

# National Institute of Financial Studies

*Promoting Educational Excellence*



**National Institute of Financial Studies**

**Student Information Booklet**

## Introduction

This information booklet is designed to provide you with information about the services provided by the National Institute of Financial Studies (NIFS) and our approach to providing you a safe, fair and supported environment to participate in training and assessment. This booklet does not provide you with specific information about a particular course offered by NIFS. This information is contained in the Course Brochure supplied separately.

## Our mission

NIFS's mission is to deliver quality training assessment that meets the needs of learners and industry.

## Our objectives

In recognition of this mission, our objectives are:

- **People.** We strive to attract, recruit and retain talented, competent and committed people. We promote excellent performance through leadership and professional development.
- **Safety and equality.** We are committed to providing an environment which is safe, equitable and which promotes a confident and productive training and assessment environment.
- **Integrity and ethics.** We conduct ourselves in accordance with shared and agreed standards of behaviour which holds ethical conduct and integrity as our highest priorities.
- **Quality committed.** We aspire to deliver consistent, high quality services and apply quality systems which support training and assessment excellence.
- **Learner centred.** We thrive on providing training and assessment that is learner centred and which supports lifelong learning. We respect our clients and strive to attract them time after time through high quality training and assessment experiences.
- **Industry engagement.** We recognise the value of industry engagement as the driving force in shaping our training and assessment strategies. We deliver training and assessment services which are founded on industry needs and expectations.

## Our expectation of you

NIFS expects you:

- To contribute to learning in a harmonious and positive manner irrespective of gender, race, sexual preference, political affiliation, marital status, disability or religious belief.
- To comply with the rules and regulations of NIFS.
- To be honest and respectful, which includes not falsifying work or information and not conducting yourself in any way that may cause injury or offence to others.
- To be responsible for your own learning and development by participating actively and positively and by ensuring that you maintain progress with learning modules.
- To monitor your own progress by ensuring that assessment deadlines are observed.
- To utilise facilities and NIFS publications with respect and to honour our copyrights and prevent our publication from being distributed to unauthorised persons.
- To respect other students and NIFS staff members and their right to privacy and confidentiality.

## Your safety

NIFS is committed to providing you a safe environment in which to participate in training and assessment. The following guidelines are provided as a basis for safe practice in the training environment:

- Know and observe details of emergency response and evacuation plans;
- Do not undertake activities which may cause injury to self or others;
- Be responsible for your own actions;
- No smoking at the training and assessment facilities or offices;
- Report all potential hazards, accidents and near misses to the RTO staff;
- No consumption of alcohol within training and assessment facilities or during the conduct of training and assessment;
- Keep training and assessment areas neat and tidy at all times;

- Seek assistance if you volunteer to lift items e.g. move furniture in a training area; and
- Observe hygiene standards particularly in eating and bathroom areas.

### **Electrical equipment**

- Electrical equipment that is not working should be reported to RTO staff.
- Electrical work should only be performed by appropriately licensed or trained personnel. Students, trainers and assessors should not undertake any task related to fixing electrical equipment such as lighting or electrical training aids.

### **Fire safety**

- NIFS will undertake to communicate the procedures involved in evacuation and the location of fire equipment to students at each facility for each training and assessment event; and to users of the office at least twice each year.
- All users of a training and assessment facility need to be familiar with the location of all EXITS and fire extinguishers. Users will consult available maps to determine location.
- It is the user's responsibility to understand fire drill procedures displayed around the premises.
- Users are asked to attend any sessions on fire safety procedures and the use of fire safety devices.

### **First aid**

- Provision for first aid facilities are available where training is delivered.
- All accidents must be reported to staff.
- The accident and any aid administered must be recorded by staff involved.

### **Computer facilities**

- Extended periods of work with computers can result in general fatigue and eye strain. Repetitive tasks and incorrect posture will result in consistent aches and pains.
- Current occupational health and safety guidelines indicate that people working for long periods at computers should organise their work so as to allow a five to ten minute rest every hour. This rest should include a change of position and stretching exercises as appropriate.

