



# BENCHMARK COLLEGE

# Student Handbook

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The following handbook outlines relevant information including policies and procedures for all students enrolled with Benchmark College.

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[www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au)

1800 286 916

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## Welcome

Welcome to Benchmark College, as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO Code 90274) with over 10 years' of experience we are delighted to be working with you to achieve your qualification. Benchmark College is a domestic training provider registered through the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA); our organisation is committed to delivering high quality education that meets the needs of both students and industry.

Benchmark College delivers nationally recognised training in:

- Early Childhood Education and Care (Children's Services, Child Care)
- Health and Community Services
- Training and Assessment
- Business and Management
- Warehousing
- Retail
- Specialised Training for Industry (such as traineeships and customised programs)

At Benchmark College we put each student's welfare and outcomes as our number one priority. Benchmark College aims to have a life changing impact on students' future lives and careers as well as being a positive influence on all those with whom we come in contact.

We do this by:

- Delivering training that is designed to be engaging, enjoyable, practical, innovative, and immediately useful.
- Delivering quality training that encourages each student to apply their learning immediately to real-life situations.
- Structuring training to achieve a focussed outcome that is linked to student and industry needs.
- Continually building our business in a systemic way that promotes teamwork, motivation, development and reward.
- Ensuring that all of our processes and systems are compliant with the '*Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*'. These standards are a component of the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) Quality Framework and are a requirement for all Registered Training Organisations under the National VET Regulator Act 2011. You can find more information about these standards at:

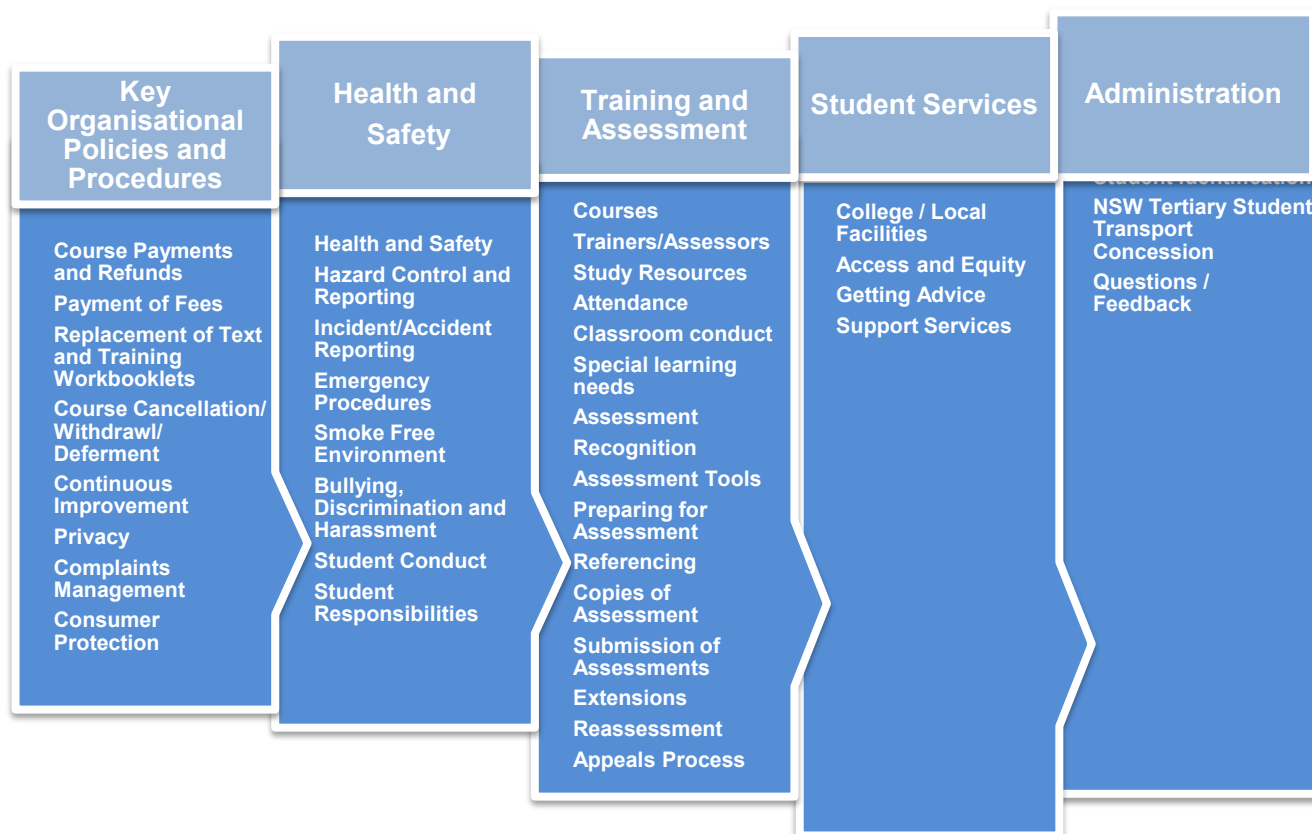
<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2014L01377>

## What is the purpose of the Student Handbook?



The following handbook provides a quick reference guide to Benchmark College training programs and processes. The document is broken up into 5 sections, each designed to provide you with relevant information;

- to successfully complete your training
- understand policies and procedures governing the issuing of your qualification
- outline your rights and responsibilities as a Benchmark College student



You may need to refer to this handbook throughout your training. If you have any questions related to your qualification or any of our policies and procedures you are encouraged to contact either your allocated trainer or the administration staff for more information.

## Contact Information

Phone: 1800 286 916 or 02 4722 3099  
 Fax: 02 4722 3599  
 Email: [info@benchmark.edu.au](mailto:info@benchmark.edu.au)  
 Head Office: 144 Henry Street, PENRITH NSW 2750  
 Postal Address: PO Box 4098, PENRITH NSW 2750  
 Head Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9.00am-5.00pm (closed Public Holidays)  
 Web: [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au)



## 1. Key Organisational Policies and Procedures

It is important for you (the student) to be aware of the organisation's policies and procedures that relate to their studies and the award of their qualification. This handbook summarises many of Benchmark College's formal policies and procedures, relating to students and student management. You can access the full documents at [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au).

