RSPCA NSW Training Team

Student Handbook

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals New South Wales
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RSPCA NSW is a Registered Training Organisation, accredited through the Australian Skills Quality Authority. RTO Code 70238

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RSPCA New South Wales

A welcome note from the RSPCA NSW training team

Thank you for considering the RSPCA NSW training team for your vocational education needs. We are dedicated to providing quality vocational education. Please read through this Student Handbook.

RSPCA NSW became a Registered Training Organisation in 2011, and since then has delivered nationally recognised qualifications in the animal industry. We are registered with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), the National VET Regulator, and operate within the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025*.

Our team of trainers have the relevant industry and training/assessment qualifications and undertake regular professional development and return to industry so as to provide students with a quality learning experience.

This Student Handbook is reviewed regularly and updated as required. A current version can be found here.

Please ensure you take the time to review the contents of this handbook to note your rights as a student when studying with RSPCA NSW. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us at training@rspcansw.org.au

Our courses are created and developed with input and verification from our skilled and experienced trainers and are reviewed by those working in the industry. We aspire for our students to be work-ready after completing a course and have designed our courses to provide a strong mix of theory and practical skills training. Your success is paramount to us, and if at any time you require assistance with any part of your training, please feel free to contact our friendly staff.

I wish you all the best with your studies and thank you for choosing to study with RSPCA NSW.

Adam Farrugia
Senior Manager - Training
RSPCA NSW

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1. Students' code of conduct

Students enrolled with the RSPCA NSW training team have rights and responsibilities and must abide by the appropriate policies and this Code of Conduct. When a student signs the declaration, they agree to abide by the following:

1.1 Students' rights

Students have a right to:

- appeal academic decisions or procedural matters
- be given information about assessment procedures at the beginning of a unit
- be treated fairly and with respect
- have access to personal records on request
- have complaints dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution
- have personal records kept private, subject to statutory requirements
- learn in a supportive and safe environment, free of discrimination and harassment
- make a complaint to or about any staff member without fear of victimisation
- receive feedback on his or her academic progress

1.2 Communication

When communicating with RSPCA NSW staff by email, letter, telephone, online meeting or in person, students have a responsibility to:

- not do anything that could offend, embarrass, or threaten others
- not harass or disrupt others in the performance of their duties
- show concern for others by not using profanities, or making obscene or offensive remarks
- treat people with respect and fairness

1.3 Study

Students must:

- achieve satisfactory progress in their studies through attending all sessions as required by the course timetable or student information sheet
- complete all assessment tasks and examinations honestly, without any form of cheating
- complete all assessment tasks by the due date (where a date is specified) or ask for an extension of time if there are exceptional circumstances
- not submit and claim as their own, work derived from another source or work done by another person
- ensure that their behaviour does not negatively affect the learning experience of other students

1.4 Safety

When on RSPCA NSW premises, students have the additional responsibility to:

- follow any safety practices required and follow directions, both written and spoken, given by RSPCA NSW staff
- not damage or steal property
- not enter RSPCA NSW premises with illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons or under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- not smoke on RSPCA NSW premises
- sign the attendance register

2. Refund policy

Any person requiring a refund of fees paid must do so in writing in accordance with the refund policy outlined below. A $30 administration fee will be applied to every refund requested and is non-refundable in every case.

When a student has enrolled in a single course, the RSPCA NSW training team will refund part of a course payment when:

- A student has cancelled more than 14 days prior to the course commencement. In this case, the student will receive 75% of the remaining amount (remaining amount = fees paid minus non-refundable administration fee)
- A student has cancelled less than 14 days prior to the commencement. In this case, the student will receive 50% of the remaining amount (remaining amount = fees paid minus non-refundable administration fee)

RSPCA NSW will not refund course fees once the course has commenced. RSPCA NSW may need to cancel, postpone, or reschedule a course when necessary due to low enrolment numbers or due to extraordinary circumstances. If this occurs, the student will be offered an alternative date or a full refund. Application for a refund can be made by completing the Application for a Refund Form (Appendix A).

