

ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1.3. Accommodation Assistance Policy and Procedure

Policy Content

Aspect	Details
Regulator	Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
Standards Referenced	
Legislation / Requirements	

Purpose

The RTO affirms that it does not provide or approve accommodation, support, or general welfare arrangements for international students under the age of 18. Enrolment is only open to students aged 18 years or above. However, for students aged 18 or older, the RTO provides referral-based accommodation support through verified services while maintaining clear boundaries on legal responsibilities.

Objective

- To ensure all students receive appropriate referrals for accommodation services if requested.
- To clarify the RTO's position regarding underage students and welfare responsibilities.
- To comply with SRT0 2025 and National Code obligations in managing student welfare where applicable

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All current and prospective students over 18 years of age
- Student Support Officers
- RTO administrative and enrolment staff

Policy Principles

- The RTO does not enrol students who are under 18 years of age.
- Accommodation services are not directly provided or managed by the RTO.

- All student requests regarding accommodation are referred to external, vetted agencies.
- The RTO does not undertake any legal guardianship roles.
- If, in future, the RTO considers enrolling underage students, additional compliance mechanisms will be developed and implemented before such enrolments occur.

Procedures

1.3.1. Enrolment Age Verification

- The RTO strictly limits its enrolments to students who are 18 years of age or older at the time of course commencement.
- As part of the admission process, applicants are required to submit proof of age, typically through a passport, national ID card, or birth certificate.
- Upon receiving the application, the Admissions Officer verifies the applicant's age.
- If the applicant is found to be under 18, the application is automatically declined. The applicant receives a formal notification explaining that the RTO does not enrol students under 18 and will not take on welfare or accommodation responsibilities.
- This process ensures compliance with the ESOS National Code Standard 5.3 and avoids breaching child welfare regulations under Commonwealth and state legislation.

1.3.2. Referral to Accommodation Providers

- While the RTO does not directly provide accommodation, it recognises that international students may require help finding suitable housing.
- If a student requests assistance, the Student Support Officer provides contact details and guidance for accessing external, pre-vetted providers, such as:
 - Australian Homestay Network (AHN)
 - Student-specific rental platforms

- Accredited student lodges
- The Student Support Officer may assist the student in:
 - Understanding how to apply
 - Checking for availability
 - Navigating websites or online portals (if required)
- The RTO explicitly disclaims legal or contractual responsibility for any arrangement made between the student and the provider. This is made clear in all correspondence and published material.
- Students are advised to review the terms and conditions of their accommodation agreements carefully before signing.
- This ensures that the RTO meets its duty to support student wellbeing without contravening its legal boundaries.

1.3.3. Future Consideration for Under-18 Enrolments

- While the RTO currently does not accept students under 18, this procedure outlines contingency steps if the organisation chooses to do so in future.
- Before enrolling any student under 18, the RTO would need to:
 - Develop and implement a compliant welfare system.
 - Submit a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter to the Department of Home Affairs.
 - Ensure that any staff or third-party providers involved in welfare or accommodation have valid Working with Children Checks (WWCC) or equivalent certifications.
- The RTO would also:
 - Conduct prior inspections of accommodation.
 - Reassess accommodation suitability every six months.
 - Establish and communicate emergency contact points, including after-hours options.

1.3.4. Emergency and Disruption Protocols

- In cases where the RTO assumes welfare responsibility (if applicable in the future), clear protocols would be followed to handle emergencies or disruptions:
 - A 24/7 emergency contact number would be issued to the student and guardian.
 - In case of an emergency (e.g. student goes missing, health issue, unsafe accommodation), the RTO would immediately intervene and provide temporary, safe housing.
 - The RTO would also:
 - Attempt to contact the student's parent or guardian.
 - Report the incident to relevant authorities if required (e.g., child protection, Immigration).
 - Record and document all actions taken, including the outcome.
- If the accommodation arrangement is no longer valid or appropriate, the RTO must:
 - Inform the Department of Home Affairs within 24 hours, using the correct online portal.
 - Help the student transition into a new, compliant arrangement or return home temporarily.

