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1. COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS): SUPPORT AVAILABLE FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Federal Government has announced stimulus and support services for businesses to manage cash flow challenges and retain employees.

Assistance includes cash flow support to businesses and temporary measures to provide relief for financially distressed businesses.

Information on all financial assistance support available, eligibility and timing can be found here: <https://www.business.gov.au/risk-management/emergency-management/coronavirus-information-and-support-for-business>

a) Examples of support available from the Federal Government for Australian businesses

Examples of support available from the Federal Government for Australian businesses are listed below.

- **Wage subsidy for apprentices and trainees**

If you employ an apprentice or trainee you may be eligible for a wage subsidy of 50 per cent of their wage paid from 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2020. You can register for the subsidy from early April 2020.

Further information: <https://www.business.gov.au/risk-management/emergency-management/coronavirus-information-and-support-for-business/supporting-apprentices-and-trainees>

- **Temporary cash flow support**

The Federal Government is providing up to \$100,000 to eligible small and medium sized businesses, and not-for-profits (including charities) that employ people, with a minimum payment of \$20,000.

Further information: <https://www.business.gov.au/Risk-management/Emergency-management/Coronavirus-information-and-support-for-business/Boosting-cash-flow-for-employers>

- **Supporting the flow of credit**

The Coronavirus SME Guarantee Scheme will provide support for these businesses. Under the Scheme, the Government will provide a guarantee of 50 per cent to small and medium enterprise (SME) lenders for new unsecured loans to be used for working capital. This will enhance these lenders' willingness and ability to provide credit, which will result in SMEs being able to access additional funding to help support them through the upcoming months.

SMEs with a turnover of up to \$50 million will be eligible to receive these loans.

Further information: <https://www.business.gov.au/risk-management/emergency-management/coronavirus-information-and-support-for-business/coronavirus-sme-guarantee-scheme>

- **Backing Business Investment (BBI)**

A time limited 15 month investment incentive to support business investment and economic growth over the short term, by accelerating depreciation deductions. This applies to eligible assets acquired from 12 March 2020 and first used or installed by 30 June 2021. Businesses with a turnover of less than \$500 million will be able to deduct 50 per cent of the cost of an eligible asset on installation, with existing depreciation rules applying to the balance of the asset cost.

Further information: <https://www.business.gov.au/risk-management/emergency-management/coronavirus-information-and-support-for-business/backing-business-investment-bbi>

- **Increasing the Instant Asset Write-Off**

The instant asset write-off threshold has been increased from \$30,000 to \$150,000 and expanded access to include businesses with aggregated annual turnover of less than \$500 million (up from \$50 million). This applies from 12 March 2020 until 30 June 2020, for new or second-hand assets first used or installed ready for use in this timeframe.

Further information: <https://www.business.gov.au/risk-management/emergency-management/coronavirus-information-and-support-for-business/instant-asset-write-off>

2. QUESTIONS REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS (RTOS) MAY HAVE REGARDING COVID-19

TSNSW is actively working in collaboration with federal, state and local government to make information and advice available to Registered Training Organisations (RTOS).

We are constantly assessing the options available and will continue to work with affected RTOs on a case by case basis. TSNSW's regional and metropolitan offices remain open and are ready to provide support and information to impacted RTOs.

Below are questions and answers that RTOs may have regarding COVID-19 and further information for is available on the TSNSW website: <https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/news/articles/covid-19/index.html>

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) has established an Info Line to support providers. Providers that are impacted by COVID-19 are encouraged to contact the ASQA Info Line on 1300 701 801 or at enquiries@asqa.gov.au to discuss adaptive measures.

- **Our RTO is experiencing financial hardship – what support is available?**

The **Federal Government** has announced a second **coronavirus stimulus package** to support businesses manage cash flow challenges and retain employees.

Assistance includes cash flow support to businesses and temporary measures to provide relief for financially distressed businesses. Examples of support available includes wage subsidies for apprentices and trainees, boosting cash flow for employers and increasing the instant asset write-off

Information on all financial assistance support available, eligibility and timing can be found [here](#) or call 13 28 46.

Also, please keep your **Strategic Relationship Manager (SRM)** updated on your circumstances so that they can explore how TSNSW can best support your organisation and its learners.

