

# PRIVACY POLICY

This policy outlines the ACES approach to protecting the privacy of its employees, students and community, and its approach to the collection, holding, use, correction, disclosure, or transfer of personal information.

Australian College of Environmental Studies Pty Limited (ACES) may collect information from students or persons seeking to enrol with ACES, either electronically or in hard copy format, including information that personally identifies individual users. ACES may also record various communications between individuals and the college. In collecting personal information, ACES is committed to the protection of privacy, compliant with the Privacy Act 1988 and Commonwealth Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000.

ACES is committed to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of its personnel and student records. ACES complies with the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) including the 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)* as outlined in the *Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (Cth)*. Providing an overall framework for our privacy practices, ACES has developed and implemented this APP Privacy Policy. This policy is designed to maintain requirements with additional jurisdictional requirements including:

- *Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017 (Cth)*;
- *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth)*;
- *Information Privacy Act 2014 (ACT)*;
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)*;
- *Information Act 2003 (NT)*;
- *Information Privacy Act 2009 (QLD)*;
- *Information Privacy Act 2000 (VIC)*; and
- *Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (TAS)*.

ACES manages personal information in an open and transparent way. This is evident in the implementation of practices, procedures, and systems we outline in this policy, that ensure our compliance with the APPs and any binding registered APP code and provide suitable procedures for ACES personnel to be able to deal with related inquiries and complaints that may be received from time to time.

## AUSTRALIAN PRIVACY PRINCIPLES

The following sections of this policy outline how we manage personal information.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 1 - Open and transparent management of personal information**

ACES retains a record of personal information about all individuals with whom we undertake any form of business activity. ACES must collect, hold, use and disclose information from our clients and stakeholders for a range of purposes, including but not limited to:

- Providing services to clients;
- Managing employee and contractor teams;
- Promoting products and services.
- Conducting internal business functions and activities; and

### **Requirements of stakeholders**

As a government registered training organisation, regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority, ACES is required to collect, hold, use and disclose a wide range of personal and sensitive information on students in nationally recognised training programs. This information

# PRIVACY POLICY

requirement is outlined in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* and associated legislative instruments. In particular, the legislative instruments:

- *Student Identifiers Act 2014 (Cth)*;
- *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 (Cth)*;
- *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)*; and
- *Data Provision Requirements 2012 (Cth)*.

It is noted that ACES is also bound by various State Government Acts requiring similar information collection, use and disclosure (particularly *Education Act(s)*, *Vocational Education & Training Act(s)*, and *Traineeship & Apprenticeships Act(s)* relevant to state jurisdictions of ACES operations). It is further noted that, aligned with these legislative requirements, ACES delivers services through a range of Commonwealth and State Government funding contract agreement arrangements, which also include various information collection and disclosure requirements.

Individuals are advised that due to these legal requirements, ACES discloses information held on individuals for valid purposes to a range of entities including:

- Governments (Commonwealth, State or Local);
- Australian Apprenticeships Network Providers;
- Employers (and their representatives), Job Network Providers, Schools, Guardians; and
- RTOs such as RTO Management Services for data management, credit agencies and background check providers.

## **Kinds of personal information collected and held**

The following types of personal information are generally collected, depending on the need for services delivery:

- Contact details;
- Employment details;
- Educational background;
- Demographic Information;
- Course progress and achievement information; and
- Financial billing information.

The following types of sensitive information may also be collected and held:

- Identity details;
- Employee details & HR information;
- Complaint or issue information;
- Disability status & other individual needs;
- Indigenous status; and
- Background checks (such as National Criminal Checks or Working with Children checks).

## **How personal information is collected**

ACES's usual approach to collecting personal information is to collect any required information directly from the individuals concerned. This may include the use of forms (such as registration forms, enrolment forms or services delivery records) and the use of web-based systems (such as online enquiry forms, web portals or internal operating systems). ACES may receive solicited and unsolicited information from Third Party sources in undertaking services delivery activities.

# PRIVACY POLICY

This may include information from such entities as:

- Governments (Commonwealth, State or Local);
- Australian Apprenticeships Network Providers;
- Employers (and their representatives), Job Network Providers, Schools, Guardians; and
- RTOs such as credit agencies and background check providers.

