

# Learner HANDBOOK



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## ABOUT US

Indie College Australia is a not-for-profit Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that provides nationally accredited courses for both young people and adults. The College is dedicated to helping Learners overcome personal barriers that may have resulted in disengagement from education and training, by providing them with the necessary support and empowerment.

Indie's accredited courses focus on foundation level skills in the areas of language, literacy, and numeracy. These courses also encompass elements of life skills, employability skills, community engagement, goal setting, and project-based learning.

Indie College has a partnership with Indie School to deliver a Let's Go Re-engagement Program and Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools for Indie School Students.

Adult Learners can enrol in a Certificate in General Education for Adults (CGEA) at either an Introductory, Certificate I, or Certificate II level.

To assist Learners at each phase of their learning journey, Indie College employs Coaches (Trainers and Assessors), welfare support, administrative staff, and managers to provide support and celebrate achievements.

Indie College is an inclusive organisation that encourages enrolments from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities.

Indie College is currently operational in the following states: Victoria, New South Wales (NSW), Tasmania, Western Australia (WA), Queensland (QLD), and South Australia (SA).

For more information on site locations, please refer to the contact page on our website.

## **ABORIGINAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Indie College acknowledges the traditional owners of this land on which we stand and pay our respects to the Elders, past, present, and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, and culture of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



## **INDIE FACILITIES**

Indie College offers a comfortable, safe, and supportive learning environment. During the enrolment interview, Learners are informed about which Indie location, days, and times they are required to attend. In certain cases, alternative options such as community centres or libraries may be utilised. Indie College conducts regular risk assessments on all facilities to ensure safety. If there are any concerns about a facility, please report them to an Indie staff member immediately.

All Learners will be provided with a tour of the Indie facility; along with a site-specific safety induction; which includes the location of emergency exits and evacuation procedures. In the unlikely event of an emergency, Learners are asked to familiarise themselves with the evacuation procedure and follow all directives provided by Indie staff.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Indie sites are open from Monday to Friday, 8.30 am - 4.36 pm (excluding Public Holidays and the Christmas Closure period).

Indie College is open during school holidays. All sessions run as normal, with the expectation that Learners will attend.

## INDIE COACHES

At Indie, each site has a team of Coaches (Trainers and Assessors) which are led by a Lead Coach. When a Learner enrolls with Indie, they are assigned a Coach who will be their main point of contact throughout the course. However, Learners may work with different Coaches for the duration of their course. The role of the Coach is to create an engaging learning environment, support to Learners with their coursework, review and mark all assessment activities, organise group engagement activities, and assist Learners to set, review, and achieve their learning goals.

Each location has dedicated staff to provide further support to the Learners. This includes an Administrative Assistant, a Regional Manager, Welfare Officer, and an Assistant Welfare Officer. All Learners are provided with contact details of their Coach and Lead Coach, who can be reached during business hours for any assistance required related to coursework, learning goals, or welfare referral.



## CODE OF PRACTICE

Indie College is committed to protecting the privacy of Learners' personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and Australian Privacy Principles.

During the enrolment process, Learners are provided with information about their privacy rights, training agreement, consent to publish and the use their personal information. The Learner can choose to accept or decline these statements before signing and accepting the enrolment. For Learners under the age of 18, a parent or guardian's consent may be required.

Indie College adheres to the requirements of various governing bodies and legislation, including the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), VET Quality Framework, Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), Standards for VET accredited courses 2021, Fit and Proper Person Requirements 2011, Skills First VET Funding Contract, NSW Smart and Skilled, Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and Child Safe Standards.

All staff at Indie College hold a current Police Check, and Working with Children Check(s), and complete yearly mandatory reporting training to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Learners.

## ACCESS and EQUITY

Indie College ensures all training and assessment materials;

- embrace cultural diversity and utilise appropriate language and terminology.
- use plain Australian English.
- provide advice on reasonable adjustments.
- allow for re-assessment and / or re-enrolment if required.
- incorporate culturally specific competencies.
- provide flexibility to accommodate different individual learning requirements.
- use language that is free of discrimination.