### 1.1 ADMISSION

Benchmark College is committed to ensuring that student selection processes are fair and equitable and are consistent with workplace performance, competency level and Training Package requirements. Selection into our programs is based upon the applicant/student;

- Obtaining a Unique Student Identifier (USI)
- Completing the required application and enrolment forms
- Satisfying appropriate funding body criterion (if applicable)
- Satisfactorily completing a language, literacy and numeracy assessment
- Meeting required pre-requisite qualifications and experience
- Meeting required industry age requirements that may be in place for a particular course
- Agreement to abide by the organisation's policies, procedures and code of conduct
- Payment of required fees and charges

More information regarding the selection and enrolment process is available from our website [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au).

#### 1.1.1 UNIQUE STUDENT IDENTIFIER (USI)

If you undertake vocational education and training, you must hold a unique student identifier (USI). If you are a new or continuing student undertaking nationally recognised training you need a USI in order to receive your qualification or statement of attainment.

Please speak to a staff member or visit our website [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au) for more information on the USI. You can obtain your USI online by visiting <http://www.usi.gov.au>

### 1.2 COURSE PAYMENTS AND REFUNDS

Course fees will vary depending on the course you are enrolled in. Course fees are determined on how your course is delivered and its duration. Fees are generally for items such as tuition and enrolment fees, course materials, text books, student services and other related training and assessment services.

Government subsidised training in NSW is called 'Smart and Skilled'. Under Smart and Skilled fees are determined on eligibility. Students can check their eligibility for Smart and Skilled training at <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/are-you-eligible>. Students can get an estimate of the fee for their preferred course in the course finder:

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<https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/sands/find-a-course>.

For programs conducted in Western Australia course fees are determined based on the Government of Western Australia Department of Training and Workforce Development VET Fees and Charges Policy.

### 1.3 PAYMENT OF FEES

To ensure students are well informed of the financial considerations of their enrolment, Benchmark College provides fee information to each student prior to enrolment. If you have not received fee information, or if you have any questions in relation to fees and charges you are encouraged to contact the administration team for more information.

In general the following payment methods are accepted: Cheque, money order, direct deposit, credit card (VISA, MasterCard), EFTPOS, and EziDebit\*. VET FEE-HELP\* is available to eligible students for selected Diploma courses (\*Fees and charges apply).

#### 1.3.1 VET FEE HELP LOAN SCHEME

VET FEE-HELP is a loan scheme that helps eligible VET students pay their tuition fees for certain higher-level VET qualifications. VET FEE-HELP can be used to pay all or part of an eligible student's tuition fees, but cannot be used for additional study costs such as text books.

Benchmark College will not accept a VET FEE-HELP loan request from a student until a two-day 'cooling off' period has elapsed after enrolment.

If you are enrolled in a Diploma or higher qualification, you can access VET FEE-HELP to cover all or part of your tuition fees. You will incur the liability and therefore the debt for the tuition fees after the census date. In the event of a student withdrawing from a VET unit of study prior to the end of the census date<sup>1</sup> for that unit of study, and where the student has paid their fees upfront, the student is eligible for a refund if they withdraw on or before the census date for the relevant Unit of Study.

Sometimes, students may need to withdraw from their studies after the census date or may have been unable to complete their studies due to special circumstances. In the event of a student withdrawing from a VET unit of study after the end of the census date for that unit of study: No refund is applicable; and/or the student will incur a VET FEE-HELP debt. Students may be eligible for a refund or remittance of debt if they withdraw after the Census Date *only* if they can demonstrate special circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> A census date that is no earlier than 20% of the way through a VET unit of study will be set by Benchmark College for each VET unit of study. Benchmark College will ensure that all students are informed of the census date for each VET unit of study in the manner and by the date prescribed in the VET Administration Guidelines.

If you want to use a VET FEE-HELP loan to pay for your study, you must submit a valid Tax File Number, even if you do not have a job. This is because repayments on HELP debt are made through the Australian taxation system.

If you are eligible for VET FEE-HELP and require further information on payments and refunds, please ask the staff at Benchmark College. You can also visit the following websites;

- [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au) (Refund Policy and Procedure, Fees and Charges Policy and Procedure)
- <http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-paying-my-fees/vet-fee-help/pages/vet-fee-help>

For any additional information regarding VET FEE-HELP is required, you can visit the Study Assist website at [www.studyassist.gov.au](http://www.studyassist.gov.au).

#### **1.4 REPLACEMENT OF TEXT AND TRAINING WORKBOOKS**

If you require replacement of issued text or training workbooks you will be liable for additional charges to cover the cost of the replacement. If you have purchased a text or training work booklets and subsequently cancels your enrolment, Benchmark College will not refund monies for the textbook.

#### **1.5 COURSE CANCELLATION / WITHDRAWAL / DEFERMENT**

If you are having difficulty with your training and are considering withdrawing or deferring, speak to your trainer, the Training Coordinator or the Operations Manager as they can help you find a way to put a plan in place to facilitate your completion of the course.

If you need to defer or suspend your studies you are required to complete a 'Withdrawal/Refund/Deferment Request Form' For those enrolled in a Traineeship program you are also required to contact your Apprenticeship Centre to notify your intention to defer your traineeship.

If you are funded under NSW Department of Education and Communities, you may be able to defer your training for a period of no more than six months from the date you complete and lodge the Withdrawal/Refund/Deferment Request Form. There are fee implications of deferring subsidised training; Benchmark College will advise you of these fees at the time of deferment. If you do not recommence subsidised training within a six month period of deferral, NSW Department of Education and Communities will be advised that you are discontinuing subsidised training.

Should you require to cancel or withdraw from your training, whether it before or after commencement, you must advise Benchmark College in writing by completing the Withdrawal/Refund/Deferment Request Form. For those enrolled in a Traineeship program you are also required to contact your Apprenticeship Centre to notify your intention to cancel your traineeship.



Full details regarding the refund of course fees are provided in Benchmark College's Refund Policy, which is available at [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au). We strongly encourage you to be aware of this policy before you decide to enrol.

