



**National
Institute of
Construction
Skills**

Apprentice STUDENT HANDBOOK

For more information on NICS policies and procedures, refer to the
Student Handbook General



NATIONALLY RECOGNISED
TRAINING

**National Institute of Construction Skills (NICS)
RTO Number: 30048**

WELCOME TO NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CONSTRUCTION SKILLS

The Master Painters, Decorators & Signwriters Association of Queensland Union of Employers is now trading as National Institute of Construction Skills (NICS).

The team is proud to welcome you on board. We trust that you will find the time we share challenging, rewarding and fun.

Our aim is to equip you with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to carry out your duties and responsibilities in the workplace. We will also offer you an opportunity to build your confidence and motivation with a view to prepare you for a competitive market.

During your time with us, you will be exposed to a variety of experiences and challenges. Our courses provide a mix of theory and practical skills training.

Upon enrolling, you have rights and responsibilities, most of which are outlined in this handbook. You are welcome to ask us for further information if you have questions, which are not covered in this handbook.

As a registered training organisation, National Institute of Construction Skills is responsible for compliance with the 2025 RTO Standards which is regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

Therefore, we provide the highest quality training to ensure that you are fully equipped with exceptional knowledge and skills to be an ambassador for the painting industry.

The quality of your experience at National Institute of Construction Skills depends largely on your motivation and commitment. We feel that we have in place an ideal learning environment.

Meet the challenge and we will do our very best to ensure that the benefit to you exceeds your expectations.

Regards,

Chris Munday

President

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Training and Assessment

Training and Assessment Standards

How Training is Delivered?

NICS delivers training using a combination of learning methods depending on the qualification or unit being completed. These methods may include:

- Online learning through the NICS Online learning system
- Face-to-face training sessions
- On-site training in the workplace under supervision of a qualified employer or supervisor
- Practical training and assessment activities supervised by a NICS Trainer
- Practical training conducted at a suitably equipped training centre

Most theory learning is completed through the NICS Online student portal, which allows students to access training materials, complete learning activities and record workplace tasks as they progress.

NICS contains the apprentice's training record book, Workplace Activity Recorder. Training, tasks and activities conducted onsite by the workplace supervisor must be documented by the apprentice in the Workplace Activity Recorder on an ongoing basis. Refer to Training Plans and Training Records for further information.

In some situations, training may also take place at a training centre or at the student's workplace using NICS training equipment or mobile training facilities.

Some units must be completed face-to-face for safety reasons, such as CPCWHS1001 Prepare to Work Safely in the Construction Industry (White Card).

NICS Online and Workplace Training Records

Within NICS Online students will also complete their Workplace Activity Recorder, which acts as a training record book. This allows students to record:

- Workplace learning activities
- Practical skills completed on the job
- Training tasks completed under supervision
- Both formal and informal workplace learning

Students should update this record regularly to reflect the work they are completing during their apprenticeship.

A NICS Trainer will review the Workplace Activity Recorder periodically to monitor progress and ensure the training plan remains suitable.

For more detailed information on our training and assessment practices, please refer to the NICS_08_002 Student Handbook_General.

[NICS - Student Handbooks](#)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) allows students to receive credit for skills and knowledge they already have through:

- Previous training
- Work experience
- Life experience

Students who believe they may already have the required skills should contact the NICS administration team. RPL applications should be submitted within the first 90 days of enrolment so that students do not complete training unnecessarily.

To apply for RPL, students may be required to:

- Submit evidence of previous work or training
- Participate in a competency discussion with a trainer
- Provide supporting documentation from employers

Training Plans and Training Records

During the enrolment process, the training plan provides a structure for the delivery of the qualification and enables all parties to record the progress of the apprentice through their training.