## How personal information is held

ACES's usual approach to holding personal information always includes robust storage and security measures. Information on collection is:

- As soon as practical converted to electronic means;
- Stored in secure, password protected systems, such as financial system, learning management system and student management system; and
- Monitored for appropriate authorised use at all times.

Only authorised personnel are provided with login information to each system, with system access limited to only those relevant to their specific role. ACES IT systems are hosted internally with robust internal security to physical server locations and server systems access. Virus protection, backup procedures and ongoing access monitoring procedures are in place. Destruction of paper-based records occurs as soon as practicable in every matter, using secure shredding and destruction services at all ACES sites. Individual information held across systems is linked through an ACES allocated identification number for everyone.

## Retention and Destruction of Information

ACES students enrol and submit their assessments online. All Enrolment and Assessment documentation is stored in either a passworded drop box Student folder or in the password protected Moodle Platform.

## Accessing and seeking correction of personal information

ACES confirms all individuals have a right to request access to their personal information held and to request its correction at any time. To request access to personal records, individuals are to contact:

**ACES Administration Manager**  
Sandy Lynch [sandy@aces.edu.au](mailto:sandy@aces.edu.au)

Several third parties, other than the individual, may request access to an individual's personal information. Such third parties may include employers, parents or guardians, schools, Australian Apprenticeships Network Providers, Governments (Commonwealth, State or Local) and various other stakeholders.

In all cases where access is requested, ACES ensures that:

- Parties requesting access to personal information are robustly identified and vetted;
- Where legally possible, the individual to whom the information relates will be contacted to confirm consent (if consent not previously provided for the matter); and
- Only appropriately authorised parties, for valid purposes, will be provided access to the information.

# PRIVACY POLICY

## **Complaints about a breach of the APPs or a binding registered APP code**

If an individual feels that ACES may have breached one of the APPs or a binding registered APP code, please refer to the *Privacy Complaints Procedure* below for further information on what actions may be taken. ACES confirms that individuals' personal information is not disclosed to overseas recipients, for any purpose.

## **Australian Privacy Principle 2 - Anonymity and pseudonymity**

ACES provides individuals with the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym, when dealing with us in relation to a particular matter, whenever practical. This includes providing options for anonymous dealings in cases of general course enquiries or other situations in which an individual's information is not required to complete a request. Individuals may deal with us by using a name, term or descriptor that is different to the individual's actual name wherever possible. This includes using generic email addresses that does not contain an individual's actual name, or generic usernames when individuals may access a public component of our website or enquiry forms. ACES only stores and links pseudonyms to individual personal information in cases where this is required for services delivery (such as system login information) or once the individual's consent has been received. Individuals are advised of their opportunity to deal anonymously or by pseudonym with us where these options are possible.

## **Requiring identification**

ACES must require and confirm identification however in services delivery to individuals for Nationally Recognised Course programs. We are authorised by Australian law to deal only with individuals who have appropriately identified themselves. That is, it is a *Condition of Registration* for all RTOs under the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* that we identify individuals and their specific individual needs on commencement of services delivery and collect and disclose Australian Vocational Education and Training Management of Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) data on all individuals enrolled in nationally recognised training programs. Other legal requirements, as noted earlier in this policy, also require considerable identification arrangements. There are also other occasions also within our services delivery where an individual may not have the option of dealing anonymously or by pseudonym, as identification is practically required for us to effectively support an individual's request or need.

## **Australian Privacy Principle 3 — Collection of solicited personal information**

ACES only collects personal information that is reasonably necessary for our business activities. We only collect sensitive information in cases where the individual consents to the sensitive information being collected, except in cases where we are required to collect this information by law, such as outlined earlier in this policy. All information we collect is collected only by lawful and fair means. We only collect solicited information directly from the individual concerned unless it is unreasonable or impracticable for the personal information to only be collected in this manner.

## **Australian Privacy Principle 4 - Dealing with unsolicited personal information**

ACES may from time to time receive unsolicited personal information. Where this occurs, we promptly review the information to decide whether we could have collected the information for the purpose of our business activities. Where this is the case, we may hold, use, and disclose the information appropriately as per the practices outlined in this policy. Where we could not have collected this information (by law or for a valid business purpose) we immediately destroy or de-identify the information (unless it would be unlawful to do so).