## 1.6 ENROLMENT VARIATIONS

Where training is work-based, your employer may wish to vary the elective units previously selected. You will need to speak to your Trainer to gain approval prior to any change in your enrolment details. If your employer wishes to vary your units, and this is approved by Benchmark College, an *"Enrolment Variation Form"* is required from the student.

## 1.7 TRANSFERRING STUDENTS

### 1.7.1 TRANSFER TO BENCHMARK COLLEGE

If you are funded under NSW Smart and Skilled, you may withdraw from a qualification from another Smart and Skilled Training Provider and transfer to Benchmark College. Depending on the reason for the transfer, the fees you pay may change. Benchmark College will be able to calculate any changes to your fees. You will be required to complete the Admission process outlined in this handbook.

### 1.7.2 TRANSFER FROM BENCHMARK COLLEGE

If you are funded under NSW Smart and Skilled, you may withdraw from a qualification from Benchmark College and transfer to another Smart and Skilled Training Provider. You will need to complete the Withdrawal/Refund/Deferment Request Form. Depending on the reason for the transfer, the fees you pay may change. Your new Training Provider should be able to calculate any changes to your fees.

## 1.8 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

To improve the service we provide and better meet the needs of our students and industry, Benchmark College encourages you to provide feedback about the quality of our programs, facilities and resources.

You can provide verbal and written feedback throughout your training through evaluation forms supplied at completion of a course and via ad hoc feedback to trainers or staff members. We look forward to hearing your thoughts about our service and your program.

## 1.9 PRIVACY

Benchmark College collects personal information in order to properly and efficiently carry out its functions. Benchmark College only collects personal information that is required for the purposes of employment or education, requests for Australian Government fee assistance or in order to meet government reporting requirements.

Benchmark policies and procedures abide by the Australian Privacy Principles and outline reasonable measures taken to protect the privacy of individuals and staff in line with state and federal legislation. More information can be found at [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or [www.privacy.org.au](http://www.privacy.org.au).

### Records held by Benchmark College include:

- Information you provide on your Application and Enrolment Forms
- Identification details (including USI)
- Training / work experience / employment details
- Copies of any supplied evidence relating to recognition of prior learning or credit transfers
- Copies of certificates or qualifications
- Payment information
- Complaints or appeals lodged (if applicable) including reports and outcomes.

Information collected or held by Benchmark College will only be disclosed to third parties after written consent has been obtained by the individual using the *Information Release Form* or where required by law. This may include:

- The individual's authorised representative or legal advisors
- Training fee 'credit providers' for credit application related functions i.e. VET FEE-HELP
- Government and Statutory Authorities where required by law
- National Vet Regulator auditing purposes
- Employment Service Providers / Employers & Apprenticeship Centres (per the trainees Training Contract)

Benchmark College will store securely all records containing personal information and take all reasonable security measures to protect personal information collected, from unauthorised access, misuse or disclosure.

You may request access to the personal information held and may also make requests to correct personal information if it is not accurate, up-to-date or complete. Personal details can be amended by contacting administration and/or completing an *Enrolment Variation form*.

You may request access to your personal information by calling us during office hours or sending a written request to Benchmark College by email, facsimile or post (see Contact Information section of this handbook). To protect the privacy of our students/clients and the privacy of others, Benchmark College will ask for evidence of identity before the College can grant access to information or change it. Once your identity has been verified, access will to be provided in an appropriate manner within 30 days.

A mechanism exists in which you can raise a complaint in relation to how their personal information is handled. There are three stages in the complaint-handling process:

1. The complaint is made directly to Benchmark College in the first instance
2. The complaint may be taken to a recognised external dispute resolutions scheme (if applicable), and lastly
3. The complaint may be taken to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

You can contact Benchmark College by phone, email, fax, and drop into our office or send a request or complaint to the College address (refer to the Contact Information section of this handbook). The College undertakes to respond to the complainant within 30 days. If the request or complaint takes longer to resolve, the College provides individuals with a date by which they can expect a response.

All policies and procedures, including the Privacy Policy and Procedure are available on the Benchmark College website.

## 1.10 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Benchmark College is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system which is easily accessible and offered to students/clients at no charge.

Wherever possible, students, clients and staff are encouraged to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned. There are trainers, administration and management staff available to assist you in resolving issues at this level. If you are unable to resolve your issue at this level, a formal grievance can be lodged.

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing, addressed to the Consumer Protection Officer, Benchmark College:

**Postal Address:** **PO Box 4098**  
**PENRITH NSW 2750**

The Compliance Manager or Operations Manager will contact you within ten (10) working days of the receipt of a formal complaint / appeal. During the complaints process you are encouraged to have a support person present at all meetings. Your enrolment is maintained throughout the complaints and appeals process. You are informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including details of the reason for outcome.

The National Training Complaints Hotline (133873) is available for complaints that remain unresolved after all steps have been taken to resolve the matter.

### 1.10.1 CONSUMER PROTECTION

Benchmark College Consumer Protection Policy provides information about the rights of consumers in the following areas:

- Ethical and accurate marketing
- Providing student information prior to enrolment
- Quality Training and Assessment
- Protecting Fees paid in advance
- Complaints and Appeals
- Privacy
- Continuous Improvement of products and services

For more information, you can request a copy of Benchmark College's Consumer Protection Policy and Complaints and Appeals Policy by calling 02 4722 3099 or view a copy on the website [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au)

## 2. Health & Safety

Benchmark College is committed to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees, students and visitors. Following the Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011 we take reasonable care of the health and safety of others by:

- A workplace that is safe to work in, with working procedures or safe work method statements to inform staff and students on safe working procedures.
- Ensuring that the organisation has policies and procedures that advocate a zero tolerance for bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- Ensuring any student-related practical task is adequately managed for risk.
- The provision of facilities, tools and equipment that are properly maintained.
- Supplying Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, eye protection and sharps containers where required.
- Training Benchmark College personnel in areas which include safe work procedures, infection control procedures and appropriate hygiene.

