personal details before providing any information over the phone.

Should you require further information contact Bronwyn Clinch, Executive Officer at PO Box 20 Barraba 2347 or phone 02 67827253 or email eo@communitycollege.nsw.edu.au.

REFUND POLICY

- 1) Students are entitled to a full course fee refund if;
 - a) Community College – Northern Inland Inc. cancels a course for any reason prior to its commencement.
 - b) If the student has unique or extenuating circumstances which prevent their attendance. These cases will be assessed on an individual basis in discussion with the Executive Officer.
- 2) Students are entitled to a refund, less \$10.00 administration charge, if they give the Association 7 days notice of cancellation.

Should there be less than 7 days notice of cancellation by a student the case will be assessed on an individual basis in discussion with the Executive Officer
- 3) There will be no refunds after the course has commenced unless, in the opinion of the Executive Officer, the course and/or its delivery has not met the reasonable expectations of the students and co-ordinator.
- 4) The refund policy will appear on the course brochure each term.
- 5) If the student is not satisfied with the conditions under which a refund or partial refund is paid or denied then the Associations Grievance Policy and procedure will be brought into being.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR VET

Community College – Northern Inland Inc. undertakes to ensure at all assessments and evaluations of students in accredited VET courses will be done in accordance with the criteria laid down in the course curriculum, or if a training package, the assessment component of the training package.

All assessment and evaluations will recognise equity issues without compromising the integrity of the assessment or evaluation.

Procedure

Assessment may take place at any time, including at the beginning of a course. Some students/clients may enrol for assessment only. Assessment will be provided when the student/client feels he/she is ready for the assessment.

Assessment will be undertaken in an environment as close as practical to the normal work environment. Wherever possible, assessment of competence will be carried out in the workplace whilst the candidate performs an actual job or task as appropriate to the level of development. Assessment-only candidates will be informed of the criteria for assessment and the appeals process prior to the assessment event.

All requirements of the Training Package for assessment will be observed.

Students/clients wishing to appeal any assessment decision should refer to the appropriate section in the VET Assessment Appeals Procedure and the Complaints Procedure.

Information on assessment decisions is only released to stakeholders with the written permission of the client.

RECOGNITION

Definition

Recognition is the term that covers Recognition of Prior learning, Recognition of Current Competency and Skills Recognition. All terms refer to recognition of competencies currently held regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. Under the AQTF, competencies may be obtained in a number of ways. This includes through any combination of formal or informal training and education, work experience or general life experience. In order to grant recognition the assessor must be confident that the candidate is currently competent against the endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards or outcomes specified in the AQF accredited courses. The evidence may take a number of forms and could include certification, references from employers, testimonials from clients and work samples. The assessor must ensure that the evidence is authentic, valid, reliable, current and sufficient.

(from AQTF Standards for RTOs)

Recognition Policy

We recognise that adults bring to their learning a wide variety of experiences and all students of accredited VET courses are advised of the availability of Recognition.

Assessments for Recognition will be made against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria specified in the accredited course curriculum or nationally endorsed training package.

We recognise the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any other Registered Training Organisation. We will provide credit transfer for any formal learning that a client has undertaken which meets the same criteria.

VET ASSESSMENT APPEALS POLICY

Community College – Northern Inland Inc. undertakes to ensure at all assessments and evaluations of students in accredited VET courses will be done in accordance with the criteria laid down in the course curriculum, or if a training package, the assessment component of the training package.

All assessment and evaluations will recognise equity issues without compromising the integrity of the assessment or evaluation.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Officer to ensure

- a) all assessment and evaluation processes are fair and transparent
- b) all assessment and evaluation processes strictly adhere to the criteria in the curriculum and/or training package
- c) that the Association's Access and Equity policy is followed and provides fair assessment and evaluation process that recognises the particular equity issue

VET ASSESSMENT APPEALS PROCEDURE

The Executive Officer can seek the advice of independent experts for any aspect of the process

Where a student disputes the result of an assessment or evaluation the following procedure will commence;

- a) the Executive Officer will arrange to view the assessment tool and completed assessments of other students to ascertain fairness of the process
- b) the Executive Officer will consult with the tutor and/or assessor for his/her view of the issue and maintain a record of any comments they wish to make.
- c) A second assessment will be offered to the student if this is not acceptable then a suitably qualified alternate assessor will be employed to conduct the assessment or evaluation. The student will be advised within 2 working days of the outcome of this review
- d) if the Executive Officer does not believe there is a need for an independent review the student will be advised of the decision within 2 working days of the dispute being lodged.

In the event of the Executive Officer refusing a review or the second assessment does not find the student competent, the student will be given a copy of the Association's grievance procedure.

If a student fails an assessment or evaluation they will be offered an interview to explain the reasons why. If the failure of this assessment leads to non issuance of the qualification written advice must be given to the student within 2 working days

Appellants will be informed of their right make a formal statement and to lodge a complaint with the State Registration Authority. Clients will be provided, on request, with a written record of the proceedings including the reasons for any findings.

Appeals against an assessment finding will be accepted for 28 days after the notification of the result to the client.