# PRIVACY POLICY

## **Australian Privacy Principle 5 - Notification of the collection of personal information**

Whenever ACES collects personal information about an individual, we take reasonable steps to notify the individual of the details of the information collection or otherwise ensure the individual is aware of those matters. This notification occurs at or before the time of collection, or as soon as practicable afterwards.

Our notifications to individuals on data collection include:

- ACES's identity and contact details, including the position title, telephone number and email address of a contact who handles enquiries and requests relating to privacy matters;
- The facts and circumstances of collection such as the date, time, place and method of collection, and whether the information was collected from a Third Party, including the name of that party;
- If the collection is required or authorised by law, including the name of the Australian law or other legal agreement requiring the collection;
- The purpose of collection, including any primary and secondary purposes;
- The consequences for the individual if all or some personal information is not collected;
- Other organisations or persons to which the information is usually disclosed, including naming those parties;
- Whether we are likely to disclose the personal information to overseas recipients, and if so, the names of the recipients and the countries in which such recipients are located.
- A link to this APP Privacy Policy on our website or explain how it may be accessed; and
- Advice that this APP Privacy Policy contains information about how the individual may access and seek correction of the personal information held by us; and how to complain about a breach of the APPs, or any registered APP code, and how we will deal with such a complaint.

Where possible, we ensure that the individual confirms their understanding of these details, such as through signed declarations, website form acceptance of details or in person through questioning.

## **Australian Privacy Principle 6 - Use or disclosure of personal information**

ACES only uses or discloses personal information it holds about an individual for the primary purposes for which the information was collected, or secondary purposes in cases where:

- An individual consented to a secondary use or disclosure;
- An individual would reasonably expect the secondary use or disclosure, and that is directly related to the primary purpose of collection; or
- Using or disclosing the information is required or authorised by law.

### **Requirement to make a written note of use or disclosure for this secondary purpose**

If ACES uses or discloses personal information in accordance with an 'enforcement related activity' we will make a written note of the use or disclosure, including the following details:

- The date of the use or disclosure;
- Details of the personal information that was used or disclosed;
- The enforcement body conducting the enforcement related activity;
- If the organisation used the information, how the information was used by the organisation; and
- The basis for our reasonable belief that we were required to disclose the information.



# PRIVACY POLICY

## **Australian Privacy Principle 7 - Direct marketing**

ACES does not use or disclose the personal information that it holds about an individual for the purpose of direct marketing, unless:

- The personal information has been collected directly from an individual, and the individual would reasonably expect their personal information to be used for the purpose of direct marketing; or
- The personal information has been collected from a Third Party, or from the individual directly, but the individual does not have a reasonable expectation that their personal information will be used for the purpose of direct marketing; and
- We provide a simple method for the individual to request not to receive direct marketing communications (also known as 'opting out').

On each of our direct marketing communications, ACES provides a prominent statement that the individual may request to opt out of future communications, and how to do so. An individual may also request us at any stage not to use or disclose their personal information for the purpose of direct marketing, or to facilitate direct marketing by other organisations. We comply with any request by an individual promptly and undertake any required actions for free. We also, on request, notify an individual of our source of their personal information used or disclosed for the purpose of direct marketing unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.

## **Australian Privacy Principle 8 - Cross-border disclosure of personal information**

Before ACES discloses personal information about an individual to any overseas recipient, we take reasonable steps to ensure that ACES does not breach any privacy matters in relation to that information.

## **Australian Privacy Principle 9 - Adoption, use or disclosure of government related identifiers**

ACES does not adopt, use, or disclose a government related identifier related to an individual except:

- In situations required by Australian law or other legal requirements;
- Where reasonably necessary to verify the identity of the individual;
- Where reasonably necessary to fulfil obligations to an agency or a State or Territory authority; or
- As prescribed by regulations.

## **Australian Privacy Principle 10 - Quality of personal information**

ACES takes reasonable steps to ensure that the personal information it collects is accurate, up-to-date, and complete. We also take reasonable steps to ensure that the personal information we use or disclose is, having regard to the purpose of the use or disclosure, accurate, up-to-date, complete, and relevant. This is particularly important:

- When we initially collect the personal information; and
- When we use or disclose personal information.

