



Practical Outcomes

Business & Training Solutions

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Practical Outcomes is a registered training organisation specialising in the delivery of training to the children's services and vocational education industries. The company prides itself in having a team of staff with extensive experience in a range of service types, from direct service to management roles.

Staff have comprehensive level of knowledge and skills of all facets of the industry and can draw on the experiences of their team to meet the specific needs of individual students and workplaces.

Practical Outcomes strives to provide a quality training and assessment process that builds the capacity of child care workers to contribute to the industry.

All training courses have been designed by our team of qualified staff. Our training model allows students to learn and establish basic skills in all job roles prior to working towards developing more complex skills. This allows students to scaffold their skills throughout their courses. The course aims to establish growth in skills and knowledge over time and in all facets of work.

Courses have been designed in relation to the types of duties undertaken by a staff member working at the level of the qualification the student is embarking upon.

Qualifications

We offer the following accredited and nationally recognised competencies:

- Certificate III in Children's Services (CHC30402)
- Certificate IV in Outside School Hours Care (CHC40402)
- Diploma of Children's Services (CHC50302)
- Diploma of Outside School Hours Care (CHC50202)
- Advanced Diploma of Children's Services (CHC60202)
- Certificate IV in Training & Assessment (TAA40104)
- First aid including
 - Perform CPR (HLTCPR201A)
 - Apply first aid (HLTFA301B)
 - Apply advanced first aid (HLTFA402B)
- Food safety (Health and Hospitality units)
- Course in First Aid Management of Anaphylaxis (21659VIC)
- Course in Emergency Asthma Management (21386VIC)

As new courses are added to our registration throughout the year, they will be published on our web site. Students should refer to individual course brochures for more information on content and vocational outcomes for each course.

Application processes and selection criteria

Selection for enrolment in our courses will be approved for applicants who meet the qualification selection criteria which are detailed in individual course brochures.

In line with Government policy, students with intellectual and physical disabilities are encouraged to participate in training.

Fees and costs involved in undertaking training

Fees are invoiced according the fee schedule provided to you prior to enrolment. Fee refund arrangements are outlined in the Agreement and Contract which students are required to complete prior to enrolment.

Quality assurance processes

Practical outcomes are bound by requirements under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

In line with these requirements and to ensure high quality of service delivery, we undertake regular evaluations of student learning at classes or following completion of our short courses and through an annual student review. Results of each annual review will be provided to all students in our student newsletter and will be published on our web site.

We use information gathered from this process to make improvements to our training programs and services to our clients.

Language, literacy and numeracy

Language, literacy and numeracy expectations are based on the National Reporting System established by the Australian National Training Authority and the Federal Government.

Certificate I and II level qualifications

The learner's language, literacy and numeracy levels are expected to be equivalent to Level 2

Certificate II, IV and Diploma level qualifications

The learner's language, literacy and numeracy levels are expected to be equivalent to Level 3 of the National Reporting System.

More details about language, literacy and numeracy requirements are contained in the individual course brochures.

Dispute resolution procedure and code of behaviour

We have a dispute resolution procedure to provide students with a fair and equitable process for resolving any disputes or complaints they may have.

Students are required to follow the Code of Behaviour at all times. Failure to follow the Code of Behaviour may involve the imposing of sanctions including removal from the course.

Relevant legislation

A range of legislation is applicable to all staff and students. Information on relevant legislation can be found at the following websites.

OH&S <http://www.business.channel.vic.gov.au>

EEO <http://www.eoc.vic.gov.au/>

VET <http://www.otte.vic.gov.au/>

Work Cover <http://www.workcover.vic.gov.au>

Privacy <http://www.privacy.gov.au/>

Code of Practice – Trainers and Students

This Code of Practice requires Practical Outcomes to implement policies and management practices that maintain high professional standards in the delivery of education and training services and which safeguard the educational interests and welfare of staff and students.

This code also outlines the roles and responsibilities of students and Practical Outcomes staff.