If the RSPCA NSW training team closes or ceases to deliver the training product once training has commenced, a pro-rata refund will be offered to students. In addition, statements of attainment may be issued for achieved competencies up until the training ceases.

3. Student selection and enrolment

Policy: RSPCA NSW employs access and equity principles in its procedures for selecting, enrolling and inducting students. There are no barriers to any specific individuals or groups, inclusive of age, educational or social background, ethnicity, family responsibility, gender, political beliefs, religion, and sexuality. Delivery modes and training and assessment materials have been developed to maximise the opportunities for all students and enhance flexibility.

3.1 Procedure

The RSPCA NSW training team systematically selects its students based on the following procedure:

3.1.1 The RSPCA NSW training team welcomes enquiries from all members of the community regarding its courses and qualifications

3.1.2 All applicants 18 years or older are considered, and final selections are made following a review of applications by the Senior Manager – Training. Applications are reviewed in order of receipt and availability of placement

3.1.3 Prior to enrolment, prospective students have access to information regarding the RSPCA NSW training team in the form of this Student Handbook which outlines the relevant policies and procedures, including:

- refund policy
- student selection and enrolment
- recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- complaints, grievances and appeals
- access and equity
- competency in delivery and assessment
- strategies for learning and assessment
- summary of relevant legislation

3.2 Diversity

The needs of a diverse range of clients are identified and catered for through the following procedure:

3.2.1 An enrolment form is completed by each student, where they are asked to state whether or not they believe they have any barriers to learning (e.g., hearing impairment, learning difficulties, physical disabilities, visual impairment)

3.2.2 Trainers are provided with this information and contact the student to discuss their learning barrier further and discuss the requirements of the course and what (if any) reasonable adjustments can be made to delivery methods and assessment tools to assist them with their learning and assessment

3.3 Student support

On the enrolment form, students should identify any barriers to learning that may affect their ability to attain competency in any of the units, including Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) and Digital Literacy needs. If the student does not identify such barriers, it is very difficult to maximise their learning experience by customising delivery and assessment methods and tools. Based on this information, along with information provided by the student during the course, the RSPCA NSW training team will identify any individuals or groups with special training needs and will endeavour to provide support to these students.

The RSPCA NSW training team supports the student during the course through:

3.3.1 allowing students to record the sessions for further study

3.3.2 flexible learning and assessment procedures, which can be modified to cater for each individual student's needs. Reasonable adjustments will be made in compliance with each particular unit of competency

3.3.3 if necessary, referring students to external agencies to assist students (e.g., TAFE, community colleges, etc.)

3.3.4 incorporating practical, hands-on experiences as part of the activities

3.3.5 referring students, who have a self-identified need, to external services and agencies where appropriate

3.3.6 the provision of one-on-one training

3.3.7 the provision of handouts, and the provision of PowerPoint presentations online
3.3.8 the use of graphics to support learning materials

In the first instance, if students are experiencing difficulties, they are encouraged to seek support from the trainers. Following this, the trainers may refer the student to external welfare and guidance agencies, such as:

- Services Australia: servicesaustralia.gov.au
- Headspace: headspace.org.au
- Lifeline: call 13 1 1 14
- Kids Helpline (for those aged under 25): call 1800 55 1800
- Beyond Blue: beyondblue.org.au, or call 1300 22 4636
- The Australian Counselling Association (to find a registered counsellor): theaca.net.au
- NSW Mental Health Line: call 1800 011 511
- Blue Knot Foundation – Adult Survivors of Childhood Trauma: call 1300 657 380 or https://blueknot.org.au/
- MensLine: Call 1300 78 99 78 or https://mensline.org.au/
- Suicide Call Back Service: call 1300 659 467
- Anxiety Support Groups: https://understandinganxiety.wayahead.org.au/support-groups/
- Head to Health: medicarementalhealth.gov.au

3.4 Language/Literacy/Numeracy and Digital Literacy

The RSPCA NSW training team recognises the importance of basic skills in English language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) and digital literacy. Language, literacy and numeracy requirements form part of each of the components of the accredited courses offered by the RSPCA NSW training team. The RSPCA NSW training team will review all student enrolments in relevance to the LLN and Digital Literacy requirements of your course. To achieve this, the RSPCA NSW training team will:

3.4.1 ensure that all participants enrolled in training courses are evaluated for their LLN and Digital Literacy skills.
3.4.2 ensure that the LLN and Digital Literacy skills required in each of the courses are consistent with the specific workplace demands.
3.4.3 where possible, provide support for individual students' needs and tailor training programs to suit.
3.4.4 advise students where courses may not be suited to their current LLN and Digital Literacy level and recommend options for further learning in these areas.

4. Recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs (Credit Transfer) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

4.1 Policy

The RSPCA NSW training team recognises the AQF Qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by any other RTO in Australia. The RSPCA NSW training team also accepts any request for Recognition of Prior Learning from students. Any information provided by students is reviewed and this information is utilised in all decisions and outcomes for RPL and Credit Transfer to be considered.

4.2 Procedure

The RSPCA NSW training team must recognise the AQF Qualifications, Statements of Attainment and any previously attained skills and knowledge that students can provide evidence of.

4.2.1 Credit Transfer

Students with evidence of previously completed study with another RTO in Australia should discuss this with the Community Administrator prior to enrolling in the course. After verification of any evidence provided a trainer will contact the student to discuss any possible Credit Transfer that can be provided and any alteration to study arrangements for the course that this credit transfer may bring.

4.2.2 Recognition of Prior learning

Where students believe they have evidence to prove they have already attained the skills and knowledge of part/any or all of the units in a course, they should contact the Community Administrator (training@rspcansw.org.au) to request an RPL kit for that course. After review of the RPL kit, if a student believes they have enough evidence to provide and wish to proceed with an RPL application they should contact the Community Administrator to organise a meeting with a trainer to discuss further.

In both Credit Transfer and RPL the Senior Manager - Training will ensure that an appropriately designated person will:

- accurately check that the qualification or Statement of Attainment has been issued by a registered RTO
- verify the authenticity of the evidence provided by contacting the issuing body
- make decisions based on the currency of the evidence provided
- provide students with a copy of the relevant RPL handbook as requested
- maintain client records in relation to the RPL process

5. Complaints and grievances

5.1 Policy

Any complaint or grievance issued against the RSPCA NSW training team, its trainers or staff, will be dealt with in a constructive and timely manner and as required by any legislative requirements.

5.2 Procedures

Grievance procedures take account of the principles of procedural fairness which apply to the complainant, the respondent and the Senior Manager – Training at RSPCA NSW. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process of making and resolving complaints.

The complainant has the right to:

- be treated with dignity and respect
- be provided with a response within an adequate timeframe
- call witnesses
- have his or her complaint taken seriously
- have the complaint heard confidentially by an external staff member

The respondent has the right to:

- be presumed innocent unless proven otherwise
- be treated with dignity and respect

A client may make a complaint against the RSPCA NSW training team, its trainers or staff members, any 3rd party associated with the RTO or another RTO student, through one of the procedural methods outlined below:

5.2.1 Personal Resolution: The client may wish to personally and informally resolve the grievance by informing the person that their behaviour is causing problems and asking them to stop. Alternatively, the complainant may express their concerns in writing.

5.2.2 Formal Complaint: A client may complete the Complaint/Grievance Form (see Appendix B) to initiate further action. The form can be acquired from the trainers or by contacting the Senior Manager of Training directly. The form can be lodged in full confidentially. The form will be forwarded to the RSPCA NSW training team Senior Manager – Training.
A conference may be organised, involving the complainant, the responder and an impartial mediator as decided by the Senior Manager - Training. An outcome and any actions required will be determined by the Senior Manager – Training.

5.2.3 Formal complaint to external agencies: If a client is unsatisfied with the manner in which the RSPCA NSW training team has managed a grievance or complaint, the client may then approach the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) (asqa.gov.au).

If the RSPCA NSW training team believes that it will take longer than 60 days to process and finalise the complaint, the student will be informed in writing of the reason why and will receive updates on the progress of the matter.

