

Private training courses

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

If you are considering undertaking a private training course there are certain things you should consider.

Private training can be very expensive, and you will want to get value for money. **Be wary when paying any fees for training.**

Remember: private trainers are businesses wanting to sell a product. Buyers have to be aware of risks, and should choose courses and colleges with care.

Remember, many private training courses are offered without any government approval. You have to make the choice. It's your time and money.

HERE IS A CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU MAKE THE BEST DECISION

1. Find out what is on offer

- Shop around. Compare courses at a number of private institutions and TAFE Colleges (a free copy of the TAFE courses directory is available from the website www.tafe.vic.gov.au or by contacting Information Victoria on **1300 366 356**).



Job Watch Inc is

an independent, not for profit, employment rights legal centre. It provides a free, confidential telephone information and referral service and other assistance to Victorian workers.

Hours:- Monday – Friday 9am-5pm
(Except Tuesday 12-2pm)

Phone: (03) 9662 1933 or
1800 331 617

Website: www.job-watch.org.au

- Seek advice about which courses suit the jobs you want (see over for contact details). For example, you can go to your careers teacher, local library, Career Information Centre, the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) Job Guide, websites like www.myfuture.edu.au and www.jobjuice.gov.au.

2. Enrol in an officially recognised course

The Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) has the power to grant **registration** to private training organizations 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.

Details on registered training organizations and accredited courses go to the National Training Information Service website www.ntis.gov.au

Details as to whether the organization is government registered and for which courses, contact the Office of Training and Tertiary Education on **(03) 9637 2762**.

Remember, even if a course is accredited and the College is registered, you should still check it out thoroughly.

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

Industry Acceptance:

Get an opinion from a related industry association and employee organization (for example, you may contact the Australian Hotels Association and the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union about hospitality courses). Also, you may contact the personnel managers of key employers in the field. In the Yellow Pages telephone directory look under:

- Business and Professional Organisations;
- Unions.

Ask 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.

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.

Job Watch can give you telephone information and referrals to other relevant organizations:
**Metro - (03) 9662 1933 or
Regional - 1800 33 1617**

4. Youth Allowance and Austudy eligibility

Accredited training offered by Registered Training Organisations may be approved for Youth Allowance, Austudy or other forms of financial assistance. Check with Centrelink Youth and Student Services: Tel. **132 490**

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.

If the course/college claims to be "government recognised", make sure it is officially registered by visiting the www.ntis.gov.au website or contacting the Office of Training and Tertiary Education: Tel **(03) 9637 2762**.

Many private courses are now being conducted at TAFE colleges. This does not guarantee quality, so you still need to check out the courses thoroughly.

Never be pressured to sign a contract on the spot, or pay deposits or fees. Be satisfied that the course/college is officially recognised or otherwise satisfies your needs. Have documents checked by a solicitor or other qualified adviser before you sign it.

For your nearest Community Legal Centre contact the Federation of Community Legal Centres on **(03) 9654 2204**. Remember, you are making a big commitment so take the time to organise things thoroughly.

Read everything you are asked to sign. Keep copies of all written information you receive from the college or training organization 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

Job Watch 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; computer industry; correspondence courses; private security industry; and some natural therapy courses.

Be wary of 'fashionable' or 'flavour of the month' language in advertisements such as, "Internet", "Marketing" or "Multi-media".

7. Know where to refer problems

If you are unhappy with training you can contact the Office of Training and Tertiary Education or Consumer Affairs Victoria.

You may have rights to file an application with Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to recover monies you have paid.

Where to get help

Job Watch Inc: Metro **(03) 9662 1933**
www.job-watch.org.au Rural 1800 331 617

ACTU Worker Connect **1300 362 223**
(for referral to relevant union):
www.actu.asn.au

Career Information centre Melb **(03) 9403 8855**
Geelong **(03) 5228 6323**
for information on careers and courses
cic.mel@centrelink.gov.au

Centrelink Youth & Student Services **132 490**
for Youth Allowance and Austudy
www.centrelink.gov.au

Consumer Affairs Vic **1300 558 181**
www.consumer.vic.gov.au

Department of Education, Science & Training
for copy of Job Guide
www.jobguide.dest.gov.au

Federation of Community Legal Centres **(03) 9654 2204**
for referral to closest legal centre

Information Victoria **1300 366 356**

Job Juice
for information about career directions and job seeking
www.jobjuice.gov.au

My Future
for information about career planning, education and training options for Australian jobs
www.myfuture.edu.au

National Training Information Service

for information on registered training organizations
and accredited courses

www.ntis.gov.au.

Office of Training and Tertiary Education (03) 9637 2762

for registration of training organizations and
accreditation of courses

www.otte.vic.gov.au

TAFE Course Line 131 823

for information on TAFE courses (03) 9637 2203

www.tafe.vic.gov.au

Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) (03) 9628 9700

www.vcat.gov.au

Important disclaimer

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