Unique Student Identifier (USI) Policy and Procedure

Purpose

This policy outlines the responsibilities of Smartlink Training and its approved third-party providers (short courses only) in implementing and complying with the Student Identifiers Act 2014, the USI scheme, and the 2025 Standards for RTOs, particularly in regard to student identification, privacy, certification issuance, and data security.

Policy Statement

Smartlink Training ensures that all learners are informed of the requirement to have a Unique Student Identifier (USI) before enrolment or course commencement. No learner will be issued with an AQF qualification testamur/award or statement of attainment and or record of results without a verified USI unless an exemption applies. Where an exemption applies Smartlink Training will inform the VET students prior to the completion of enrolment or commencement of training and assessment whichever occurs first that the results of the training will not be accessible through the Commonwealth; and will not appear on any authenticated VET transcript prepared by the Registrar. Smartlink Training will ensure to advise students of any difficulties that may arise when accessing their records or information through the Commonwealth or USI Register. Smartlink Training will ensure that this data is not accessible throughout Commonwealth or on any authenticated transcripts prepared by the USI registrar. Smartlink Training will ensure to protect the privacy of an individual's Unique Student Identifier.

This policy applies to all training and assessment services delivered by Smartlink Training and its third-party providers who only deliver short courses, including short courses and full qualifications.

Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025

Part 2 Compliance Requirements

Student identifier requirements

1. An NVR registered training organisation must: a. not include any individual's student identifier on a VET qualification or VET statement of attainment; and b. request the Registrar to verify that any student identifier provided to it by an individual belongs to that individual before the organisation uses the identifier for any purpose.
2. Subject to subsections (3) and (5), an NVR registered training organisation must not issue a VET qualification or a VET statement of attainment to a VET student unless the student has been assigned a student identifier.
   Exemptions given by the Minister
3. The Minister may, in writing and as agreed by the Ministerial Council, specify an issue to which the requirement in **subsection** (2) does not apply, by reference to one or more of the following: a. the organisation doing the issuing; b. the VET qualification, or VET statement of attainment, being issued; or c. the VET student to whom the VET qualification, or VET statement of attainment, is being issued.
4. Where an exemption described in subsection (3) or subsection 53(3) of the Student Identifiers Act 2014 applies – an NVR registered training organisation must inform the VET student prior to the completion of enrolment or commencement of training and assessment, whichever occurs first, that the results of the training: a. will not be accessible through the Commonwealth; and b. will not appear on any authenticated VET transcript prepared by the Registrar.
5. Subsections (2) and (3) only apply to NVR registered training organisations that are not constitutional corporations.
   Note: Similar requirements to those set out in subsections (2) and (3), that apply to NVR registered training organisations that are constitutional corporations, are set out in section 53 of the *Student Identifiers Act 2014.*

USI Requirement:

Learners must provide a Unique Student Identifier. Where exempt, Smartlink Training will issue written notice that results will not appear on authenticated VET transcripts.

Procedure

USI Requirement Notification

- All prospective learners are informed of the USI requirement in pre-enrolment materials: Student Handbook, website, (course brochure for Qualification courses only).
- Learners are encouraged to create or retrieve their USI via www.usi.gov.au prior to enrolment.

USI Collection and Verification

- Learners are required to provide their USI during the enrolment process.
- Smartlink uses its Student Management System (PowerPro RTO) to verify all submitted USIs.
- Verified USIs are flagged green in the system; failed verifications are flagged yellow with an error message.
- If verification fails, students are contacted to correct the issue. If unresolved, they are referred to the USI Registry for assistance.

USI Creation (If Requested)

- If a learner cannot create their own USI, Smartlink may assist upon:
- - Receiving signed permission (USI Permission Form)
- - Providing the learner with the USI Privacy Notice
- - Collecting and securely handling acceptable forms of ID
- Once created, students are emailed their USI, and only the consent page is retained.

Privacy and Data Handling

- Smartlink complies with the Privacy Act 1988 and Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).
- USI-related data is securely stored and access is restricted to authorised staff only.
- All documents used for USI creation are destroyed once no longer required.

Exemptions

- Where a USI exemption applies, Smartlink informs the learner before enrolment or training begins.
- Students are advised prior to the completion of enrolment or commencement of training and assessment whichever occurs first that results will not appear on their national VET transcript. Smartlink Training will issue written notice that results will not appear on authenticated VET transcripts.

Training and Awareness

- All staff and third-party providers (short Course) are trained in USI policies and procedures.
- Security protocols are enforced to protect student data.

Certification Issuance

- A verified USI (through the Registrar) must be recorded in PowerPro before issuing any AQF certification documentation and is only issued to students who hold their own student identifier (USI number), unless an exemption is in place.
- Where an exemption applies Smartlink Training will inform the VET students prior to the completion of enrolment or commencement of training and assessment which every occurs first that the results of the training will not be accessible through the Commonwealth; and will not appear on any authenticated VET transcript prepared by the Registrar. Smartlink Training will ensure to advise students of any difficulties that may arise when accessing their records or information through the Commonwealth or USI Register. Smartlink Training will ensure that this data is not accessible throughout Commonwealth or on any authenticated transcripts prepared by the USI registrar. Smartlink Training will ensure to protect the privacy of an individual's Unique Student Identifier.

- The individual student identifier (USI number) is not included on the VET qualification or VET statement of attainment by ensuring that all Smartlink Training's AQF certification documentation templates (Testamur/Award (qualification certificate), Statement of Attainment (unit/s of competency/ies), and or Record of Results do not include the USI number on it.
- Smartlink Training ensures to take reasonable steps to protect each student's personal information to maintain privacy and confidentiality by having authorised and trained personnel who can only have access to student records as part of their RTO role and responsibilities by using the current and valid username and is password protected that limits access to the student management system (PowerPro).

Key Resources and References

- https://www.usi.gov.au/
- https://www.usi.gov.au/providers/create-usi-student
- https://www.usi.gov.au/providers/student-permissions
- https://www.usi.gov.au/about-us/privacy
- https://www.usi.gov.au/terms/terms-and-conditions-org
- Student Identifiers Act 2014
- National VET Data Policy