6. Access and equity

6.1 Policy

The RSPCA NSW training team applies the NSW Principles for Equity in Education and Training:

- Everyone is entitled to high quality education and training programs that provide recognised credentials and clear pathways to employment and lifelong learning. The outcomes of education and training should not depend on factors beyond the learner's control or influence.
- In the allocation of public resources, priority is given to narrowing those gaps in education and training outcomes that reflect need and prevailing social inequalities.

- The diversity of the population is recognised and valued by inclusive approaches to the development, conduct and evaluation of programs.
- A demonstrated commitment to these equity principles and practices is a core responsibility for all those involved in education and training.

To ensure a coherent linkage between resources, access, delivery, participation, and outcomes to achieve equity, these principles will be applied in three main ways:

- Equity principles will be built into all services provided by the RSPCA NSW training team
- Available resources will be clearly linked to the achievement of better and more equitable participation and outcomes
- Specific measures will continue to be provided to assist all learners and groups to maximise their outcomes from education and training

6.2 Procedure

The RSPCA NSW training team's access and equity principles are enforced through:

- course information
- implementing the Complaints and Grievances Policy
- recognising prior learning completed by each student (RPL/Credit Transfer)
- student selection, enrolment, and induction (see section 3)
- student support employed by the RSPCA NSW training team (see section 3.3)
- the inclusion of workplace policies upon enrolment in the course
- the provision of support for clients with identified learning needs in the planning, delivery and assessment of training
- the RSPCA NSW training team Refund Policy

7. Competency and strategies in delivery, learning and assessment

The RSPCA NSW training team's training and assessment strategies and practices are responsive to industry and learner needs and meet the requirements of the relevant training packages. All training and assessment is delivered by appropriately qualified trainers and assessors.

The RSPCA NSW training team assessment system ensures that assessment is conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence as outlined in the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025* - https://www.asqa.gov.au/for-providers/standards-for-RTOs

8. Feedback to students regarding assessments

The RSPCA NSW training team assessors provide feedback to students regarding their assessments. The assessor may provide feedback to the student regarding:

- areas for improvement
- gaps in evidence
- how to demonstrate competence
- positive aspects of the assessment tasks
- advice on future options

9. Student access to records

Every student that studies with the RSPCA NSW training team will have access to his or her enrolment and assessment records.

A student can request access to his or her records in writing:

- training@rspcansw.org.au, or
- RSPCA NSW training team, PO Box 34, Yagoona, NSW, 2199

Once received, the student will be sent his or her records within 10 working days. Should this not be possible, the RSPCA NSW training team will inform the student of any delay at the first available opportunity.

Please note, email is the preferred method of correspondence.

10. Appeals

The RSPCA NSW training team provides an opportunity for all students to appeal assessment decisions. All students should be given the provision of appeal if they believe they have been unjustly or unfairly deemed 'Not Yet Competent'. The RSPCA NSW training team respects this right and has developed the following procedure to ensure students' rights are met.

Students have the following avenues of appeal:

- They can approach the assessor informally
- If the student is unsatisfied with the assessor's decision, they have a further right to formally appeal to the Senior Manager - Training and present their case. This appeal must be in writing, with the record of interactions attached (see Appeals Form Appendix C)
- If the student is unsatisfied with the decision of the Senior Manager - Training, following the presentation of their formal appeal, they have a further right to resubmit the Appeals Form to the General Manager: RSPCA NSW Community and Engagement.
- Following consideration of the appeal, the student will be provided with a written statement of the appeals outcomes, including reasons for the decision
- Should the student decide to appeal their final notice of assessment, they will need to retain all assessments and return them to the RSPCA NSW training team within the appeal period (28 days from the completion of the course). At the request of the student appealing, an independent party may review the appeal.
- If a student is unsatisfied with the manner in which the RSPCA NSW training team has managed a grievance or complaint, the student may then approach the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) (asqa.gov.au).

If the RSPCA NSW training team believes that it will take longer than 60 days to process and finalise the appeal, the student will be informed in writing of the reason why and will receive updates on the progress of the matter.