## LEARNER ENROLMENT

### **Pre-Training Review (ACER online):**

As part of the enrolment process, Learners are required to complete an online ACER assessment. The aim of the ACER is to provide insight to the Learners language, literacy, and numeracy levels. Indie will also assess the Learners digital literacy through questions and observation during the enrolment process. These processes support Indie to select the most suitable course of study for each Learner.

Questions asked during the enrolment interview assist Indie in identifying any additional supports or reasonable adjustments that may be required for the Learner whilst undertaking the course. Learners are encouraged to make Indie aware of any areas of adjustment or support required.

Course eligibility and requirements are explained during the enrolment process. Learners are encouraged to speak to a Coach or Lead Coach if they need further information.

### **Learner Transport:**

To support Learner engagement and reduce the barrier of transport, particularly in rural areas, Indie College provides transportation to and from sessions as approved by parents, guardians, and Indie management.



## Unique Student Identification (USI):

In Australia, USI is a unique education number for life that serves as an online record of all nationally accredited training that a Learner has undertaken since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. It is mandatory for all Learners enrolled in nationally accredited training to have a USI.

Without a USI, Learners will not be eligible for Commonwealth financial assistance and cannot begin their training with Indie College. During the enrolment interview, Indie College can provide support and guidance on how to create a USI.

For further information or to apply for a USI, please visit the website at [www.usi.gov.au/](http://www.usi.gov.au/)