At the start of the apprenticeship, a NICS representative (usually the apprentice's nominated trainer) will negotiate a training plan with the apprentice and their employer. A training plan will be developed and agreed to by:

- The student (apprentice)
- The employer
- NICS

The training plan outlines:

- Units of competency to be completed
- The structure of training delivery
- How progress will be monitored

Training Plans must be negotiated and signed by all parties within 90 days of commencement of the training contract and issued to the apprentice and the employer within 14 days of signing. The Training Plan is contained in NICS Online and negotiated and signed at the time of enrolment. Both the employer and the apprentice will have ongoing access to the training plan throughout the duration of the apprenticeship through NICS Online. Any updates to the training plan will require re-negotiation and re-signing.

A training record book is built directly into NICS Online, the Workplace Activity Recorder. The purpose of the training record is to enable the apprentice to record all on the job training including:

- Formal
- Informal
- Supervised learning (under the direction of the supervisor) – theory and practical

It is recommended that the Workplace Activity Recorder be completed at regular intervals to detail activities and tasks completed on the job. Each unit of competency attracts minimum activity numbers and durations to be undertaken and recorded.

Workplace Activity Recorders will be reviewed at minimum of three (3) monthly intervals by a NICS trainer. This may be done over the telephone or on site. The purpose of reviewing the Workplace Activity Recorder is to ensure that it is being maintained with the apprentice's progress and that there are no changes to be made to the apprenticeship. For example, changing an elective unit of competency which will result in the negotiation of and signing of a new training plan.

Students and employers will be provided with full training on the use of NICS Online during the enrolment process including completion of the work activities in the Workplace Activity Recorder.

Enrolment and participation in training

User Choice Funding

NICS delivers apprenticeship training under the Queensland Government User Choice Program through a contract with the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training (DYJESBT).

The User Choice program provides a public funding contribution towards the cost of training and assessment for eligible Queensland apprentices. While DYJESBT funds a significant portion of the training program costs, eligible apprentices and trainees are required to pay a contribution toward the costs of their training.

More information about the program is available from the Queensland Government website.

User Choice program, go to <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/training-careers/incentives/userchoice>.

Course Enrolment process

Course enrolments are normally completed during the Pre Enrolment and induction sessions conducted at the NICS Salisbury campus, unless other arrangements are agreed upon with the student, employer and the NICS Admin team.

During enrolment students will:

- Complete an online enrolment form (online)
- Participate in undertaking a short literacy and numeracy assessment (LLN)
- Provide evidence of eligibility for funding - Taking copies of eligibility evidence (see below lists) for the purposes of subsidised training
- Participate in full NICS induction sessions
- Sign a training plan
- Sign a contribution fee agreement
- Negotiating (with the apprentice's employer) and signing a formal training plan

Students will also receive access to NICS Online and be introduced to the key information in the Student Handbook. The enrolment process will be completed face to face and, directly through NICS Online. The duration of time required to complete this process will significantly depend on the preparation work completed by the Trainer, Student and employer, enrolments cannot be successfully completed and processed through the NICS systems until all documentation and information has been provided to the NICS admin and in some instances the NICS compliance team. Failure to provide requested information in a timely manner may result in a delay of a student's enrolment being processed. The NICS Admin and Compliance team suggest that students frequently check their emails and mobile phones as emails, SMS and phone calls will likely occur from the teams during the enrolment process.

Entry requirements

For a student to enrol in an apprenticeship funded through the **User Choice program**, students must provide evidence that they:

- Are at least 15 years of age
- Are an Australian or New Zealand citizen
- Reside in Queensland

Students must provide documents confirming eligibility:

Eligibility evidence includes: (one document from each category must be supplied)

Queensland residency

- Driver's licence, (the address on your licence must match the address on your enrolment form) or
- Utility bill showing current address

Evidence of citizenship (Australian or New Zealand (living in Australia for at least 6 months)):

- Copy of passport; or
- Copy of citizenship papers (if born overseas); or
- Copy of birth certificate; or
- Green Medicare card

Citizenship

- Passport, or
- Birth certificate, or
- Citizenship documents, or
- Medicare card

Date of birth

- Birth certificate, passport or driver's licence

During the induction process, apprentices will be taken through the key components of this Student Handbook and the Student Handbook General and provided with access to their account in NICS Online. It is important that all students, Parents / Guardians are aware of all of the conditions outlined in this document.