Administration and management

Practical Outcomes will meet the following minimum administrative and management standards:

- Ensure a person or persons with relevant qualifications and experience will undertake responsibility for the management and coordination of training delivery, assessment, verification, staff selection and professional development of the Registered Training Organisation.
- Maintain adequate and appropriate insurance including public liability, professional indemnity and Work Cover.
- Advise the Registering Authority in writing within 10 working days of any change to the information contained in its Registration/Endorsement Application.
- Allow the Registering Authority or its agent's access to training records, delivery locations and staff for the purpose of auditing performance or verifying compliance with the Conditions of Registration/Endorsement.
- Pay the Registering Authority all registration fees within 30 days of these fees being due and payable to maintain currency of registration.
- Maintain systems for recording student enrolments, attendance, completion, assessment outcomes (including Recognition of Competency), results, qualifications issued, complaints and the archiving of records.
- Treat all personal records of clients with the strictest confidentiality.
- Provisions for staff and students to be able to access their own records.

Course delivery

Practical Outcomes will:

- Provide, prior to course commencement, orientation program containing information about the course curriculum, program of study and availability of learning resources.
- Ensure that a current copy of the accredited course curriculum is available to staff and students.
- Ensure that training and assessment occur in accordance with the requirements of the accredited course.
- Ensure that National guidelines are followed when customising courses to meet the needs of particular clients.
- Obtain written permission from course copyright owners prior to course delivery to use and, if required, customise courses.
- Ensure that all courses in the Scope of Registration remain accredited.

Staff

Trainers and Assessors of Practical Outcomes will have:

- Demonstrated competencies at least to the level of those being delivered
- For Trainers demonstrated achievement of at least Certificate IV in Training & Assessment
- Industrial experience that is current and relevant to the particular courses or modules that they are involved in delivering.

Service delivery to students

Practical Outcomes staff are responsible for ensuring a high level of support and commitment to each and every student. This responsibility means that we will:

- Make monthly contact to all students via classes
- Reply to phone calls or emails within 2 working days

Training environment

Practical Outcomes will meet the following minimum training environment standards:

- Comply with all laws relevant to the operation of training premises including occupational health and safety, equal opportunity, anti harassment, privacy and fire safety regulations.
- Ensure that training premises are of adequate size and have adequate heating, cooling, lighting and ventilation.
- Ensure that training facilities, equipment and other resource materials are adequate for the Scope of Registration and are maintained in good order and repair.

Awards and Statements of Attainment

Awards and Statements of Attainment will be issued to students who satisfactorily complete courses or units within the Scope of Registration in the form of certificates containing the following information:

- name and registered number of the provider as shown on the Certificate of Registration;
- name of the person receiving the qualification;
- name of the course or units as shown on the Scope of Registration;
- a certificate number
- the Nationally Recognised Training Logo
- the appropriate Australian Qualifications Framework statement
- identification of the recognition authority
- date issued; and
- authorised signatory of the Registered Training Organisation

The Registered Training Organisation will identify units of competency achieved on any certification issued in relation to courses based on national competency standards.

The Registered Training Organisation will accept and mutually recognise the qualifications and Statements of Attainment awarded by any other registered training organisation.

Marketing and recruitment

Practical Outcomes will:

- Market courses within the Scope of Registration with integrity, accuracy and professionalism, avoiding vague and ambiguous statements. No false or misleading comparisons are to be drawn with any other provider or course.
- Not state or imply that courses other than those within the Scope of Registration are recognised by the registering authority.
- Recruit students at all times in an ethical and responsible manner consistent with the requirements of courses.
- Ensure that application and selection processes are explicit and defensible and equity and access principles are observed.

Student information

Practical Outcomes will advise prospective students of.

- its Scope of Registration;
- application processes and selection criteria;
- fees and costs involved in undertaking training;
- fee refund policy;
- qualifications to be issued on completion or partial completion of courses;
- competencies to be achieved during training;
- assessment procedures including recognition of prior learning;
- literacy and numeracy requirements
- complaint procedure;
- staff responsibilities
- facilities and equipment; and
- student support/welfare services.

Access and Equity Operating Procedures

Practical Outcomes:

- Aims to ensure that access to employment and training is available, regardless of gender, socioeconomic background, disability, ethnic origin, age or race.
- Training services are delivered in a non-discriminatory, open and respectful manner.
- Staff members are appropriately skilled in access and equity issues, including cultural awareness and sensitivity to the requirements of clients with special needs.
- Facilities are updated to provide reasonable access to clients of all levels of mobility, and physical and intellectual capacity.
- Conduct client selection for training opportunities in a manner that includes and reflects the diverse client population.
- Actively encourages the participation of clients from traditionally disadvantaged groups and specifically offers assistance to those most disadvantaged.
- Provides culturally inclusive language, literacy and numeracy advice and assistance that assist clients in meeting personal training goals.
- Is accountable for its performance in adhering to the principles of this policy, and welcomes feedback as part of its continuous quality improvement system.
- Staff and students are required to comply with access and equity requirements at all times.