### 2.1 GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Students and staff should avoid whenever possible, or otherwise carry out carefully and correctly, any lifting.
- Students should not leave items/cords or obstructions in walkways or passageways.
- Students should wear footwear appropriate for the activities that they expect to undertake.

### 2.2 HAZARD CONTROL AND REPORTING

Anyone who sees a potential or existing hazard should;

- Assess if they can safely remove or reduce the hazard themselves without undertaking any unnecessary risks
- Take action to signal or warn of the hazard to those who may be near
- Report the hazard to your trainer who will arrange any further control of the hazard required.

## 2.3 INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTING

The College recognises the duty of care owed to its students and that planning for the management of a critical incident is essential.

A critical incident is defined as ‘a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury’. The College has in place efficient, sensitive and supportive strategies for dealing with a critical incident and provides support to members of staff, students and others in the community who are involved.

If the incident is on the College premises, the first action will be to contact the emergency services - fire, ambulance or police – as would be the case with other WHS matters. The Operations Manager and Chief Executive Officer are contacted immediately when an incident involves death, serious injury or a threat to life or property.

If the critical incident involves a student or staff member and is off-campus, the person receiving the information must immediately contact Head Office who will communicate with other staff as appropriate.

All accidents and injuries must be reported to Head Office. Staff will follow the Procedure for Hazard/Incident Reporting outlined in the Workplace Health, Safety and Environment Policy and Procedures (available at [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au)). The aim of the reporting system is to prevent accidents from recurring by identifying the problem or hazard.

## 2.4 FIRST AID

A First Aid kit is located at each campus site. The College is not permitted to administer medication to any student. All injuries requiring first aid are reported, treated and recorded as outlined in the Procedure for Hazard/Incident Reporting. Your Trainer will outline who the First Aid Officers are at each campus.

## 2.5 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### *In the Event of Fire*

1. Raise the alarm – contact Fire & Rescue (000)
2. Alert other occupants
3. Notify the Chief Warden of the Building
4. Evacuate the immediate area
5. Assemble as directed by the floor wardens and trainers
6. When instructed, evacuate the building.

### *Evacuation*

1. Move to the Assembly Point as directed by floor wardens and trainers
2. When instructed to evacuate, leave by the Fire Stairs/Exits  
DO NOT USE LIFTS
3. Move quietly and calmly to the Assembly Area
4. Await instructions.

### *Building Alarms and Other Emergencies*

If the building fire alarm rings or if you are advised that there is an emergency in the building:

1. Stay calm
2. Follow the directions of floor wardens and trainers
3. Follow the evacuation procedure if required.

## **2.6 DRUG FREE ENVIRONMENT**

Under the *Smoke-free Environment Act 2000* smoking is prohibited within all Benchmark College premises. We have a legal obligation to enforce this law.

The *Smoke-free Environment Act 2000*. Section 6A(1)(i) bans smoking within 4 metres of a pedestrian access point to a public building<sup>2</sup>.

Students who attend class under the influence of prohibited drugs will be asked to leave the premises and may face disciplinary action.

## **2.7 BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT**

Benchmark College operates without bias, discrimination or harassment, and expect the same from all participants in our courses.

We do not behave in ways that are unwelcome, demeaning, unreciprocated and/or offensive to an individual or group of people, and we require the same from you. You have the right to feel safe and to have full opportunity to achieve your potential in your study. If you are being harassed seek help immediately.

There are several options. Choose the course of action you feel most comfortable with. Do not ignore discrimination or sexual harassment, thinking it will go away – often discrimination just gets worse and silence may give the impression that discrimination or sexual harassment is acceptable.

You may:

- Tell the person they are making you uncomfortable and ask them to stop; or
- Make a complaint to one of the staff from Benchmark College; or
- Make a complaint under Anti-Discrimination Legislation to:

### **New South Wales**

Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW  
<http://www.antidiscrimination.justice.nsw.gov.au>

### **Western Australia**

Equal Opportunity Commission  
[www.eoc.wa.gov.au](http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au)

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<sup>2</sup> NSW Government, Department of Health, *SMOKE-FREE GUIDE*

## 2.8 STUDENT CONDUCT

All students must comply with the Student Behaviour and Misconduct Policy and Procedure and any lawful direction given by their trainer or other staff member. Benchmark College reserves the right to remove any student who breaches any aspect of the Student Behaviour and Misconduct Policy and Procedure. Repeated instances could result in cancellation of your enrolment.

Students who attend Benchmark College under the auspices of their employer are required to adhere to the policies and procedures of their employer and any unacceptable behaviour will be reported back to their employer.

If a student's enrolment is cancelled by the College, the student has 20 working days to access the Complaints and Appeals process. The student's enrolment status will not be affected during the internal complaints and appeals process.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour may include:

- Sexual harassment
- Actions which are unsafe which place you or others at risk
- Disruption to the class or other students
- Refusal to take part in group learning activities
- Lack of personal hygiene
- Damage, steal, modify or misuse College property
- Use of the College computers (or data/telephone points) to send, broadcast, search or download inappropriate, offensive, defamatory or illegal material
- Dishonesty or misconduct in examinations or assessments such as plagiarism, collusion or cheating
- Threatening or intimidating actions or language
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Smoking anywhere within the college
- Repeated lateness or failure to attend classes
- Other behaviour deemed by your trainer or other students as objectionable
- Litter the college premises, the entrances to the college premises or on the pedestrian thoroughfares within the vicinity of the College premises

## 2.9 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Benchmark College Student, you are required to;

- Be responsible for both your own health and safety and the health and safety of others and have a duty to **immediately report any unsafe conditions or hazards** to your trainer or another staff member.
- NOT act in a manner that jeopardises the health and safety of yourself or any other person.
- Treat all other students and staff with courtesy, fairness and respect.
- Refrain from participating in, condoning or approving conduct which is harassing, discriminatory or unfair.



- Follow safe working practices and comply with all safety directions given to you by your trainer or other staff.
- Inform the College of any changes to your personal details, contact information or enrolment status.
- Wear Student Identification cards (where applicable) whilst on work experience.
- Comply with State and Commonwealth laws relating to crimes, harassment, discrimination and copyright.