We take steps to ensure personal information is factually correct. In cases of an opinion, we ensure information considers competing facts and views and makes an informed assessment, providing it is clear this is an opinion. Information is confirmed up to date at the point in time to which the personal information relates.

# PRIVACY POLICY

Quality measures in place supporting these requirements include:

- Internal practices, procedures, and systems to audit, monitor, identify and correct inferior quality personal information (including training personnel in these practices, procedures, and systems).
- Protocols that ensure personal information is collected and recorded in a consistent format, from a primary information source where possible.
- Ensuring updated or new personal information is promptly added to relevant existing records.
- Providing individuals with a simple means to review and update their information on an on-going basis through our online portal.
- Reminding individuals to update their personal information at critical services delivery points (such as completion) when we engage with the individual.
- Contacting individuals to verify the quality of personal information where appropriate when it is about to be used or disclosed, particularly if there has been a lengthy period since collection; and
- Checking that a Third Party, from whom personal information is collected, has implemented appropriate data quality practices, procedures, and systems.

## **Australian Privacy Principle 11 — Security of personal information**

ACES takes active measures to consider whether we can retain personal information we hold, and to ensure the security of personal information we hold. This includes reasonable steps to protect the information from misuse, interference, and loss, as well as unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. We destroy or de-identify personal information held once the information is no longer needed for any purpose for which the information may be legally used or disclosed. Access to ACES offices and work areas is limited to our personnel only visitors to our premises must be authorised by relevant personnel and are always accompanied. Regarding any information in a paper-based form, we maintain storage of records in an appropriately secure place to which only authorised individuals have access. Regular personnel training and information bulletins are conducted with ACES personnel on privacy issues, and how the APPs apply to our practices, procedures, and systems. Training is also included in our personnel induction practices. We conduct ongoing internal audits (at least annually and as needed) of the adequacy and currency of security and access practices, procedures and systems implemented.

## **Australian Privacy Principle 12 — Access to personal information**

Where ACES holds personal information about an individual, we provide that individual access to the information on their request. In processing requests, we:

- Ensure through confirmation of identity that the request is made by the individual concerned, or by another person who is authorised to make a request on their behalf;
- Respond to a request for access:
  - Within 14 calendar days, when notifying our refusal to give access, including providing reasons for refusal in writing, and the complaint mechanisms available to the individual; or
  - Within 30 calendar days, by giving access to the personal information that is requested in the manner in which it was requested.
- Provide information access free of charge.

## **Australian Privacy Principle 13 Correction of personal information**

ACES takes reasonable steps to correct personal information we hold, to ensure it is accurate, up-to-date, complete, relevant, and not misleading, having regard to the purpose for which it is held.

# PRIVACY POLICY

## Individual Requests

On an individual's request, we:

- Correct personal information held; and
- Notify any third parties of corrections made to personal information if this information was previously provided to these parties.

In cases where we refuse to update personal information, we:

- Give a written notice to the individual, including the reasons for the refusal and the complaint mechanisms available to the individual;
- Upon request by the individual whose correction request has been refused, take reasonable steps to associate a statement with the personal information that the individual believes it to be inaccurate, out-of-date, incomplete, irrelevant or misleading;
- Respond within 14 calendar days to these requests; and
- Complete all actions free of charge.

## Correcting at ACES's initiative

We take reasonable steps to correct personal information we hold in cases where we are satisfied that the personal information held is inaccurate, out-of-date, incomplete, irrelevant, or misleading (that is, the information is faulty). This awareness may occur through collection of updated information, in notification from third parties or through other means.

## Request for Records Access

Individuals or third parties may at any stage request access to records held by ACES relating to their personal information. The following procedure is followed on each individual request for access:

1. A request for access is provided by the requester, with suitable information provided to be able to:
  - Identify the individual concerned.
  - Confirm their identity; and
  - Identify the specific information that they are requesting access to.
2. This request may be in any form, or preferably using ACES's *Records Access or Update Request Form*.
3. Upon receiving a request for access, ACES then:
  - Confirms the identity of the individual or party requesting access.
  - Confirms that this individual or party is appropriately authorised to receive the information requested.
  - Searches the records that we possess or control to assess whether the requested *personal information* is contained in those records; and
  - Collates any personal information found ready for access to be provided.