11. Disciplinary procedures

RSPCA NSW training team has disciplinary procedures to ensure consistent standards of behaviour and effective responses to misconduct.

Student disciplinary procedures will be employed only after all other good teaching techniques and strategies have been exhausted (e.g., supporting students towards positive behaviour, following up concerns with students immediately, etc.). Additionally, whenever possible and appropriate, informal resolution and or mediation will be used to resolve issues of individual behaviour before recourse to formal disciplinary procedures.

All misconduct matters will be referred to the RSPCA NSW Senior Manager - Training team for appropriate action, which may include suspension from training sessions, suspension of the student's course, or in certain circumstances include cancellation of the student's enrolment. Students will be notified in writing of any action to be taken.

Behavioural misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- failure to comply with any RSPCA NSW training team policy or the Student Code of Conduct
- refusing or failing to identify oneself truthfully
- any act or omission that endangers the safety or health of any person or animal
- acting in a way that causes students or staff to fear for their personal safety, or the safety of the animals
- being under the influence of prohibited drugs and/or substances including alcohol while on RSPCA NSW premises
- possession of a weapon on RSPCA NSW premises
- any action deemed unlawful under State or Commonwealth laws

Where State or Commonwealth laws appear to have been breached, the matter will be referred to the police or other appropriate authority.

12. Compliance with Standards for RTO and all other required legislation

The RSPCA NSW training team will meet all its requirements as per the items set out in the Standards for RTO's 2025 and all other required legislation of the State and Federal Government. National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025 - Federal Register of Legislation

13. Student enquiries, learning and support

For all student enquiries, or information about courses and careers, please contact:

RSPCA NSW training team

P:(02)9782 4478, E: training@rspcansw.org.au, W: rspcansw.org.au

If students are experiencing difficulties, external support agencies that may be of assistance include:

- Headspace: headspace.org.au
- Lifeline: call 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline (for those aged under 25): call 1800 55 1800
- Beyond Blue: beyondblue.org.au, or call 1300 22 4636
- The Australian Counselling Association (to find a registered counsellor): theaca.net.au
- NSW Mental Health Line: call 1800 011 511
- Blue Knot Foundation – Adult Survivors of Childhood Trauma: call 1300 657 380 or https://www.blueknot.org.au/
- Mensline: Call 1300 78 99 78 or https://mensline.org.au/
- Suicide Call Back Service: call 1300 659 467
- Anxiety Support Groups: https://understandinganxiety.wayahead.org.au/support-groups/
- Head to Health: medicarementalhealth.gov.au

Appendix A

RSPCA NSW training team Application for Refund

Payment of a refund is subject to the RSPCA NSW training team Refund Policy

Date:

Applicant's name:

Applicant's address:

Applicant's phone number:

Applicant's email:

Name of course applicant was enrolled in:

Date of course commencement:

Proof of payment attached: YES / NO Total amount paid:

Reason for withdrawal from the course:

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Date received:

Proof of payment produced: YES / NO

Application for refund accepted: YES / NO

Administration fees payable:

Total refund payable (if applicable):

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Appendix B

RSPCA NSW training team Complaints/Grievance Form

All complaints using this form will be forwarded to the RSPCA NSW Senior Manager - Training

Your name:

Your address:

Your phone number:

Your email:

Name of the course in which you are currently enrolled:

Date of course commencement:

Name of person involved in this complaint:

Date of incident: Time of incident:

Complaint (please be specific with all details):

Was any action taken to correct the problem at the time of the incident? If so, what action was taken?

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Name of RSPCA NSW training team staff member this complaint was given to:

Action taken:

Follow-up requirements:

Recommendations:

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Appendix C

RSPCA NSW training team Appeals Form

Student's name:

Student's phone number:

Student's email address:

Course code and name:

Assessor's name:

Unit code and name:

Name of assessment item:

Date submitted: Date feedback received:

Details to support appeal:

Student's signature:

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Date appeal received: Date of resolution:

Outcome of appeal:

Signed:

Assessor's name:

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Appendix D

AQF Policies

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) provides the standards for Australian qualifications. To review the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy, please see https://www.aqf.edu.au/

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