- Posture can be improved by adjusting chair height so that the operator's feet are comfortably placed on the floor (or footrest) and your arms are at an approximately 90-degree angle.
- The screen should be positioned to avoid reflection from lights and windows and at a suitable distance so that it can be easily read.

### **Lifting**

- Students, trainers and assessors are encouraged not to lift anything related to the training and assessment provided by NIFS unless they do so voluntarily and taking all responsibility for any injury caused.
- Never attempt to lift anything that is beyond your capacity.
- Always bend the knees and keep the back straight when picking up items.
- If you have experienced back problems in the past do not attempt to lift heavy objects at all. Ask someone else to do it for you.

### **Work and study areas**

- Always ensure that all work areas are clean and clear of clutter so as to avoid the danger of accident by tripping or falling over.
- Place all rubbish in the bins provided.
- Ensure that kitchen bench spaces are left clean and tidy and that all dishes are washed.
- Do not leave tea towels or any cleaning cloths in a bundle on the bench tops or draped near any bin.
- Do not sit or climb on any desks or tables.

### **Your equity**

NIFS is committed to ensuring that the training and assessment environment is free from discrimination and harassment. All NIFS staff members (including contractors) are aware that discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances. In the event that discrimination and harassment is found to have occurred disciplinary action will be taken against any staff member who breaches this policy. Suspected criminal behaviour will be reported to police authorities immediately. Students should expect fair and friendly behaviour from NIFS staff members and we apply complaint handling procedures advocated by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).

Students who feel that they have been discriminated against or harassed should report this information to a staff member of NIFS that they feel they can trust. This will initiate a complaints handling procedure which will be fair and transparent and will protect your rights as a complainant. Alternatively, if a student wishes to report an instance of discrimination or harassment to an agency external to NIFS, they are advised to contact the HREOC Complaints Info-line on 1300 656 419.

### **Your privacy**

NIFS takes the privacy of students very seriously and complies with all legislative requirements. These include the Privacy Act 1988 and National Privacy Principles (2001).

Student information is only shared with external agencies such as registering authorities to meet compliance requirements as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). All information shared is kept in the strictest confidence by both parties and is available on request.

In some cases we are required by law to make student information available to others such as the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research. In all other cases NIFS will seek the written permission of the student for such disclosure.

### **Fees and refunds**

In accordance with applicable State legislation, NIFS is entitled to charge fees for items or services provided to students undertaking a course of study. These charges are generally for items such as course materials or text books, student services and training and assessment services.

### **Fees payable**

Fees are payable when the student has received notification of enrolment. Fees must be paid in full within 10 days of receiving an invoice from NIFS. NIFS may discontinue training

if fees are not paid as required. For a full list of current fees and charges please request a copy of NIFS schedule of fees and charges.

### **Student cancellation**

Students who cancel their enrolment part way through a training program must notify NIFS in writing at the soonest opportunity if consideration of fee reimbursement is required. Once NIFS is notified a refund will be issued for the component of training not commenced. NIFS is entitled to retain fees for any component of the course completed up until the point of notification by the student cancellation.

### **Replacement of text and training workbooks**

Students who require replacement of issued text or training workbooks will be liable for additional charges to cover the cost of replacement. For a full list of replacement charges please refer to the NIFS schedule of fees and charges.

### **Refunds**

Students who cancel their enrolment before the commencement of a training program will be entitled to a full refund of fees paid. Requests for refunds will be processed and transacted at the end of each month in which the cancellation notification was received.

Where a student has purchased a text or training workbooks and subsequently cancels, NIFS will not refund monies for the text unless a written request for a refund is received and NIFS is satisfied that the text is in as-new condition.

### **Payment method**

NIFS accepts payment for fees using:

- Credit Card
- Electronic Funds Transfer (account details available on request)
- Cheque (made payable to NIFS)

Payment in cash is discouraged.

### **Access to your records**

You are entitled to have access to your student file and learning and assessment records on request. You may require these to monitor your progress with training or simply to go back

and confirm something in a previous training module. Whilst these records will be retained by NIFS, you are welcome to have access anytime and request a copy. If you require access to your records, just ask your trainer and it will be organised immediately.