If you have any suggestions as to how we can improve our performance with respect to access and equity, or if you would like further information on anything included in this policy, please contact the Welfare and Guidance Officer.

Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour requires the following rights to be respected and adhered to at all times by students.

- The right to be treated with respect from others, to be treated fairly and without discrimination, regardless of religious, cultural, racial and sexual differences, age, disability or socio-economic status
- The right to be free from all forms of intimidation
- The right to work in a safe, clean, orderly and cooperative environment
- The right to have personal property (including computer files and student work) and the property of Practical Outcomes protected from damage or other misuse
- The right to have any disputes settled in a fair and rational manner (this is accomplished by the Complaint Procedure)
- The right to work and learn in a supportive environment without interference from others
- The right to express and share ideas and to ask questions
- The right to be treated with politeness and courteously at all times

For non-compliance with the Code of Conduct the following three-step procedure for discipline will be followed:

Step 1 - A member of the Practical Outcomes staff will contact students in the first instance to discuss the issue or behaviour & to determine how the issue might be rectified. This meeting and its outcomes will be documented, signed by all parties and included on the student's personal file.

Step 2 - Where the issue or behaviour continues, students will be invited for a personal interview with the Director to discuss this issue further. This meeting and its outcomes will be documented, signed by all parties and included on the student's personal file.

Step 3 - Should the issue or behaviour continue the student will be provided with a final warning in writing & a time frame in which to rectify the issue. A copy of this letter will be included on the student's personal file.

After the three steps in the discipline procedure have been followed, should the issue or behaviour still continue, training services will be withdrawn and the student will be notified in writing that their enrolment has been terminated.

At any stage of this procedure students are able to access the Complaint Procedure to settle any disputes that may arise.

Recognition of Competency

Skills can be developed through formal education and training, through work experience or training or through life experiences.

There are times where a student will enrol to undertake accredited training after working for an extensive period of time in the industry or whom have worked in a similar industry. They may have life experience and informal learning experiences which contribute to them having established skills and knowledge applicable to the course they are enrolling in.

Students who believe they already have some of the competencies (skills and knowledge applicable to one or more unit of competency) in the course may apply for Recognition of competency.

The recognition process we use has been developed by the Community Services & Health Industry training board and has been validated and approved by professionals from the children's services industry. In essence it is observation and interview driven and allows for the student to be able to talk through and demonstrate the range of skills as outlined in the competencies.

The aim of the process is to minimise the cost and time to applicants whilst retaining the integrity required by the AQTF to recognize competencies in accordance with the requirements of Training Package.

The process can occur at any time during the course of study however it is best to commence this process at enrolment to ensure the training is undertaken in the most suitable manner for the student. As a result the RC process may allow the student to study less units of competency than the original course outline.

Application for recognition can be made prior to enrolment however fees do apply. Information on our recognition process will be provided during orientation.

Credit Transfer

The qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by any other Registered Training Organisation must be recognised. This means that you will be granted exemptions in a course as a consequence of having completed the same unit(s) with another Registered Training Organisation.

Students are asked to have this material present upon enrolment to assist in planning of their training needs. As a result the credit transfer process may allow the student to study less units of competency than the original course outline.

It is a requirement that we verify the Award or Statement of Attainment prior to granting credit transfers. These copies will be kept in your student files.

Assessment Policy

What is competency?

Competency involves the specification of skills and knowledge and their application to a particular standard of performance required in the workplace. Aspects of work performance included in this concept involve:

- Performance at an acceptable level of technical skill;
- Organising one's tasks;
- Responding and reacting appropriately when things go wrong; and
- Transferring skills and knowledge to new situations and contexts.

Assessment procedures

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on the extent and nature of performance and other requirements, as described in a set of standards, or learning outcomes, resulting in a judgement of whether or not competency has been demonstrated.