## 2.10 STUDENT RIGHTS

You have the right to:

- Be treated fairly and with respect by trainers, other staff and students
- Learn in an environment free of bullying discrimination and harassment
- Complete your course in a supportive and stimulating learning environment
- Have your training records and personal information stored and kept in confidence and secured
- Receive feedback about assessment outcomes and progress
- Modify your training plan circumstances change, in consultation with your trainer and head office staff
- Provide the College with information regarding recognition of prior learning (RPL) and/or credit transfer (CT) at the commencement and/or during your course
- Defer or withdraw from your studies in writing using College required documentation.

## 2.11 PROTECTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In accordance with Benchmark College's Person at Risk Policy and Procedures and NSW Government legislation, the College is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people (under the age of 18 years).

In some jurisdictions, but not all, it is a legal requirement for Benchmark College representatives to report child abuse or victimisation if it is observed or suspected.



## 3. Learning and Assessment

### 3.1 THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The College has policies, procedures and information to help create a working and learning environment that is safe and healthy, culturally diverse, friendly and non-discriminatory. We encourage you to visit the student section of our website to view all relevant policies and procedures. You can access these documents by going to [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au) selecting the 'Student' tab, then 'Policies & Procedures.'

### 3.2 THE COURSES

Benchmark College provides vocational education in a number of different areas including Early Childhood Education and Care (Childcare), Health and Community Services (Aged Care), Business, Transport and Logistics (Warehousing), Training and Assessment. All Nationally Recognised Qualifications that we are able to deliver are located at <http://training.gov.au/Organisation/Details/90274>.

Our courses are offered in various modes of delivery including: classroom, traineeship (workplace) and blended mode (e.g. a recognition pathway).

### 3.3 THE TRAINERS

Benchmark College staff are an integral part of our student's journey towards growth. From the time you apply to the time that you graduate you will be assisted by staff who are dedicated to providing you with a quality service.

All of our Trainer/Assessors are highly qualified, dynamic and experienced industry professionals who consistently model best practice and who are committed to optimising your ability to meet course requirements. All Trainer/Assessors are required to provide the College with recent evidence of industry currency, competency and professional development.

### 3.4 STUDY RESOURCES

You will be supplied learning resources on commencement of your training. These resources will be extremely useful for you in the understanding of course content, completion of assessment tasks, and will also provide you with fabulous reference material once you are in the workplace.

Some qualifications may require you to purchase additional textbooks. You may be able to buy allocated text books directly from the college or from local/online book stores. Benchmark College will not provide refunds for textbooks see 'Refund Policy'.

### 3.5 ATTENDANCE

In order to maximise the benefits of study and achieve academic success all students who are enrolled in a classroom based learning program are required to regularly attend their classes. Any absence is required to be supported with documentary evidence (e.g. medical certificate) within 7 days of the students return. Where a student has missed greater than 20% of the required attendance they will be required to meet with either the Training Coordinator or the Operations Manager. Course completion and the College's ability to issue an award may be affected if a student has significant absences noted.

Where a student is on work experience they **MUST** notify the College and their work experience host of their inability to attend. Documentary evidence will be required for any absences.

### 3.6 CLASSROOM CONDUCT

A mature attitude in respect to classroom conduct is expected of all students. You are expected to be punctual for lessons.

You are not allowed to bring unsealed food or drinks into any of the computer laboratories or any other classroom on College premises, or consume any food or drink in any such laboratory or classroom.

Mobile telephones must be switched off during class. You may receive or make a telephone call only during a break.

### 3.7 SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS

If you have any special needs in relation to assessment, preparing for assessment, or understanding the assessment plan, you should notify your trainer/assessor. (You should also notify the College of this upon induction and tell your trainer about this for the purposes of lesson or training delivery.) You need to provide the College sufficient notice so that a suitable assessment plan can be developed. Ideally, you should inform the trainer of this when joining the class and remind them two weeks before the particular assessment event.

Common special needs that may be catered for are:

- coloured paper (for some forms of dyslexia)
- a scribe for students with injured writing hands, etc.

Other needs where you are requesting some advantage such as extra time and/or dictionaries may have to be assessed by the Training Coordinator so you should provide sufficient time and evidence for this request to be considered.

To support student's special needs Benchmark College has developed referral pathways to a variety of different Support Services see this section for more information.

### 3.8 ASSESSMENT

The training provided includes assignments which students must complete and submit as part of the ongoing assessment of their training and progress. Failure to complete assignments will be recorded on the student's records and taken into consideration when final results are being reviewed.

*'Assessment is the process of forming and recording a judgement about a person's skill and knowledge'* (Blackwater: 2010:11). In order for you to complete your qualification you will be required, through our assessment processes, to provide evidence that you are competent.

Evidence is the term used to describe the information your assessor will use to assess whether you have gained the skills and knowledge consistently and in a variety of situations.

Each qualification will offer a number of different assessment pathways that may be utilised depending on the individual. These pathways include the 'Recognition for Prior Learning pathway' (see section 3.9 of this Handbook), 'Training and Assessment pathway' and 'Blended pathway'.

**Training and Assessment Pathway** means that as you undertake your qualification you are required to complete set assessment tasks (Blackwater Projects: 2010:7).

**Blended Assessment Pathway** means that you enrol in training and units of competence via the RPL and training and assessment pathway (Blackwater Projects: 2010:7).

### 3.9 RECOGNITION

#### What is recognition?

Recognition is a way that you can have your knowledge and skills assessed against a Nationally Recognised Qualification or specific Units of Competency. During your life you may have;

- Gained extensive experience, knowledge and skills from previous job roles.
- Have undertaken community and volunteer work.
- Completed formal or informal training (in the work place, at a Registered Training Organisation or at a University).

Benchmark College provides the opportunity for all students to apply to have prior learning and experience recognised toward a qualification or units of competence for which they are enrolled.

Recognition generally takes two forms: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer.

## **RPL - Recognition of Prior Learning**

RPL is a type of assessment that recognises a person's skills and knowledge as a result of previous work and/or life experience. RPL assesses this unrecognised learning against the requirements of a unit of competence and removes the need for duplication of learning. A participant is required to provide evidence to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in a unit of competence. This process is assessed in the same manner as any other assessment and is mapped to the standard under the same guidelines according to the relevant training package.