Employer Workplace Assessment

During the enrolment process, the NICS representative will also complete an Employer Resource Assessment (ERA) to confirm that the student's potential employer:

- Can provide the range of work necessary to complete the apprenticeship
- Has the necessary facilities and equipment to provide on-the-job training
- Has sufficient suitably qualified supervisors to provide supervision for the apprentice

As part of the enrolment process, NICS will confirm that the employer can support the apprentice's training by ensuring the workplace:

- Provides the range of work needed to complete the qualification
- Has appropriate equipment and facilities
- Has qualified supervisors available

If the workplace cannot provide some training activities, NICS may organise training at NICS training facilities or other approved training locations.

NICS also operates mobile training facilities to support apprentices in remote areas or workplaces that do not have access to specialised equipment.

Evidence of the qualifications of supervisors must be provided at the time of the ERA being completed. Where an employer does not hold qualifications relevant to the apprenticeship being undertaken by the student, additional discussions and checks will need to be conducted to ensure that the employer / supervisor has the skills, knowledge, understanding and ability to supervise a NICS student in that environment.

Failure to provide evidence of this may result in NICS supporting the student in seeking and securing alternative training options.

Where an employer does not have access to the facilities, equipment or range of work for a specific unit of competency, alternative training will be organised using the NICS purpose-built facilities at Salisbury and Caboolture or via other training located facilities arranged by NICS. NICS has a mobile training facility capable of accessing our apprentices in remote communities or without access to certain equipment or environments as a direct result of their location.

Fees and charges policy information

Student Contribution Fees

NICS must charge and collect contribution fees from each apprentice enrolled in a qualification unless eligible for exemptions. The charges apply to all units of competency delivered for the qualification in which they are enrolled.

Under the User Choice Program, apprentices are required to contribute toward the cost of training.

The current contribution fee is \$1.60 per nominal hour per unit of competency. This contribution fee is subject to change on 1 January of each year by the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training.

If the fee increases during your enrolment, you will be advised in advance prior to 1 January in the following calendar year when the new contribution rate will come in affect.

Contribution fees apply to:

- Units completed through training
- Units completed through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Contribution fees do not apply to units granted through direct credit transfer.

Contribution fees may be paid by:

- The apprentice, or
- The employer on behalf of the apprentice

Invoices must generally be paid within 7 days.

Contribution fees may be paid on behalf of the apprentice by their employer. Should the employer choose to pay the fees on behalf of the apprentice, the employer will be required to sign a declaration to confirm such arrangements.

Information on student contribution fees is retained in MPA Online. During the enrolment and induction process, students are provided with an electronic copy of the contribution fees applicable to their course before their enrolment is finalised and confirmed.

Fee Free Apprenticeships

If a student is under 25 years of age (you must be under 25 at the time and date of training commencement) and are eligible for an apprenticeship, the Queensland Government may cover the cost of training, requiring the student to make no contribution fee at time of enrolment.

Students must still meet all **User Choice eligibility requirements**.

Billing contribution fees

As mentioned above, employers may pay the apprentice contribution fees on behalf of their apprentice. If the employer is paying the fees, all invoices will be made out to the employer, and additional information may be requested from the NICS Admin or NICS Finance team to facilitate this. If the apprentice (student) is paying the contribution fees, then the invoice will be made out to the apprentice.

At the time of enrolment, an individual invoice will be raised for the unit of competency, CPCCWHS2001 Apply WHS requirements, policies, and procedures in the construction industry.

NICS has identified that this unit of competency is one of the most critical to be completed at the commencement of training and, is a pre-requisite to several units of competency in the qualifications offered under the User Choice program. This unit must be successfully completed before the apprentice can officially progress.