## Confirming identity

ACES personnel must be satisfied that a request for personal information is made by the individual concerned, or by another person who is authorised to make a request on their behalf. The minimum amount of personal information needed to establish an individual's identity is sought, which is



# PRIVACY POLICY

generally an individual's name, date of birth, last known address, and signature. When meeting the requesting party in person, identification may be sighted. If confirming details over a telephone conversation, questions regarding the individual's name, date of birth, last known address or service details must be confirmed before information is provided. Once identity and access authorisation are confirmed, and personal information is collated, access is provided to the requester within 30 calendar days of receipt of the original request. We will provide access to personal information in the specific manner or format requested by the individual, wherever it is reasonable and practicable to do so, free of charge. Where the requested format is not practical, we consult with the requester to ensure a format is provided that meets the requester's needs. If the identity or authorisation access cannot be confirmed, or there is another valid reason why ACES is unable to provide the personal information, refusal to provide access to records will be provided to the requester, in writing. Our notification will include reason(s) for the refusal, and the complaint mechanisms available to the individual. Such notifications are provided to the requester within 30 calendar days of receipt of the original request.

## Request for Records Update

Individuals or third parties may at any stage request that their records held by ACES relating to their personal information be updated. The following procedure is followed on each individual request for records updates:

A request for records update is provided by the requester, with suitable information provided to be able to:

- Identify the individual concerned.
- Confirm their identity; and
- Identify the specific information that they are requesting be updated on their records.
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This request may be in any form, or preferably using ACES's *Records Access or Update Request Form*.

Upon receiving a request for records update, ACES then:

- Confirms the identity of the individual or party to whom the record relates.
- Searches the records that we possess or control to assess whether the requested *personal information* is contained in those records; and
- Assesses the information already on record, and the requested update, to determine whether the requested update should proceed.

## Assessing Update

ACES personnel assess the relevant personal information we hold, and the requested updated information, to determine which version of the information is considered accurate, up to date, complete, relevant, and not misleading, having regard to the purpose for which it is held. This may include checking information against other records held by us, or within government databases, to complete an assessment of the correct version of the information to be used.

Once identity and information assessment are confirmed, personal information is:

- Updated, free of charge, within 14 calendar days of receipt of the original request: and
- Notified to any third parties of corrections made to personal information if this information was previously provided to these parties.

# PRIVACY POLICY

If the identity of the individual cannot be confirmed, or there is another valid reason why ACES is unable to update the personal information, refusal to update records will be provided to the requester in writing, free of charge, within 14 calendar days. Our notification will include the reasons for the refusal and the complaint mechanisms available to the individual. Upon request by the individual whose correction request has been refused, we will also take reasonable steps to associate a 'statement' with the personal information that the individual believes it to be inaccurate, out-of-date, incomplete, irrelevant, or misleading. This statement will be applied, free of charge, to all personal information relevant across ACES systems within 30 calendar days of receipt of the statement request.

## Privacy Complaints

If an individual feels that ACES has breached its obligations in the handling, use or disclosure of their personal information, they may raise a complaint. We encourage individuals to discuss the situation with their ACES representative in the first instance, before making a complaint. The complaints handling process is as follows:

- The individual should make the complaint including as much detail about the issue as possible, in writing to ACES:

**Nicole Bijlsma** [nicole@aces.edu.au](mailto:nicole@aces.edu.au)

- ACES will investigate the circumstances included in the complaint and respond to the individual as soon as possible (and within 30 calendar days) regarding its findings and actions following this investigation.
- After considering this response, if the individual is still not satisfied, they may escalate their complaint directly to the Information Commissioner for investigation:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

[www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 363 992

- When investigating a complaint, the OAIC will initially attempt to conciliate the complaint, before considering the exercise of other complaint resolution powers.
- Alternatively, if the complaint relates to a non-privacy matter, or should individuals choose to do so, a complaint may also be lodged with the ASQA complaints handling service for complaints against RTOs:

Australian Skills Quality Authority

[www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 701 801