## **RCC - Recognition of Current Competency**

RCC may be available if a student has successfully completed the requirements previously for a unit of competency or module and is now seeking to participate in a skills recognition process, in order to be reassessed, to ensure that the competence is being maintained - for example as a part of an RPL process. A knowledge assessment may be required to assess the currency of the student's underpinning knowledge, allowing Benchmark College to meet the rules of evidence and the requirements of the particular competency criteria.

## **Credit Transfer**

Credit transfer is the recognition of learning achieved through formal education and training. Credit transfer allows a student to be awarded a unit of competence based on successful completion of the unit which has been previously awarded.

Benchmark College recognises AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any other Registered Training Organisation.

An application for credit transfer must include certified copies of certificates/transcripts which outline the units in which credit transfer is being sought. Benchmark College will only provide transfer on equivalent units.

## **How to apply for Credit Transfer or RPL**

You are encouraged to apply for Credit Transfer or RPL at any time, however, it is best to apply before commencing a training program as this will reduce unnecessary training.

Any documents you provide us to assess your competency must be either the originals or certified copies of the originals. We will make copies of your documents and give return the originals to you.

The Assessor must be able to ensure that:

- You have met the requirements of the Units of Competency
- You have met any regulatory requirements
- The evidence you provide is your own work and can be verified or authenticated.
- That you can demonstrate competency reliably and consistently and to a standard required by the industry
- That the evidence is sufficient to make a judgement.

For information how to apply for recognition and create a certified copy of your documents, please call Benchmark College on 02 4722 3099 or visit our website to download the Recognition flyer.

### 3.10 ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Assessment tools are used to gather evidence about a student's competence. All developed assessment tools support the assessment of applicable units of competence in accordance with the requirements of industry Training Packages and fit with the requirements of the target industry and enterprise. The following are examples of assessment tools which may be used to assess your competence;

- Direct observation checklist
- Simulation exercises or role-plays
- Written questionnaires
- Portfolios, for example collections of work samples by the student
- Workplace samples/products
- Project outlines and explanation sheets
- Workplace templates
- Verbal questionnaires
- Product with supporting documentation or journal/log book
- Industry/workplace evidence reports

### 3.11 PREPARING FOR ASSESSMENT

To maximise your performance in assessments you should;

- Be prepared for the assessment
- Ask your trainer/assessor to clarify any questions or tasks of which you are unsure
- Advise your trainer/assessor immediately if there is any factor which will affect your performance in the assessment or if you have any special need;
- Read the instructions on the assessment task and complete all the identification details;
- Write legibly; and clearly.

**NOTE:** The College reserves the right not to mark student assessments or to withhold results if there are fees outstanding.

### 3.12 REFERENCING / COPYING OF WORK

Referencing is required to acknowledge information from other sources when you are writing. If you fail to reference another person's ideas, theories or data you will be in breach of copyright or may be accused of plagiarism. Examples of sources you will need to reference include textbooks, reference journals, website information and conference notes.

Benchmark College requires you to use referencing when quoting another person's ideas, theories or data. It is imperative when submitting all assessment tasks that you do not use another person's ideas, thoughts and data without appropriate referencing.

If you are unclear on how to reference a resource available from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research exists that outlines how to reference using the Harvard system of referencing. In your web browser type the following:

- Referencing guide: author/date style - National Centre for Vocational Education Research
- Download the PDF.

If you have any questions regarding how to reference, we would encourage you to ask your trainer.

Copying of another students' work is **not** permitted. Disciplinary action may be taken if you are suspected of using another student's work and could jeopardise your ability to complete your qualification.

All work submitted is required to include a signed a declaration from you to verify that it is a product of your own. Any assignments and assessments **MUST** be your own original work. Failure to do this could result in the assignment/assessment being deemed 'not yet competent' by the assessor, requiring additional work and assessment to be submitted before any Statements of Attainment or Qualifications will be issued.

### 3.13 COPIES OF ASSESSMENTS

For record keeping requirements, all work that is submitted will be kept in your student file. Your work will not be returned to you and we will not be responsible for any submissions which have been lost, stolen or destroyed. You need to keep duplicate copies of your work for your reference or should they be lost in the mail.

### 3.14 SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENTS

In general all assessments are to be submitted directly to your trainer/assessor. They can also be submitted at Head Office. Your trainer will advise on assessment due dates and the format required for submitting your assessments. All assessment tasks will be required to contain a Cover Sheet. Your trainer will provide copies of the Cover Sheet. Should you require further copies, speak to your trainer or administration.

### 3.15 ASSESSMENT EXTENSIONS

Requests for an extension may be granted if prior notice and sufficient reason is present. If illness is the reason for an extension a Doctors certificate will be required. Extensions will not be granted the day prior to due date. In the event of the weekend, the last date for request for extension is the close of business Friday.

Extensions need to be in writing and addressed to the allocated trainer/assessor. In the event this cannot occur your written request must be submitted the next day at the College.

### 3.16 FAILURE TO ATTEMPT AN ASSESSMENT

As there are a number of different assessment tasks for each subject, students who do not attempt an assessment task without a valid reason will risk a withdrawal result for the unit being assessed. This means that failure to complete an assessment task could jeopardise your ability to complete your qualification.

However, the College understands that there may be valid reasons why a student may not attempt an assessment task. Students may apply for an alternative assessment or special consideration if, because of illness or other circumstances (not work-related) beyond their control, they;

- Miss a formal assessment
- Attend an assessment but are forced to leave before the allocated time has expired
- Finish an assessment, but believe that their performance was affected
- Have difficulty in completing an assessment task.

To be considered, the students must:

- Inform the College as soon as is practicable and no later than two working days after the assessment; or
- Inform their Trainer/Assessor at the time, if they attempted any part of the assessment; **and**
- Provide external independent evidence of the illness or misadventure in the form of a doctor's certificate from a registered medical practitioner or a Police Report or any other documentation that will support their application.