Effective and objective assessment is the key to the successful implementation of competency standards in the workplace and in education. This is the judgement of performance and knowledge against the relevant industry competency standards.

Assessment is carried out by the comparison of a candidate's evidence of skills and knowledge, against the requirements of the Standards.

In general terms assessment during training will involve:

- Oral responses to questions – involving the trainer / assessor asking questions general undertaken in the workplace.
- Observation of performance in the workplace or in computer laboratories.
- Portfolio of evidence.
- Written response to questions, assignments and case studies – these are provided in the student manual. Students are generally provided with a range of options for the method of answering the questions in relation to the manner in which they best learn and apply themselves.
- Students will be given advance warning of the time and form of any assessment and will not be expected to undertake an assessment they have not prepared for.
- Students will be given an opportunity for at least one reassessment for any competencies not achieved on the first attempt. In some of the courses competencies will be assessed on-going for the duration of the course.

Underlying principles of assessment

For an effective assessment system in a competency environment, some basic principles must apply:

Validity

The assessments actually assess what they claim to assess and what they have been designed to assess.

Validity of assessment is achieved when:

- Assessors are fully aware of what is to be assessed, as indicated by the standards of competence, including clearly defined performance criteria
- Appropriate evidence is collected from activities that can be clearly related to the units of competency.

Authenticity

- The evidence collected is authentic - that is, it is actually derived from valid sources and is directly attributable to the individual.

Reliability

Reliable assessment uses methods and procedures that ensure that the competency standards are interpreted and applied consistently from person to person and from context to context.

The following are important to ensure that assessment produces consistent outcomes:

- Clear, unambiguous, well-documented assessment procedures and competency standards;
- Clear, consistent and specific assessment criteria;
- Effectively trained, briefed and monitored assessors;
- Adequate assessors across industries and a hierarchy of assessment which ensures a quality outcome; and
- Assessment is carried out within a system flexible enough to cope with multiple and diverse forms of evidence.

Consistency

The assessment system must ensure that evidence collected and provided for judgement is consistent across the range, without undue reliance on any small number of select workplace contexts or projects.

Currency

Under an effective system, assessment evaluates whether or not the individual's skills and knowledge are current and can be applied in today's workplace.

As a general rule, competencies that have not been demonstrated within the past 3 years are not usually accepted as "current". However, an assessor, under some circumstances may make exceptions to the specified period.

There may be specific situations where individual skills have not been directly applied for a longer period, but these skills are in fact still current for the individual. In cases such as this, evidence from earlier periods may be admissible, and assessed for currency, within an appropriately flexible assessment system.

Sufficiency

Evidence of competency should be sufficient to cover all the elements, performance criteria and required range of variables in the standards against which assessment is to be carried out.

A tendency of many candidates is to provide more (or less) evidence than is actually required to prove competency against the standards. An effective assessment system ensures that candidates are clearly advised regarding the amount and form of evidence, which is sufficient to prove competency. This should avoid the situation where masses of evidence are provided, requiring assessors to spend more time than necessary per candidate, or too little evidence, making it difficult to judge competence.

Flexibility

Every piece of candidate evidence is unique. Each candidate will identify and develop his or her own specific set of evidence to prove competency against the standards. This set will be based on the workplace experience of the candidate and will comprise diverse types and forms of relevant and appropriate evidence.

Assessors must be capable of taking a flexible approach to the assessment of evidence. Clearly, this approach must always take time and cost into account - both to ensure the best use of assessor time and from the viewpoint of the candidate and his or her employer.

An assessment system must evaluate the scope of knowledge and skills covered by the criteria - both performance (skill) and underpinning knowledge & understanding.

Fairness and Equity

An assessment system and its processes must not disadvantage any person or organisation. All eligible candidates must be guaranteed access to assessment, which does not discriminate on any basis. Assessment guidelines must include an approach for working with candidates who have special needs.

To achieve these principles, the assessment system must exhibit the following characteristics:

- The standards, assessment processes and all associated information are straight forward and understandable;
- The characteristics of potential candidates are identified, to enable all potential assessment issues to be identified and catered for;
- The chosen processes and materials within the system of assessment do not disadvantage candidates;
- An appropriate and effective review and dispute resolution mechanism is in place to investigate, examine and redress any issue of unfairness or disadvantage identified, involving access, assessment, certification or any other related issue; and
- Where potential disadvantages are identified, the system is amended to avoid or counter them, or appropriate steps taken to overcome them including reassessment if required.