Invoices for contribution fees must be paid within seven (7) days. Where invoices are not paid by the due date and within 48 hours of the invoice becoming overdue, NICS will send a reminder with the fees due and payable within 7 days to the appropriate persons. Where the fees are not brought up to date within this timeframe, the apprentice's enrolment will be suspended and no further access to NICS Online will be provided until all fees in arrears are paid in full.

The employer must indicate and confirm at the time of enrolment that he/she will be paying the initial (CPCCWHS2001) and ongoing contribution fees on behalf of the apprentice.

Further contribution fees will be invoiced for a subsequent unit or group of units when the apprentice has successfully completed a unit or group of units of competency. Invoices must be paid before the apprentice is able to access the learning and theory assessment.

Refunds

As all apprentice contribution fees are invoiced at the commencement of each unit of competency, NICS will issue a refund on a proportionate basis. An apprentice (or their employer, depending on who is responsible for paying the invoices) may request a proportionate refund of the contribution fees in the event that they cancel or withdraw their enrolment.

Refunds will be paid to the original payment method.

Contribution fee exemptions

Some students may qualify for a full or partial fee exemption,

Full Contribution fee exemptions

The following circumstances will constitute a full contribution fee exemption (i.e., no contribution fees will be payable):

1. If the time of Training commencement, the apprentice is still attending high school (i.e., a school-based apprentice)
2. If at the time of commencement, the apprentice completed year 12 in the preceding year.
3. If at time of commencement, a school-based apprentice has converted to a full time or part time apprenticeship
4. Circumstances whereby the payment of contribution fees will cause extreme financial hardship to the apprentice
5. The apprentice transitions to NICS within 12 months of completing year 12

Evidence must be presented to confirm eligibility for exemption (in the case of 1, NICS will generally be involved in the enrolment process with your school).

Partial Exemption – Tuition Fees

NICS will not charge more than 25% of the tuition fee where the participant falls into one or more of the following exemptions categories;

- (a) The student was or will be under 17 years of age at the end of February in the year in which NICS provides training and the participant has not completed year 12.
- (b) The student holds a health care card or pensioner card issued under Commonwealth law or is the partner of a dependent of a person who holds a health care card or pensioner concession card and the student is named on the card.
- (c) The student issues NICS with an official form under Commonwealth law confirming that the participant is a dependent, is entitled to concessions under a health care card; or
- (d) The Participant is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person (the apprentice must ensure this information is clearly identified on their enrolment form).

Financial Hardship

The collection of contribution fees from the apprentice are mandatory under the Queensland Government User Choice Program. However, we understand that in some cases, apprentices may be facing financial hardship due to various circumstances. NICS may provide a student with an alternative option and enter into a financial arrangement between NICS, the apprentice (student) and their employer to assist in the assurance of these fees being paid and allowing the student to continue to progress through their apprenticeship.

To demonstrate extreme financial hardship, apprentices will be required to present a budget of their expenses based on their income. NICS will consider all data in the budget and may request further evidence to substantiate the details. NICS encourages and is required by legislative requirements to, wherever possible, ensure all apprentices contribute towards the cost of their training.

NICS will work with apprentices under these circumstances to implement payment arrangements.

Should you wish to discuss your circumstances further, NICS recommends firstly discussing your circumstances with your trainer and then they can arrange a private discussion with the relevant NICS management.

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Lauree Skene	RTO Compliance Coordinator	Co Author	07/01/2026
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Seven (7)	06/10/2025 L. Skene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision of document using compliance recommended template etc. Implemented relevant 2025 RTO standards and referencing Included hyperlinks to User choice and National Child Safe Principles 2026 as applicable Implemented reviewed document naming convention and amendments to document format.
Six (6)	30/09/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of document and implementation of changes recommended by Trainers & Assessors

Distribution List

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