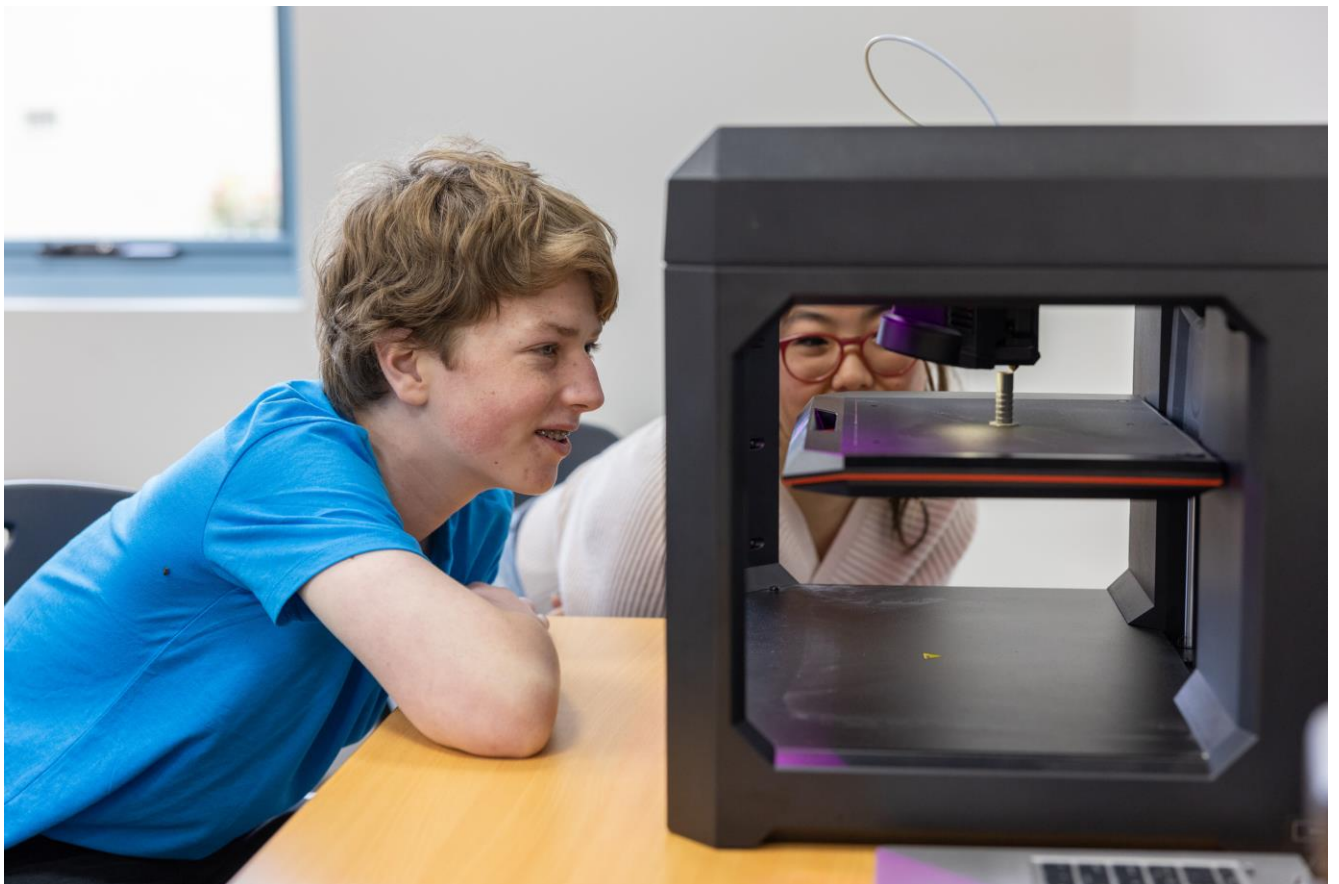


## ICT Equipment:

Indie College provides the opportunity for Learners to loan a tablet / computer if they do not have access to a device for training purposes related to their course. The Coach or Lead Coach will explain the procedure and requirements.

If the Learner chooses to accept this option, an agreement will be signed before collecting the device.

The agreement states that the device belongs to Indie College and must be returned in good working condition upon course completion or withdrawal.



## **COURSE DOCUMENTS**

### **Training Plan:**

Each Learner receives a personalised Training Plan (TP) via email, which contains essential information about their course of enrolment.

The TP includes the following information; Learner's details, delivery mode, title and code of the course of enrolment, contact details of Indie College, Coach name, course unit codes and names, as well as the proposed start and finish dates for each unit.

On the day of course commencement, the TP is signed and dated by the Learner and Coach as an acknowledgment of the plan.

### **Assessment Schedule and Attendance Record:**

The Assessment Schedule and Attendance Record outlines the training schedule for the units the Learner is enrolled in, along with the number of weeks allocated to complete each unit.

The Learner and Coach are required to sign the assessment schedule and attendance record after every training session to confirm attendance.

## Coursework:

Indie Learners will receive a folder with the required course material. This is provided at no cost to the Learner. The folder will include the following;

- Learner Activities and Assessments
- Learner Support Materials
- Stationary pack i.e., pen, highlighter

The Indie Coach will provide an overview of the course material, including the course requirements and the content covered in each unit.

At the beginning of each unit, the Learner will be required to sign a declaration, indicating their understanding of the unit requirements and assessment expectations for successful completion.

## ASSESSMENTS

At the beginning of each unit, the Coach will provide the Learner with an overview of the unit, including its requirements, how the learning will occur, and any resources or equipment needed. The Coach will also explain when and where assessments will take place.

Each unit is divided into Learner activities and assessments. The Learner will submit their activities and assessments to the Coach for marking.

To demonstrate competency, there are several methods used to assess the Learner's knowledge and understanding of the unit topic(s). These methods include written tasks, portfolio of evidence, practical tasks, roleplay, case studies, written and oral questioning, and observation.

When an assessment is submitted, the Learner must sign a declaration stating that the work is their own and has not been copied or plagiarised.

The Coach has access to assessment marking guidelines and criteria to ensure that assessments are marked in a fair, valid, and reliable manner.



## **Assessment outcomes:**

Upon completion of each unit, the Coach will provide the Learner with feedback in both written and verbal form regarding the outcome of the unit.