Assessors

The role of an assessor is to objectively assess and judge a candidate's evidence against a set of standards.

In order to do this effectively, an assessor must have a sound knowledge of, and be skilled in, the relevant industry area. In addition, the assessor must have acknowledged competency in assessment itself and hold an appropriate Workplace Assessor qualification or equivalent.

An assessor must:

- Interpret and understand the criteria;
- Ensure that evidence meets the standards;
- Ensure that evidence is valid, authentic, reliable, consistent, current and sufficient; and
- Use expertise to make fair and objective judgements.

The training and ongoing professional development of assessors must include such areas as:

- Roles, responsibilities and ethics;
- Procedural and administrative duties;
- Performance and knowledge evidence gathering and presentation;
- Interpretation and usage of standards;
- Selecting and using appropriate methods of assessment; and
- Requirements regarding processing and recording of results, progress and feedback.

It is imperative that assessors at all times understand and practise fair, objective, unbiased and flexible assessment processes.

Candidates with Special Needs

One fundamental principle of an assessment system is that each candidate must have access to fair and open assessment. Candidates with special needs should be offered the same opportunities as any other candidate.

As special needs extend to more than identified physical or learning difficulties, an assessor will also need to consider the best approach when dealing with candidates with needs such as low literacy, lack of confidence or non-English speaking background.

An assessor must take special needs into consideration from the planning stage onwards and adopt particular assessment methods as appropriate. Depending on any specification given in the standards, the assessor may be able to accept alternative evidence from a candidate with special needs.

If there is uncertainty, the assessor should call on other assessors or a verifier for assistance and guidance, as required. In such a case, the situation must be fully documented, with appropriate feedback being provided to the candidate at all stages.

Feedback

Where students are assessed as not competent they will be provided with additional feedback on their assessment outcome to assist in achieving the required performance standard on reassessment.

Reassessment

Students who are dissatisfied with their assessment outcome may apply for reassessment by contacting their trainer/assessor or follow the complaint procedure if necessary.

Privacy Policy

Personal information is collected solely for the purpose of operating as a Registered Training Organisation under the Australian Quality Training Framework administered by the Victorian Government who is the registering authority.

The requirements of the registering authority may require the release of your personal information for the purposes of audit or for collection of data by Commonwealth and State Government departments and agencies.

It is a requirement of the Australian Qualifications Framework that students can access personal information held by the college and may request corrections to information that is incorrect or out of date.

Please apply to the office if you wish to view your own records.

Information privacy principles

The following information privacy principals are followed by this organisation.

Collection of information

We collect only personal information that is necessary for our organisation to meet its professional and legal obligations. We advise individuals that they can gain access to personal information.

Use and disclosure of information

We use and disclose personal information only for the primary purpose for which it was collected or a secondary purpose the person would reasonably expect. Use for secondary purposes will have the written consent of the person.

Data quality

We audit and review data to make sure personal information is accurate, complete and up to date.

Information security

We take reasonable steps to protect personal information from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

Openness

Our documents clearly expressed policies on management of personal information, and provide the policies to anyone who asks.

Access and correction of information

Individuals have a right to seek access to their personal information and make corrections. The office will handle access to files and correction to incorrect or out-of-date information.

Student Complaints and Appeals

Students who are concerned about the conduct of our services are encouraged to attempt to resolve their concerns using this complaint procedure.

Information on our complaint policy and procedure can be found on our website. All complaints will be managed fairly and equitably, professionally and confidentially in order to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

We will attempt to resolve any complaints fairly and equitably within five (5) working days.

Students may raise any matters of concern relating to training delivery and assessment, the quality of the teaching, student amenities, discrimination, sexual harassment and other issues that may arise.

We will encourage the parties to approach a complaint with an open view and to attempt to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation. Where a complaint cannot be resolved through discussion and conciliation, we acknowledge the need for an appropriate external and independent agent to mediate between the parties.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Employment, Training and Tertiary Education has the power under legislation to suspend or cancel the registration of a provider or a course.

Students may make a complaint to the Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Employment, Training and Tertiary Education by contacting officers of the Office of Employment, Training and Tertiary Education, telephone 9637-2762.