1.3.5. Welfare Transfer or Termination

- This procedure applies only if the RTO were to assume responsibility for student welfare in the future.
- If a student transfers to another provider:
 - The RTO must coordinate with the releasing provider to ensure there is no gap in welfare coverage.
 - This coordination must be formally documented and communicated to Immigration.
- If the student:
 - Returns home, or

- Moves into the care of a parent or nominated relative, the RTO must:
 - Cease welfare responsibility.
 - Inform Immigration immediately, using the appropriate forms or portals.
- If the RTO is unable to continue approving welfare (e.g., student disappears or becomes non-contactable):
 - The RTO must make reasonable efforts to contact the parent/guardian.
 - Notify the Department of Home Affairs within 24 hours, meeting compliance obligations.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
PEO (Principal Executive Officer)	- Ensure the RTO does not enrol students under 18 unless compliant systems are in place - Sign Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW), if applicable in future - Approve and oversee welfare and accommodation procedures and documentation - Notify Immigration if the RTO is no longer able to approve welfare arrangements
RTO Manager / Compliance Manager	- Maintain compliance with SRT0 2025, ESOS Act, and Migration Regulations related to accommodation and welfare - Oversee accommodation policy implementation and periodic review- Ensure all staff are trained on their accommodation-related obligations - Monitor incidents or complaints for continuous improvement purposes

Student Support Officer	- Assist students with accommodation queries and refer them to appropriate, verified services (e.g. Homestay networks) - Support students with concerns or complaints related to housing - Keep records of accommodation assistance provided - Ensure culturally appropriate and student-centred support is given
Admissions Officer / Enrolment Staff	- Verify student age during application stage and reject enrolment if under 18 - Inform students and families that the RTO does not accept underage students - Maintain communication records regarding ineligibility due to age or unsupported accommodation arrangements
All Staff (General)	- Uphold the RTO's policy of not taking responsibility for accommodation of underage students - Ensure any concerns raised by students are directed promptly to the Student Support Officer or relevant senior staff.

Continuous Improvement

- All accommodation-related issues, feedback, or incident reports are collated and reviewed during scheduled management meetings.
- The RTO evaluates trends such as:
 - Repeated accommodation-related complaints or concerns.
 - Service gaps in referral processes or third-party accommodation arrangements.
 - Any risks or breaches reported regarding underage students (if ever applicable).

- Actions are implemented to address identified risks, improve support procedures, and update referral partners or agreements if necessary.

Confidentiality and Privacy

- The RTO ensures that all personal information collected about students' accommodation preferences, referrals, or concerns is treated as confidential.
- Only authorised staff (Student Support Officer, RTO Manager, or PEO) have access to this information for the purpose of service provision or compliance.
- Information is stored securely in the student management system and retained per data protection requirements.
- The RTO complies with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and relevant State laws.
- Students are informed of their privacy rights during orientation and in the Student Handbook.

Retention of Records

Records related to accommodation referrals, student support, and any welfare-related correspondence are retained in the student's file as part of the RTO's compliance obligations.

Specifically:

- If the RTO enrolls a student under the age of 18 in the future, the following records must be retained for a minimum of two (2) years after the student ceases to be an accepted student:
 - CAAW (Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare) letters
 - Accommodation approval documents
 - Home inspection reports
 - Emergency contact documentation
 - Communication logs with the student, guardians, or welfare providers
- This retention period meets the minimum requirements under:

- **Clause 10(c) of the Standards for RTOs 2025 (assessment and student service record retention)**
- **Standard 5.7 of the ESOS National Code 2018 (welfare arrangements for international students under 18)**
- **Regulation 2.07AB of the Migration Regulations 1994 (if welfare responsibility is assumed)**
- **All records are securely stored within the student management system (SMS) or internal document control system and are accessible only to authorised personnel.**
- **Records are disposed of securely once the applicable retention period has expired, following the RTO's Records Management Policy and Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).**