### 3.17 REASSESSMENT

For numerous different reasons some students may not complete an assessment task satisfactorily. At Benchmark College, our approach to these situations is to work with you to build your skill and knowledge in preparation for additional assessment.

In some rare circumstances, students may find it difficult to develop the necessary skills and knowledge within the constraints of the programs schedule. When this occurs, arrangements may be agreed to allow the student to undertake additional learning in their own time and return for reassessment at a later date.



Your tuition fees include two assessment attempts. This means if you are found Not Yet Satisfactory (NYS) for an assessment task, you can re-submit this assessment task a second time without charge. Further assessment attempts will incur a fee for each assessment re-submission. Please refer to the Benchmark College Fees and Charges Policy for more information at [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au)

As a general guide, assessors will make alternative arrangements to provide opportunities for assessment within the constraints of available time and resources. In all circumstances, the assessment is to be a planned activity that is conducted in accordance with Benchmark College assessment procedures. In some cases, after alternative arrangements have been applied, a student may be deemed not-yet-competent.

### **3.18 APPEALS PROCESS**

An appeal procedure is available to students who believe the assessment process or any assessment event was inappropriately or ineffectively carried out and therefore resulted in an inappropriate assessment or decision being made. The steps are as follows:

1. If possible, speak to your trainer/assessor to discuss your concerns;
2. If this does not resolve your concerns, you can appeal against the assessment decision within 28 days of receiving your result. To do this you will need to contact the Operations Manager either by making an appointment in person or by email who will organise a meeting to discuss;
3. Arrangements will be made for an independent assessor to assess competency;
4. Once moderation of the assessment has taken place the student will be contacted within 7 days of the decision.

### **3.19 CHANGES TO THE QUALIFICATION YOU ARE STUDYING**

From time to time, qualifications and units of competency (units) are changed due to emerging industry requirements. When qualifications or units are upgraded, the 'old' qualification/unit is called 'superseded'.

If your qualification or some of your units of competency become superseded during the time you are studying, Benchmark College will offer and encourage you to transfer to the new qualification/unit (once the new qualification/unit is on the Benchmark College scope of registration). This process is called 'transitioning.'



## 4. Student Services

### 4.1 COLLEGE / LOCAL FACILITIES

Benchmark College training facilities have:

- Classrooms equipped with whiteboards; and access to data projectors, televisions, & DVD players;
- Computer labs with printers and internet access
- Student lounge equipped with kitchen facilities and microwave, as well as additional computers with internet access, printers/copiers, etc.

Students are not allowed to eat or drink on College premises except in the designated student lounge. This is to ensure that a healthy, pest-free working and learning environment is maintained. This policy also ensures that computer hardware and other equipment/furniture are not damaged by accidental spillage.

Computer laboratories can be booked for use outside of classroom hours. Students must sign an undertaking on the use of College computers before access will be granted.

Any unauthorised use of the computers (or data/telephone points) or unauthorised installation or downloading of computer software including games and screensavers will lead to disciplinary action which may include expulsion. Copyright infringements arising from unauthorised copying, installation or downloading of computer software may also lead to criminal charges being laid.

Facilities closely located to the College include public transport, numerous food outlets, supermarkets, post offices, banks, libraries, medical centres, clubs and cinemas.

### 4.2 ACCESS AND EQUITY

Benchmark College is committed to ensuring that all eligible students have access to educational opportunities. We do this by identifying special needs and, where appropriate, making reasonable adjustments to the learning and assessment environment. Examples of reasonable adjustment may include: large print, extra time, additional tutorial support etc.

If you have a special need we would encourage you to discuss this need with your Trainer or one of our administrative staff. You can advise us on your application or enrolment form or if you would like to discuss your needs with a staff member before you begin your course you can call us directly on 02 4722 3099. All discussions are treated in the strictest of confidence. Once we know what your needs are we can work with you to put in place a plan help you complete your studies.



### 4.3 GETTING ADVICE

Benchmark College aims to ensure that all students are provided with the support needed to successfully complete their qualification. If you require help or just need to ask a question we would encourage you to talk with your trainer or Training Coordinator as soon as possible.

Problems or difficulties may occur from time to time. In such circumstances, you need to discuss the situation so that we can put suitable strategies in place.

Whatever you do... If you have a problem:

- × Don't 'pull out' or 'give up' on your training, even if things are not going to plan. They can usually be fixed.
- ✓ Talk immediately to your trainer or the Training Coordinator.

*Remember, your training can be the best start to a rewarding career. It will lead you in all sorts of new directions. So let us help you identify a solution!*

#### **4.4 SUPPORT SERVICES**

We understand that at times you may require additional services outside of our area of expertise; because of this we have developed partnerships and pathways with other providers. A range of services and professional associations including personal and career advisory/counselling services are available – see Table 1. For most services listed you can self-refer or we can contact the provider on your behalf. If you require us to contact one of the services listed on your behalf please contact the Training Coordinator on 02 4722 3099.

