



**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**



**National  
Institute of  
Construction  
Skills**

## **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.

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 skill training.

We will also offer you an opportunity to build your confidence and motivation with a view to prepare you for a competitive market.

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 Standards for RTOs 2015 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 exceed your expectations.

Regards,

**Chris Munday  
President**

# Contents

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TRAINING PLANS AND TRAINING RECORDS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ENROLMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FEES AND CHARGES POLICY INFORMATION</b>	<b>6</b>

# Training and Assessment

## Training and Assessment Standards

All training offered to apprentices by NICS may use one or more of the following methodologies depending on the qualification or unit of competency being undertaken:

- Online learning
- Face to face learning
- On-site learning under the direct supervision of their qualified employer
- Practical on-site learning and assessment activities under the supervision of a NICS Trainer (negotiated with the apprentice and his/her employer)
- Practical activities at a suitably equipped training centre under the supervision of a NICS Trainer

All formal learning will be undertaken in an online learning environment, NICS Online. Other formal face to face training and learning may be conducted on site using our mobile training facility or at a suitably equipped training centre if necessary and requested by the employer or student. This is with the exception of CPCCWHS1001 Prepare to work safely in the construction industry which must be undertaken in a face to face learning environment.

Apprentices will be provided with access to NICS online, our online learning management system. NICS contains the apprentice's training record book, Workplace Activity Recorder. Training and 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.

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

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) refers to the acknowledgement of pre-existing skills and knowledge as a result of formal training, work experience and/or life experience. If an apprentice believes they may be eligible for RPL, they must contact our administration team who will make the necessary arrangements.

Apprentices must seek RPL within the first 90 days of enrolment with NICS. Therefore, it is advantageous that applications for RPL are submitted as soon as practicable after enrolment to ensure that any units of competency are not completed unnecessarily.

Achieving RPL requires the submission of an application and submission of a range of evidence in support of any existing knowledge and skills. In addition, apprentices and their employers are required to participate in structured interviews (a competency conversation) to ascertain the level and depth of knowledge already possessed by the apprentice.

## Training Plans and Training Records

During the enrolment process, a NICS representative (usually the apprentice's nominated trainer) will negotiate a training plan with the apprentice and their employer. 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.

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. Apprentices must refer to the schedules at the rear of this handbook to confirm the **minimum** number of times the activities must be completed and over a minimum duration. Recording of activities for different units of competency can overlap.

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 holds a contract with the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) to deliver structured training programs for eligible apprentices and trainees in Queensland.

The User Choice program provides a public funding contribution towards the cost of training and assessment for eligible Queensland apprentices and trainees. While DESBT funds the majority of the training program costs, eligible apprentices and trainees are required to pay a contribution toward the costs of the training. Refer to Fees and Charges detailed further in this handbook.

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

### COURSE ENROLMENT

All course enrolments are conducted on induction days at the Salisbury campus (unless by other arrangements agreed between NICS and your employer). This will include:

- Completing an enrolment form (online)
- Participating in a brief and non-invasive literacy and numeracy assessment (online)
- Taking copies of eligibility evidence (see below) for the purposes of subsidised training
- Participating in a full induction
- Signing a contribution fee payment agreement
- Negotiating (with the apprentice's employer) and signing a formal training plan

The enrolment process will be completed face to face and, directly through NICS Online.

### Entry requirements

Students are required to provide evidence of eligibility when enrolling in an apprenticeship qualification funded under the User Choice Program. Eligibility requirements include:

- Over the age of 15 years
- Australian or New Zealand citizen
- Reside permanently in Queensland

Eligibility evidence includes:

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

Evidence of Queensland residency:

- Driver's Licence (the address on your licence must match the address on your enrolment form); or
- Utility bill in the apprentice's name showing the apprentice's 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

Evidence of date of birth:

- Birth certificate; or
- Driver's Licence (the address on your licence must match the address on your enrolment form); or
- Passport

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

During the enrolment process, the NICS representative will also complete an Employer Resource Assessment to confirm that the employer:

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

Evidence of the qualifications of supervisors must be provided at this time. Where an employer does not have access to the facilities, equipment or range of work, 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

### FEES AND OTHER CHARGES

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.

The contribution fee is calculated at \$1.60 per nominal hour for each unit of competency/module delivered and is charged at the commencement of each unit of competency or group of units. This fee is subject to change on 1 January of each year by the Department of 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.

The contribution fee also applies to each unit of competency achieved through Recognition of Prior Learning. The contribution fee does not apply to direct credit of units of competency/module.

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**

If you are under 25 and commence an eligible apprenticeship with NICS, the Queensland Government will cover the cost of your training. You must be under 25 at the time and date of commencement and commence, or be undertaking, your training between 1 January 2021 and 30 September 2022. This means that, providing you are eligible for user choice funding and under the age of 25 at the time of your enrolment, your contribution fees will be paid by the Queensland Government.

### **Billing contribution fees:**

An employer may pay the apprentice contribution fees on behalf of the apprentice. If the employer is paying the fees, all invoices will be made out to the employer. If the apprentice is paying the fees, the invoices will be made out to the apprentice.

At the time of enrolment, an invoice will be raised for CPCCWHS2001 Apply WHS requirements, policies, and procedures in the construction industry. This unit of competency must be completed before the apprentice can progress. NICS has identified this unit of competency as one of the most critical to be completed at the commencement of training and, is a pre-requisite to a number of units of competency in the qualifications offered under the User Choice program by NICS.

Invoices for contribution fees must be paid within 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. Where the fees are not brought up to date within this timeframe, the apprentice's enrolment will be suspended and no further access provided to NICS Online until all 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. However, 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.

All refunds will be made to the account or credit/debit card used to pay the fees.

## **Contribution fee exemptions**

### ***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 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 for 1, 2 and 4 above 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 exemption categories;

- (a) The participant 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 Participant 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 or is named on the card.
- (c) The participant 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 is completed on the 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 from time to time. Therefore, NICS may be able to enter into arrangements with apprentices and their employers to assist in the assurance that these fees are paid.

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 to, where possible, all apprentices make a contribution toward the cost of their training. Therefore, NICS will work with apprentices under these circumstances to implement payment arrangements. Contact Admin for an application form.



Complete this form and submit to NICS administration or your trainer as soon as your details change. This will ensure you receive your certification and any applicable refunds without delay.

## STUDENT CHANGE OF DETAILS NOTIFICATION

Surname:

First name:

Date of birth

USI

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Program of study

### Previous address and contact details

Address:

State

Postcode

Mobile Phone

Home Phone

Work Phone

Email

### New address and contact details

Address:

State

Postcode

Mobile Phone

Home Phone

Work Phone

Email

### Bank account details (for purposes of refund of CSW fees)

BSB

Bank account

Account number

Name

Signature

Date