### **Our continuous improvement of services**

NIFS is committed to the continuous improvement of our training and assessment services, student services and management systems. Central to this commitment is our approach to continuous improvement and the procedures we apply to achieve systematic and sustained improvement.

### **Suggesting improvements**

The primary method of reporting opportunities for improvement by students is via the continuous improvement reporting procedure. This procedure allows any person to raise a Continuous Improvement Report for consideration by the Continuous Improvement Committee. Often these reports will be generated after an opportunity for improvement has been identified by a staff member or student. The Continuous Improvement Report template is available on request. Students are encouraged to provide feedback to NIFS so we can improve our services in the future.

### **Learner satisfaction survey**

At the completion of your training program, you will be issued with an AQTF Learner Satisfaction Survey. This is a nationally consistent survey tool which is designed to collect feedback from students about their experience with an RTO and in undertaking nationally recognised training. Your completion and return of this survey is important to NIFS for our ongoing improvement of services and to enable us to report this information to our registering authority. Your assistance in gathering this survey data is greatly appreciated.

### **Your language, literacy and numeracy skills**

Language, literacy and numeracy skills are critical to almost all areas of work. This is particularly true in many vocations where language, literacy and numeracy skills influence the performance of workplace tasks such as measuring, weighing and comprehending written work instructions.

To support this approach NIFS will:

- Assess a student’s language, literacy and numeracy skills during their enrolment to ensure they have adequate skills to complete the training;
- Support students during their study with training and assessment materials and strategies that are easily understood and suitable to the level of the workplace skills being delivered;
- Provide clear information to students about the detail of the language, literacy and numeracy assistance available;
- Refer students to external language, literacy and numeracy support services that are beyond the support available within NIFS and where this level of support is assessed as necessary; and
- Negotiate an extension of time to complete training programs if necessary.

### **Making complaints and appeals**

NIFS is committed to providing a fair and transparent complaints and appeals process that includes access to an independent external body if necessary.

#### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is negative feedback about services or staff which has not been resolved locally. A complaint may be received by NIFS in any form and does not need to be formally documented by the complainant in order to be acted on. Complaints may be made by any person but are generally made by students and/or employers.

#### **What is an appeal?**

An appeal is an application by a student for reconsideration of an unfavourable decision or finding during training and/or assessment. An appeal must be made in writing and specify the particulars of the decision or finding in dispute. Appeals must be submitted to NIFS within 28 days of the student being informed of the assessment decision or finding.

### **Early resolution or complaints and appeals**

In all cases, issues that arise during training and assessment that are the source of frustration or are in dispute should be resolved at the time they occur between the persons involved, where possible. Sometimes, it will not be possible and in these cases you are

encouraged to come forward and inform us of your concerns with the confidence that you will be treated fairly.

### **Complaint and appeals handling**

NIFS undertakes to apply the following principles to its complaints and appeals handling:

- A written record of all complaints and appeals is to be kept by NIFS including all details of lodgement, response and resolution.
- A complainant or person lodging an appeal is to be provided an opportunity to formally present his or her case at minimal or no cost.
- Each complainant or person lodging an appeal may be accompanied and/or assisted by a support person at any relevant meeting.
- The handling of a complaint or appeal is to commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint / appeal and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- The complainant or person lodging an appeal is to be provided a written statement of the outcome, including details of the reasons for the outcome.
- The complainant or person lodging an appeal is to have the opportunity for a person or a body that is independent of NIFS to review his or her complaint or appeal following the internal NIFS complaint or appeals process. It is noted that a review of findings by an independent person or body will generally only relate to the appeals process and is less likely to be required in complaints handling.
- NIFS shall maintain the enrolment of the complainant or person lodging an appeal during the complaint or appeals process.
- Decisions or outcomes of the complaint or appeals process that find in the favour of the student or otherwise shall be implemented immediately.
- Complaints and appeals are to be handled in the strictest of confidence. No NIFS representative is to disclose information to any person without the permission of the NIFS Chief Executive Officer. Decisions to release information to third parties are only to

be done after the complainant or person lodging the appeal has given permission for this to occur.

- Complaints and appeals are to be considered on the basis of procedural fairness and lead to opportunities for improvement as a Continuous Improvement Report.