**Table 1: Support Service Contact Numbers**

<p><b>READING WRITING HOTLINE (AUSTRALIA)</b>  Phone: 1300 655 506  Website: <a href="http://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au/">http://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au/</a>  Email: <a href="mailto:rwhotline@det.nsw.edu.au">rwhotline@det.nsw.edu.au</a></p>	<p><b>TAFE NSW WESTERN SYDNEY INSTITUTE English for Speakers of Other Languages</b>  Phone: 131 870  Website: <a href="http://wsi.tafensw.edu.au/courses-and-careers/english-language/">http://wsi.tafensw.edu.au/courses-and-careers/english-language/</a></p>
<p><b>CENTRELINK SKILLS FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (SEE)</b>  Phone: 132 850  Website: <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/skills-for-education-and-employment">http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/skills-for-education-and-employment</a></p>	<p><b>NAVITAS ENGLISH</b>  Level 4, 11 York Street ,Sydney NSW 2000  Australia  Phone: 1300 730 466  Fax: +61 2 8252 2822  Email: <a href="mailto:info.attc@navitas.com">info.attc@navitas.com</a>  Website: <a href="http://navitasenglish.com/">http://navitasenglish.com/</a></p>
<p><b>PENRITH DISABILITIES RESOURCE CENTRE INC.</b>  Information, advocacy and referral service  Phone: (02) 4732 2363  Email: <a href="mailto:info@pdrc.org.au">info@pdrc.org.au</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.pdrc.org.au">http://www.pdrc.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>ABILITY OPTIONS</b>  Phone: (02) 88 111 777  Email: <a href="mailto:admin@abilityoptions.org.au">admin@abilityoptions.org.au</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.abilityoptions.org.au">www.abilityoptions.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>PHYSICAL DISABILITY COUNCIL OF NSW</b>  Phone: 1800 688 831  Email: <a href="mailto:admin@pdcnsw.org.au">admin@pdcnsw.org.au</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.pdcnsw.org.au">www.pdcnsw.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS TEAM</b>  Community Assessment and Liaison Centre  Phone: 1800 011 511  Website: <a href="http://www.nbmlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/mental-health">http://www.nbmlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/mental-health</a></p>
<p><b>BEYONDBLUE</b>  Beyondblue provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live.  Phone: 1300 22 4636  Website: <a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a>  Email: <a href="mailto:info@beyondblue.org.au">info@beyondblue.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>SALVATION ARMY COUNSELLING SERVICE</b>  Cnr Lethbridge &amp; Castlereagh St  Suite 15, Lethbridge Court PENRITH NSW 2751  Ph. (02) 4731 1554  Website: <a href="http://salvoscounselling.salvos.org.au/">http://salvoscounselling.salvos.org.au/</a></p>
<p><b>HOMELESS PERSONS INFO LINE</b>  Phone: 1800 234 566  Website: <a href="http://www.homelessnessnsw.org.au/">http://www.homelessnessnsw.org.au/</a></p>	<p><b>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS 24 HRS</b>  Phone: 1800 656 463  Website: <a href="http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents,-carers-and-families/domestic-and-family-violence">http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents,-carers-and-families/domestic-and-family-violence</a></p>

## 5. Administrative Matters

### 5.1 CHANGE OF PERSONAL DETAILS

You must inform the College as soon as practicable but not later than 7 days following the change of any change in the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Mobile/landline telephone number(s)
- Email address

An Enrolment Variation form is submitted to Head Office where your details are updated on the Student Management System.

### 5.2 USE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Benchmark College only collects personal information that is required for the purposes of employment or education, requests for Australian Government fee assistance or in order to meet government reporting requirements.

The type of information collected and held by Benchmark College includes: personally identifiable information, including sensitive information, about students (and guardians, where a trainee is under 16 years of age) before, during and after the completion of training. Consent for the collection of student information is gained at application via the application and enrolment form. For more information about privacy, see section 1.9 of this handbook.

### 5.3 GETTING YOUR RESULTS / QUALIFICATION

Benchmark College will only issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment that are within its scope of registration.

If you have successfully completed all requirements for a qualification, you will receive a certificate including a competency statement which lists all units completed. If you did not successfully complete all requirements for a qualification or only enrolled in a partial qualification, you will be issued with a statement of attainment that includes all units that you successfully completed.

You will need to allow 3-4 weeks from course completion for your qualification or statement of attainment to be issued.

Any certificates or statements of attainment will be put on hold if you have any outstanding fees.

Should you require a certification re-issue due to loss or damage, you can request this by emailing [info@benchmark.com.au](mailto:info@benchmark.com.au). There will be an administrative charge of \$25 for the re-issue of your Statement of Attainment(s) or Qualification.

## 5.4 STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

If you complete a full time program in Early Childhood Education and Care or Aged Care with Benchmark College will be provided with a Photo Student Identification Card. A Photo Student Identification Card is to be worn at all times whilst on work experience and on excursions. A replacement fee of \$10.00 exists.

## 5.5 NSW TERTIARY STUDENT TRANSPORT CONCESSION

### *Concession Opal Card*

The new Concession Opal card gives you all the convenience and flexibility of Opal, with fares at half the price of the Adult Opal card for travel on transport services<sup>3</sup>.

### *Who is eligible?*

You're eligible to apply for a Concession Opal card if you're<sup>4</sup>:

- are an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia
- reside in New South Wales
- are enrolled in an Australian Qualifications Framework, accredited higher education or vocational education and training course, at a tertiary institution authorised by Transport for NSW to issue tertiary student concessions
- you are a full-time student enrolled on an internal basis (except where a person, by reason of disability, is enrolled on a part-time basis and/or on an external basis)

For the purposes of administering the Concession Opal Card, 'a full-time student' means<sup>5</sup>:

- a university student who is considered to be enrolled on a full-time basis by their university
- a student at any other tertiary institution other than a university who is enrolled in a course of study, requiring at least 20 hours per week of classes, for a continuous period of at least nine weeks.

If you are completing a traineeship, you may be entitled to apply for a Concession Opal card. Details can be provided on request.

For further information telephone please call Opal Customer Care on **13 67 25 (13 OPAL)** or go to <https://www.opal.com.au>.

<sup>3</sup> NSW Government, Transport for NSW, [https://www.opal.com.au/en/about-opal/opal\\_for\\_concessions/opal\\_for\\_tertiary\\_institutions/](https://www.opal.com.au/en/about-opal/opal_for_concessions/opal_for_tertiary_institutions/)

<sup>4</sup> NSW Government, Transport for NSW, [https://www.opal.com.au/en/about-opal/opal\\_for\\_concessions/opal\\_for\\_tertiary\\_institutions/](https://www.opal.com.au/en/about-opal/opal_for_concessions/opal_for_tertiary_institutions/)

<sup>5</sup> NSW Government, Transport for NSW, Concession Opal Card Eligibility

## 5.6 QUESTIONS OR FEEDBACK?

Every effort has been made to ensure that information included in this handbook is correct at the time of publication.

Should you have any questions or feedback about the information in this handbook, please speak to your trainer or administration staff.

Any updates to handbooks, policies or procedures will be available for download from our website [www.benchmark.edu.au](http://www.benchmark.edu.au) so please ensure to view this regularly.