The unit outcome will be either;

C for Competent, indicating that the Learner has successfully completed the unit OR;

CNA for Competence Not Achieved, indicating that the Learner has been unsuccessful in completing the unit.

In WA, NC (Not Competent) is used instead of CNA.

## **Opportunity to re-submit:**

If the Learner is deemed CNA the unit, they will be given one (1) opportunity to re-submit the assessment(s) required.

## **Right to appeal:**

If a Learner believes their assessment / unit outcome was unfair, they have the right to appeal. It is recommended that the Learner discusses the matter with the Lead Coach in the first instance. If the Learner is still not satisfied with the outcome, they can follow the formal complaints and appeals policy and procedure located on the Indie College website.

## **LEARNER ATTENDANCE and ENGAGEMENT**

Indie College provides a variety of accredited full-time courses that cater to individual learning needs. These courses cover subjects such as reading, writing, numeracy, employability skills, and goal setting to support Learners.

Indie College provides flexibility by offering one-on-one or small-group training sessions. Learners participate in these sessions and activities to improve their skills and knowledge, and work towards achieving nationally accredited courses.

Indie courses are designed to be delivered via face-to-face training sessions with a Coach, as well as self-paced learning, which includes undertaking homework, research, and revision activities.

### **Learner attendance**

To meet the attendance criteria of the course, Learners are required to attend all of the scheduled sessions per their individualised timetable. Any changes to the schedule will be discussed to ensure that individual learning needs are accommodated. Failure to attend the required sessions may result in the Learner being withdrawn from the course and therefore not obtaining the qualification. If the Learner has been withdrawn and has been deemed competent in any unit/s, a Statement of Attainment (SOA) will be issued within 30 days.

## **Non- Attendance / Withdrawal**

Regularly missing scheduled learning sessions or being consistently late can put Learners at risk of being withdrawn from the course before the expected completion date. It is the responsibility of the Learner to inform their Coach as soon as possible if they are unable to attend a session or are running late. Non-attendance or late attendance may result in the Learner being required to attend scheduled catch-up sessions.

### **Change of details:**

If a Learner changes their mobile number or address, they must notify their Coach. Indie requires the correct details to keep in contact with the Learner throughout the course and post the issued certificate on course completion or withdrawal.





## FEES

Fees are determined by the course of enrolment, age and the individual State requirements.

Adult Learners residing in either Victoria (VIC) or New South Wales (NSW) may be eligible to access state-based funding if eligibility criteria is met. Learner eligibility for funding is assessed during the enrolment process.

Under the Skill First Victoria funding, Indie College is required to apply a fee for eligible Learners. This includes \$25 for a full fee or \$5 for a concession fee.

Under either Smart and Skilled NSW or Adult Continuing Education (ACE) NSW Indie College does not apply a fee for eligible Learners.

For Lets Go and VETiS programs, Indie College does not apply a fee for eligible Indie School Students.

The Indie College fee schedule is available on our website.

### **Cooling-off period**

A 24-hour cooling-off period is available for Learners to cancel their course enrolment if circumstances change between enrolment and course commencement. Learner must notify an Indie staff member via phone or email if they wish to cancel their enrolment.

## TRAINING GUARANTEE

Indie College provides free or reduced course fees for eligible Learners. This includes offering all necessary resources to Learners at no additional cost, making education accessible to everyone. This includes support materials, Learner activities, stationary packs, and ICT equipment (where applicable) for the entire duration of the course.

This guarantee will become null and void if the Learner;

- withdraws from the enrolled course in writing.
- verbally withdraws from the training.
- fails to comply with the Indies Code of Conduct.
- is frequently absent or unengaged during the course.



## CODE OF CONDUCT

Learners who engage in any of the following conduct may be subject to caution / disciplinary actions and are at risk of being withdrawn from their course / qualification(s).

