

Private Training Courses

If you are considering registering in a private training course, there are certain things you should be aware of. Private training can be very expensive, and you will want to get value for money. Be wary when paying any fees for training.

Things to consider

1. Find out what is on offer

- Shop around. Compare courses at a number of private institutions with your state's TAFE colleges.
- Seek advice about which courses suit the jobs you want. For example, you can go to your careers teacher, local library, career information centre, the relevant Department of Education's job guides and official study guide websites.

2. Enrol in an officially recognised course

- Your state government has the power to grant registration to private training organisations and give accreditation to courses offered by registered colleges. Some courses are registered, some courses are not. Registration is voluntary in most cases.
- Registration tells you that a private college is believed to be ethical and competent in terms of the staff skills, premises, equipment, resources provided, financial arrangements and refund rules, and protection of student fees (e.g. trust funds).
- Accreditation tells you that the teaching or training methods and curriculum standards of the course have been examined, and that the contents and standard of the course have been verified for the level of qualification offered.

3. If the college/course is not officially recognised, get more information about these things:

Industry acceptance

Get an opinion from someone in the field, for instance through a related industry association and professional organisation. Ask them if the college/course:

- is accepted in the industry;
- teaches skills used in the industry;
- gives graduates real job prospects; and
- generally has a good or bad reputation.

Resources

To see if the organisation can really deliver a course, make sure you:

- ask to see the facilities and equipment;
- ask about the student/teacher ratio;
- ask about the qualifications and training of the teaching staff; and
- compare these with what's available at TAFE colleges and Registered Training Organisations.

Remember: private trainers are businesses wanting to sell a product, and some are offered without any government approval. You need to be aware of risks, and should choose courses and colleges with care. It's your time and money.

Note!
For details on registered training organisations and accredited courses go to training.gov.au.

Disclaimer

This Fact Sheet contains information of a general nature only and is not a substitute for professional legal advice. You should obtain legal advice from a lawyer about your particular situation before acting on any of the following information. This Fact Sheet is designed for employees and prospective employees in Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland only. If you are not from these states, you should obtain advice about your specific case as soon as possible.

3. If the college/course is not officially recognised, get more information about these things: (cont.)

Financial arrangements

Beware of up-front payments. Ask for written details of:

- the terms and conditions of the enrolment contract;
- any fines, penalties and additional charges clauses;
- the cost of the course and payment arrangements;
- the conditions under which refunds are given;
- the associated costs, such as uniforms, equipment etc; and
- the arrangements in place to safeguard students' up-front payments.

Be sure you read and understand any written clauses about payments before you make your decision.

4. Centrelink support payments

Accredited training offered by Registered Training Organisations may be approved for certain Centrelink support payments or other forms of financial assistance. Check with Services Australia for more information.

5. Be a smart consumer

Beware of advertising slogans like 'employment guaranteed', 'employers recognise our course', 'quick low cost training' etc. Be particularly vigilant when it comes to courses offered by correspondence.

Many private courses are conducted at TAFE colleges. This does not guarantee quality, so you still need to check out the courses thoroughly. If the course/college claims to be 'government recognised', make sure it is officially registered by visiting training.gov.au.

Never be pressured to sign a contract on the spot, or pay deposits or fees. Have documents checked by a lawyer or other qualified adviser before you sign it.

Read everything you are asked to sign. Keep copies of all written information you receive from the college or training organisation and don't sign anything you do not understand. Some operators have asked people to sign application forms for courses and they turn out to be a binding contract.

Don't allow yourself to be pressured by the people selling the course to you. Take the time to go away and think about it.

6. Problem industries

JobWatch regularly receives complaints and enquiries about private training courses across most industries. Some industries are complained about often – for example, the beauty industry (hair care, make-up, nail care), modelling industry, IT industry, correspondence courses, private security industry, and some natural therapy courses.

7. Know where to refer problems

If you are unhappy with training you can contact Consumer Affairs in your state. See the next page for 'Where to Get Help'.

You may have rights to recover monies you have paid.

Services Australia

Phone: 132 490

Website:

servicesaustralia.gov.au

Where to get help

JobWatch's free and confidential Telephone Information Service

P: (03) 9662 1933 (Melb Metro), 1800 331 617 (Regional Vic, Qld, Tas)

W: jobwatch.org.au

International Students Employment and Accommodation Legal Service (ISEALS)

P: 1800 056 449

E: info@studymelbourne.com.au

Fair Work Infoline (Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman)	13 13 94
Fair Work Commission	1300 799 675
Consumer Affairs Victoria	1300 558 181
Office of Fair Trading Queensland	13 74 68
Consumer, Building and Occupational Services Tasmania	1300 654 499
Australian Tax Office	13 28 61
Community Legal Centres Australia	02 9264 9595
ACTU Worker Information line (for referral to a union)	1300 362 223
Law Institute of Victoria's Legal Referral Service	03 9607 9311
Queensland Law Society (for referral to a lawyer)	1300 367 757
Law Society of Tasmania (for referral to a lawyer)	03 6234 4133

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JobWatch acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors, and Elders, past, present and emerging.