### **Recognition of your existing skills and knowledge**

In accordance with the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework, NIFS provides the opportunity for students to apply to have prior learning recognised toward a qualification or units of competence for which they are enrolled.

### **What is recognition?**

Recognition involves the assessment of previously unrecognised skills and knowledge that an individual has achieved outside the formal education and training system. Recognition assesses this unrecognised learning against the requirements of a unit of competence, in respect of both entry requirements and outcomes to be achieved. By removing the need for duplication of learning, recognition encourages an individual to continue upgrading their skills and knowledge through structured education and training towards formal qualifications and improved employment outcomes. This has benefits for the individual and industry. Most importantly, it should be noted that recognition is just another form of assessment.

### **Recognition guidelines**

The following guidelines are to be followed when an application for recognition is received:

- Any student is entitled to apply for recognition in a course or qualification in which they are currently enrolled.
- Students may not apply for recognition for units of competence or a qualification which are not included in NIFS's scope of registration.
- Whilst students may apply for recognition at any time, they are encouraged to apply before commencing a training program. This will reduce unnecessary training and guide the student down a more efficient path to competence.
- Students who are currently enrolled in a training program are eligible to apply for recognition in that program at no additional charge.

- Assessment via recognition is to apply the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.
- Recognition may only be awarded for whole units of competence.

### Forms of evidence for recognition

Recognition acknowledges that workplace skills and knowledge may be gained through a variety of ways including both formal and informal learning or through work-based or life experience.

Like assessment, recognition is a process whereby evidence is collected and a judgement is made by an assessor or assessment team. The judgement is made on evidence provided by candidates of the skills and knowledge that they have previously learnt through work, study, life and other experiences, and that they are currently using. It also includes evidence to confirm a candidate's ability to adapt prior learning or current competence to the context of the intended workplace or industry.

Forms of evidence toward recognition may include:

- Work records;
- Records of workplace training;
- Assessments of current skills;
- Assessments of current knowledge;
- Third party reports from current and previous supervisors or managers;
- Evidence of relevant unpaid or volunteer experience;
- Examples of work products;
- Observation by an assessor in the workplace;
- Performance appraisal; or
- Duty statements.

Many of these forms of evidence would not be sufficient on their own. When combined together, with a number of evidence items, the candidate will start to provide a strong case

for competence. NIFS reserves the right to require candidates to undertake practical assessment activities of skills and knowledge in order to satisfy itself of a candidate's current competence.

### **Getting credit for your current competence**

NIFS acknowledges the requirement as an RTO to recognise the awards issued by other RTOs. This is limited to outcomes that are drawn from the national skills framework being units of competence awarded and accurately identified in statements of attainment and qualifications.

### **What is credit transfer?**

Credit transfer is the recognition of learning achieved through formal education and training. Under the Australian Quality Training Framework, qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any RTO are to be accepted and recognised by all other RTOs. Credit Transfer allows a student to be awarded a unit of competency/module based on successful completion of the unit which has been previously awarded.

### **Evidence requirements**

If you are seeking credit you are required to present your statement of attainment or qualification for examination by NIFS. These documents will provide the detail of what units of competence the applicant has been previously issued. You must provide satisfactory evidence that the statement of attainment or qualification is yours and that it has been issued by an Australian RTO. Statements of attainment or qualifications should be in the correct format as outlined in the Australian Qualifications Framework Implementation Handbook. You are required to submit copies only which are certified as a true copies of the original.

### **Credit transfer guidelines**

The following guidelines are to be followed in relation to credit transfers:

- Any student is entitled to apply for credit transfer in a course or qualification in which they are currently enrolled.
- Students may not apply for credit transfer for units of competence or qualification which are not included in NIFS scope of registration.

- Whilst students may apply for credit transfer at any time, they are encouraged to apply before commencing a training program. This will reduce unnecessary training and guide the student down a more efficient path to competence.
- The student does not incur any fees for credit transfer and NIFS does not receive any funding when credit transfer is granted.
- Credit transfer may only be awarded for whole units of competence. Where a mapping guide identifies a partial credit, this will not be considered for credit transfer and applicants will be advised to seek recognition.

### **Contact details**

PH: 1300 361 751

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