- Assault, attempt to assault, intentionally intimidate, bully, threaten, misbehave, or discriminate against another person.
- Cheating, plagiarism or acting dishonestly concerning assessment tasks.
- Damage to Indie property.
- Breach of Indie ICT policy and / or damage of equipment.
- Carry or use a weapon.
- Fail to comply with health and safety requirements.
- Repeated absence from, late attendance to, or early departure from training sessions.
- Repeated late submission or non-submission of assessments.
- Use of profanities.

### **Drugs / Alcohol / Smoking:**

Indie has a zero-tolerance policy of Learners, staff or visitors attending Indie whilst under the influence or affected by alcohol or drugs. Indie will not tolerate possession, use, or the trafficking of drugs (illicit or prescription) while at Indie or associated learning sites.

Learners are not permitted to attend sessions with their Coach while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol. Learners are also not allowed to bring illicit drugs or alcohol to sessions.

The Coach has the right to end the session if the Learner is under the influence of drugs or alcohol and may report to appropriate channels due to health and safety concerns.

Smoking (inclusive of e-cigarette and vapes) is not permitted during Coaching sessions, in Indie vehicles (including car or bus), on any Indie College or Indie School sites or when representing Indie during related activities and events.

### **Mobile phones:**

During learning sessions, please refrain from using your mobile phone unless it's required for the learning activities.



## **CREDIT TRANSFER and RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

### **Credit Transfer (CT):**

If a Learner has already completed a unit that is equivalent or superseded to one in their current qualification of enrolment, they can apply for a credit transfer (CT). To apply for CT, the Learner needs to complete an Indie CT form during the enrolment process and provide evidence of their successful completion of the unit. This evidence could be in the form of a training certificate or transcript.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that acknowledges the skills and knowledge a Learner has gained through previous relevant training, work experience, or life experience. This recognition can be used to gain credit toward unit(s) or an entire course.

To apply for RPL, Learners can access the Indie RPL Kit during the enrolment process. The Learner must provide evidence to support their claim for RPL. This evidence may come in the form of a portfolio containing all relevant documentation, which must be assessed by Indie for RPL to be granted. It is important to note that, unlike credit transfer, Learners have not previously been assessed for competence and must undergo an assessment process to be awarded RPL.

## ISSUING of CERTIFICATES / GRADUATIONS

Upon completing or withdrawing from the course, the Learner will receive a certificate (either a Statement of Attainment or Full Qualification) via registered post within 30 calendar days.

If there are any outstanding Learner fees, the certificate will not be issued until payment is resolved.

All Learners are invited to attend an Indie graduation ceremony. Graduations are held throughout the year to celebrate Learner's success and achievements. Friends and family are invited to attend and help celebrate these achievements.



## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

### **Public Liability:**

Indie College carries public liability insurance that adequately covers the company's size and registration scope.

### **Opportunity for Improvement:**

At Indie, we value your feedback as a Learner. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve your experience with us, please reach out to your Coach or Lead Coach who will guide you through this process. At the end of your course, you will be given the option to provide feedback via surveys. Indie appreciates your feedback as it helps us to improve our services.

### **Cheating and Plagiarism:**

In a study environment, cheating means to act dishonestly. Plagiarism is a form of cheating, it occurs when a Learner claims ownership of written words, ideas or inventions that are not theirs / copies the work without acknowledgment.

When a Learner submits their work / assessments via the Learner Activities and Assessments booklet, a declaration is signed declaring that the assessment is their own work, and the assessment contains no plagiarism. Once signed and submitted, the Coach accepts that the work submitted is the Learners own.

If there are reasonable grounds to believe plagiarism has occurred, this will be escalated to the Indie Business Management team where the matter will be investigated and reviewed. Pending on the outcome and severity of the investigation; the decision will be to either:

Deemed Competence Not Achieved (CNA): A Learner found guilty of plagiarism after a review, will be deemed CNA for the unit and will not be given an opportunity to resubmit work.

Opportunity to resubmit: A Learner found to have unintentionally plagiarised, will be required to resubmit the assessment in question. In addition, a follow up oral assessment to talk about the work submitted may be required to ensure competence in the unit.