You can also call Training Services on 13 2811 for advice.

- **Our RTO is concerned about meeting our contractual and delivery commitments – what advice is available?**

If you are concerned about Smart and Skilled or ASQA contractual obligations, contact your **Strategic Relationship Manager (SRM)** so that we can explore how TSNSW can best support your organisation and its learners. You can also register a call to 13 2811

Please also follow normal eReporting requirements as per the Smart and Skilled Terms and Conditions. Technical support can be obtained from **Training Market Customer Service** by emailing: training.market@det.nsw.edu.au

ASQA have [updated their website](#) to include up to date information regarding any changes to reporting and other measures currently being considered due to COVID-19.

Training Market Customer Service can also assist with questions relating to submitting Training Activity Data, Commitment IDs.

Also, please contact your SRM directly or contact 13 28 11 if you are concerned about;

- sub-contracting or brokering arrangements – what to do if you are unable to continue the delivery of training
- extending training end-dates
- providing help to other RTOs if able to do so

- **Our RTO may not be able to fully utilise our Smart and Skilled Financial Cap – what should we do?**

We understand that due to current circumstances, Providers may not be able to fully utilise their Financial Cap.

Please advise your **Strategic Relationship Manager (SRM)** if this applies to your organisation so that they can explore how TSNSW can best support your organisation and its learners. You can also register a call to 13 2811

SRMs will register the issue internally and Providers will **not be penalised** for future activity periods.

- **Is my RTO still able to deliver face to face training?**

Yes. RTOs can continue to deliver in a face-to-face environment but are encouraged to practise social distancing. This may mean adjustments to the classroom to create more space between people and their desks/work stations.

RTOs should also consider increasing cleaning, particularly of classrooms, toilets, common areas, door handles and equipment.

Any student who is unwell, or who is required to self-isolate, should not attend class and should be sent home.

The Australian Government Department of Health has released [resources](#) for employers and others to help stop the spread.

- **We have students unable to attend mandatory work placements and/or undertake assessments. What should we do?**

Mandatory work placement

Where work placement is mandatory, that placement may need to be deferred until such time that it can be conducted.

However, there are a range of actions that RTOs can take to mitigate some of the impact of the current situation on learners who need to undertake workplace hours. ASQA supports all RTOs (including those delivering to overseas students) in implementing these where they are able to:

1. training – bring forward theoretical training across single or multiple units to continue learning,
2. training – adjust the training and assessment strategy to continue to deliver units of competency that do not contain workplace hours,
3. training – make use of simulated workplace environments to allow for practising of skills,

4. training and assessment – where students are in different locations, make use of technologies such as video recording and Skype,
5. assessment – where the training package allows, make use of simulated workplace assessment.

Where work placement has been partially completed, both students and the RTO should retain evidence of the placement completed to date, including any log books.

Assessments

Students may be able to undertake training in a simulated environment before going to a workplace to continue their learning or to conduct assessment, (when they are able to attend a workplace).

RTOs should consider the specific assessment conditions described in the assessment requirements of each unit of competency. In some instances, assessment requirements allow for assessment to be conducted in the workplace or a simulated environment. Where simulation is allowed, RTOs should review the specific training package requirements to be able to replicate the simulated environment.

Where assessment can be conducted only in the workplace, that component of assessment may need to be deferred until such time that it can be conducted. In these instances RTOs:

1. should ensure students are aware of, and have a record of, the portion of assessment completed for the unit
2. can adjust their training and assessment strategy to rearrange sequencing of delivery of units of competency
3. should deliver an alternate unit of competency, (that does not require practical assessment, or where theoretical learning can be provided in part).

Further information from ASQA [here](#).

3. WHERE TO FIND FURTHER INFORMATION

- News and FAQs on COVID 19:
<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>
- RTOs and VET:
<https://www.asqa.gov.au/coronavirus-advice>
- Advice is also available from the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on **1800 020 080**.
- Training Services NSW:
www.training.nsw.gov.au/news/articles/covid-19

For technical support in relation to this update, contact Training Market Customer Support at Training.Market@det.nsw.edu.au or **1300 772 104**.

Please note that this update is for the information of approved Smart and Skilled providers only. If providers require further information for students or employers, please contact Training Market Customer Support, as above, unless otherwise instructed.