If plagiarism continues, the Learner may be at risk of being withdrawn from course.





## Complaints and Appeals:

Indie strives to provide a positive learning experience. If a Learner has a grievance or complaint related to Indie, their learning experience, or assessment outcome, it is recommended that they first speak with a Coach or Lead Coach to discuss their concerns and work towards a resolution.

If the complaint remains unresolved, the Learner can refer to the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure, located the Indie College website.

If you have any concerns or require further information regarding any of the above policies or procedures, please do not hesitate to contact the Lead Coach and / or Regional Manager.



## Safety:

At Indie, we prioritise the safety, protection, and well-being of all our staff and Learners.

To ensure this, we have established the following obligations:

- We have a duty of care to all Learners and staff, and we take reasonable steps to prevent harm.
- We comply with all child protection legislation in all states where we operate.
- We abide by all occupational work health and safety legislation.
- We have implemented policies and procedures to ensure that our environment is safe from abuse, including physical violence, sexual offenses, severe emotional or psychological abuse, and neglect.



## **Emergencies:**

During the induction process, Learners will receive detailed information, including evacuation points. Learners need to become familiar with the emergency plans for the location of their sessions.

In the unfortunate event of an emergency, it is crucial to follow the instructions provided by Indie staff or emergency personnel.

## **Risk Assessments:**

Indie College conducts risk assessments before offsite activities to minimise Learners' risks.

## **Incidents / Injury:**

At Indie, the safety of all Learners and staff is of utmost importance. Therefore, it is the responsibility of everyone present to ensure their safety, as well as that of others.

In the rare event of an incident or injury during a learning session, the affected individual(s) will be provided with appropriate care.

An Indie Coach or Lead Coach will be responsible for completing an Incident Report.

## SUPPORT

Indie offers a range of additional supports that can be accessed by Learners;

- Additional literacy and numeracy support.
- Mentoring and additional learning sessions.
- Reasonable adjustment implemented.
- Digital literacy and technological support.
- Welfare support.
- Career guidance.
- Referral to external organisation (counselling, disability support financial aid, job support services).



## Support services:

If there's an immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please call: 000

### Lifeline:

[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

Is a crisis support service available 24/7 that offers confidential short-term support. Phone 13 11 14 or text 0477 13 11 14.

### Beyond Blue:

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

A free, anonymous forum and confidential support service that is open 24/7 for anyone in Australia. Call a counsellor on 1300 224 636 or access website for webchat.

### Kids Helpline:

[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

Australia's only free (even from a mobile), confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. Phone 1800 55 1800 or access to the website for webchat option.

### Headspace:

[www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

Headspace supports young people with mental, physical and sexual health; alcohol and other drug services, work and study support. Access at a local centre or online.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

### **Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA):**

[www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)

Is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector.

### **Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA):**

[www.vrqa.vic.gov.au](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au)

Is Victoria's education and training regulator.

### **Skills First Victoria:**

[www.vic.gov.au/skills-first](http://www.vic.gov.au/skills-first)

Is a State Government Program that provides access to government-subsidised training to support eligible Victorian residents access training.

### **Smart and Skilled and ACE NSW:**

[www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/vocational](http://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/vocational)

Are both State Government Programs that provide access to government-subsidised training to support eligible NSW residence access training.

### **Victorian Skills Gateway:**

[www.skills.vic.gov.au/s/](http://www.skills.vic.gov.au/s/)

Is a platform to gain advice on training courses, financial assistance, and training providers in Victoria.

## Unique Student Identifier (USI):

[www.usi.gov.au](http://www.usi.gov.au)

Is an individual education number for life that provides an online record of your vocational education and training (VET) undertaken in Australia.

## Training.gov:

[www.training.gov](http://www.training.gov)

Is the national register of vocational education and training.

## Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS):

<https://www.asqa.gov.au/how-we-regulate/strategic-reviews/past/vet-schools>



